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A 20-minute spa treatment with the benefits of a night's sleep

Ayurvedic treatments work overtime to help you relax while combating a number of health issues

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by [Taylor Anderson](#)

When it comes to spa treatments, I like to stick with the basics. I'm more than happy to have a massage, facial or manicure any day of the week. But anything slightly eccentric makes me feel a bit anxious - I worry I'll end up in a rash or even worse, embarrass myself. So I felt a tad apprehensive as I headed to the Ayurveda Pura Clinic in North Greenwich, London, to try out their signature treatment, the Shirodhara, which involves a steady stream of hot oil dripped onto the forehead for 25 minutes. I was certain I'd leave with a big red burn in the middle of my face.

As soon as I stepped into the Ayurveda Pura spa, though, I felt calm. Despite it being one of the hottest days of the year, the spa was cool and as the friendly therapists spoke to me in hushed tones, I decided to let go of my fears and simply enjoy what was to come.

The spa is based on the principals of Ayurveda, or an ancient holistic medical system from India with a focus on harmony with nature. It has been practised throughout the world for more than 5000 years and is revered by some as the mother of medicine, as its principals have influenced the development of Chinese, Greek, Arabic and modern medicine. Ayurveda treatments seek to bring the body into a healthy balance



Shirodhara in action

with the use of herbal remedies, specialist massages with herb-infused oils, nutritional and lifestyle advice, as well as yoga.

The treatment I was booked in for, Shirodhara, is a widely practised Ayurvedic treatment that is so relaxing, it promises to produce the same health benefits as 8-10 hours of deep sleep in less than an hour. Warm, herb-infused oil is gently poured over the forehead across the 'third eye' in a continuous stream to help regulate the stream of energy in the body. The treatment is said to regulate the hormonal system, soothe the nervous system, and strengthen immunity by inducing a state of relaxation and endorphin production.

The therapist began with a face and foot massage as she heated up the oil over a candle. Then, for 25 minutes, she gently dripped it onto my forehead. I'll be honest - the sensation took some getting used to. But once I relaxed, it soothed me into such a nice sleep-like state that when she nudged me awake, I felt like I had been snoozing for much longer than 20 minutes. After a quick wash to get the oil out of my hair, I bounced out of the spa full of energy and slept better that night than I had in weeks. If you're looking for a highly relaxing treatment, this is it.



The relaxing treatment

Zest readers have an exclusive 10% discount on all Ayurveda Pura treatments. Valid on any full price spa and beauty treatments totalling above £20. Special Offer is valid until 30 November 2011. Bookings and treatments must be completed by 30 November 2011. Not valid with any other promotional offer. To redeem, please quote code "ZEST7" when booking. Please contact the Spa on 020 8312 8383 (Option 3) or by email on Spa@AyurvedaPura.com

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