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BORED OF A DEEP TISSUE? TRY THESE ALTERNATIVE MASSAGES

[Fitness](#), [Mind](#)



<http://whateveryourdose.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Ayurveda-pura.001.jpeg>

Like most people who have a desk job, I suffer from stiff shoulders and a sore back. When I permit myself the indulgence, I usually go for a deep tissue or sports massage to iron out the knots. Recently, however, I decided to branch out and try something a little different. Here's how I got on...

AYURVEDA PURA

Having experienced authentic Ayurveda in Kerala a few months ago, I was somewhat sceptical about how the traditional Indian therapies would be translated in a western spa. Hence my pleasant surprise when I was greeted by the Ayurveda expert Dr. Deepa Apté, Director of Ayurveda Pura, who really knows her stuff.

After spending two weeks in an Ayurvedic hospital in India I thought I knew everything there was to know about my dosha (body type). Yet Deepa shed new light on my problem areas and was able to prescribe a bespoke massage to target my specific issues.

I struggle to shake off my 'no pain, no gain' attitude, so when my masseuse described the treatment to me as "using gentle flowing strokes" alarm bells started ringing.



Photo: Ayurveda Pura

It turned out that this was just what I needed – rather than my usual post-massage sensation of feeling a little worse for wear, my body felt more relaxed and free of tension than it had in months.

Honestly, I was expecting to be underwhelmed by this Greenwich incarnation of a traditional Indian spa. Instead, I was blown away by the level of expertise and quality of therapies. Ayurveda Pura has managed to take the essence of Ayurvedic treatments out of India and spruce it up with the trappings of a western spa, without sacrificing their authenticity in the process.

As someone who is very hard to please when it comes to traditional treatments, this comes highly recommended.

LT THERAPY

The pioneering method of Langelotti Tri-Therapy developed by Sophia Kupse takes a holistic approach to back pain by searching for root causes in emotional pressure.

Sophia views the back as a map of one's experiences and relationships. The bottom part corresponding to early childhood, moving up to the present day at the top. Different areas of the back are further tied up with specific connections: friends/family, male/female, work/home, and so on.

I struggle to be convinced by methods that claim to 'read' the body and miraculously provide the secrets to what is causing our problems. All too often I feel like generic statements are used to trigger a revelation by the client, which the practitioner can then manipulate to make it seem like they have divined these insights through some sort of intuitive powers.

Despite this, in my session with Sophia I was genuinely shocked about how much she could discern about my life and relationships just from finding a few trigger points on my back. As a result, the treatment became more about the emotional rather than the physical release for me. I had to confront some painful truths – which, coincidentally, corresponded to acute pain points in my shoulders.

As I offloaded my feelings to Sophia, she placed cold marble then hot volcanic stones on these areas, designed to reduce inflammation and then remove lactic acid and toxins stored in the muscle memory that are connected to this negativity.

Physically, I did emerge from the session feeling looser and lighter, but the key takeaway for me was the sense of clarity regarding my troublesome relationships. I felt equipped to tackle these issues head on going forward, and to be perfectly honest this feeling of empowerment was so profound that it made the physical benefits pale into insignificance in comparison.

Go in with an open mind, and the effect might well surprise you.



Photo: The Polished Onion

THE ROLF METHOD OF STRUCTURAL INTEGRATION

Having been a gymnast right through to young adulthood, I've always thought that my posture was excellent – so I didn't think The Rolf Method of 'Structural Integration' would do all that much for me.

Oh, how wrong I was. The session with Anna Collins started with me standing in front of her and saying how I felt in that position (“pretty good actually”), which we return to over the course of the session to observe any changes.

The method typically comprises a series of 10 sessions, with the first focusing on opening and lengthening the front of the body. Anna’s touch made my muscles – or rather, “fascia” as Anna prefers to refer to them – experience a fizzy sensation (apparently this is normal), and at times it was hard not to let them tense up or feel like I’m being tickled.

But every time I stood back up I was shocked at how much lighter and longer the areas Anna has worked on felt. It turns out my posture was actually pretty appalling – and I’m now standing much taller, and feeling more open and much less burdened.

Half way through Anna asked me to lie on my side and warned me that the next part “might feel a little different”. As she worked along my thighs using powerful strokes, I cursed all those times I went on bike rides and was too lazy to stretch afterwards. For those who are familiar with foam rolling your IT bands, you’ll know the sensation – except that Anna mimicked the same results in just a few relatively pain-free strokes that hours of agony on a foam roller will ultimately provide.

Anna made it clear that the treatment isn’t for everyone, and if the first has piqued your interest then it’s worth trying the next two before deciding whether to commit to the full ten. Judging by the testimonials from her clients – who range from Olympic athletes through to businesspeople – the real magic happens later in the series, but even in this initial session I felt noticeable changes. And if it means I really can stand an extra couple of inches taller without having to resort to stilettos, I’m willing to give it a go!

BY ROSIE