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Flowers, sound, touch: Urban India's unusual remedies to tackle stress

The alternative therapies are also being used to alleviate aches and pains, treat seasonal allergies.

 HEALTH AND FITNESS ([HTTP://WWW.HINDUSTANTIMES.COM/HEALTH-AND-FITNESS/](http://www.hindustantimes.com/health-and-fitness/))

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 Rhythmia Kaul & Anesha George
 Hindustan Times


Evelet Sequeira conducts a sound bowl therapy session in Mumbai.

Stress is big business. Spas are devoted to helping you unwind. There's a flourishing trade in calming teas. Even fitness coaches have been pushing the feel-good aspects of a workout as much as its physical benefits.

But what if you've been to the spa, sipped the chamomile and found that the jog can only take your mood so far?

Wrung-out urban India is looking for newer ways to beat stress. Flower remedies are helping with seasonal allergies, touch therapy is treating stress, mechanical pulsations are helping restore balance, and for those looking for calm are opening up to sound baths. Here's how they're designed to help.

Bach flower remedies

In the 1930s, English homeopath Edward Bach researched plant essences and their effect on humans. He extracted essences from 38 flowers to develop a range of extremely diluted solutions, to heal patients' ailments, while taking into account their individual emotional states.

Beauty writer Jhelum Biswas Bose, 36, was introduced to Bach flower remedies six years ago for her allergies.

"For me, every season starts with a horrible bout of cold," she says. The floral remedies, she says, have alleviated her symptoms. "I tried rescue remedy and it worked wonders," she says. "I had to travel with fever and cold, and it was two drops of this which kept me going all through." She has been hooked ever since.

Biswas Bose has also worked towards becoming a certified trainer for the remedies, developed her own range of essences and customises products based on individual needs after consultations.

Many others also believe the essences gently restore the balance between mind and body.

CranioSacral Therapy

There's a theory that the path to wellness starts at the back of your head. Craniosacral therapy deals with the cranium (skull) and the sacrum (bone at the base of the spine), and consists of gentle-touch techniques



Dr Sandeep Bhasin in a craniosacral therapy session in New Delhi. (Burhaan Kinu / HT Photo)

that address the bones of the head, spinal column and spine base.

“The therapy helps in releasing compression in those areas, alleviating stress and pain,” says Dr Sandeep Bhasin, who has been practising it for 15 years in Delhi.

“After the massage, people feel electric impulses and sort of current leaving their limbs,” says Dr Bhasin.

Craniosacral work follows the principle that all healthy, living tissues subtly breathe with the motion of life. They produce rhythmic impulses that can be palpated by sensitive hands. “We combine it with other techniques such as ozone therapy and body detoxification for better results,” says Dr Bhasin.

Sound bath therapy

You don't need to disrobe for a sound bath. Just lie down, close your eyes and let rhythmic notes try to lull you into a relaxed state of mind. It is usually conducted by a single therapist who plays Tibetan sound bowls with a mallet. The vibrations are meant to give out sound waves to rejuvenate the body and mind.

Mumbai-based sound therapist and life coach Evelet Sequeira says it's like an “energy cleanse”.

In 2015, Sequeira introduced sound healing to patients undergoing chemotherapy in Holy Spirit Hospital in Mumbai.

“I was helping a 33-year-old man getting chemotherapy for a Stage-4 tumour in his neck,” she recalls. “He used our sessions to vent his fear, resentment and negativity. It was when I felt I was making a difference.”

Experts say that there is sound bowl for each of the seven major energy nodes of the body, be it the heart, brain or thyroid which releases special frequencies to induce relaxation.

A lot of importance is given to the openness of the recipient to heal as well, says Regina Vaity, 27, a marketing professional who has been attending the sessions for mental healing after she felt bogged down and stressed in life.

“After every session I emerge more energised and relaxed. It's like a detox session for your mind and for someone like me these sessions helped in getting rid of a lot of emotional baggage.”

Matrix rhythm therapy

Developed by Dr UG Randoll in Germany, this therapy aims to regenerate cells through mechanical pulsations, which help in healing and restoring muscle and tissue. According to Randoll, the cells rhythmically vibrate in the frequency of 8-12 Hz in a healthy condition. Only when this rhythm is disturbed due to injury or stress, does it change.

“A hand-held resonator produces pulsations in the same frequency so that the rhythmic balance of the cells is restored,” says Dr Swara Moharikar, a physiotherapist associated with Matrix German Therapy Centre in Mulund, Mumbai. “People who have stress-related headaches, shoulder and back pain approach us. We also treat ligament tears or arthritis.”

Dr Swati Sanghvi, head of the advanced physiotherapy and sports rehabilitation department at Saifee Hospital, has used the therapy for Eman Ahmed Abd El Aty, the Egyptian woman who is being treated for obesity in Mumbai. “We used it for her in the initial stages to help her relax her muscles and improve their regeneration.”

The Palms Spa in Mumbai and Bangalore offers the therapy as a de-stressing package as well, where it's followed by a warm herbal compress or a Balinese massage followed by steam. “Up to 50 customers opt for the therapy a month,” says Neville Umrigar, owner of The Palms Spa.

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