

CRANIAL SACRAL MASSAGE

THE BENEFITS TO CRANIAL SACRAL MASSAGE

Cranial sacral therapy is a gentle, noninvasive form of bodywork that addresses the bones of the head, spinal column and sacrum. The goal is to release compression in those areas which alleviates stress and pain. Cranial sacral therapy seeks to restore the natural position of the bones and can decrease stress from chronic injuries as well as provide relief from migraine headaches, neck and back pain, temporomandibular joint disorder (the inflammation of the joint that connects the lower jaw to the skull) and more. According to the National Headache Foundation, approximately 28 million Americans suffer from migraine headaches. Often, migraines are triggered or exacerbated by stress and poor sleep. In a study published in the *Annals of Behavioral Medicine*, researchers found that participants who received bodywork like Cranial Sacral Therapy had better quality sleep and fewer migraines than participants who didn't. Effects even lasted up to three weeks after therapy ended.

Another way to address pain in the head is through scalp massage, which can be extremely relaxing. "Many people don't realize we have muscles on our scalp," says Melissa Wheeler, a massage therapist and the teacher training coordinator for the National Holistic Institute in Emeryville, California. "Those muscles are responsible for making our facial expressions, and there can be a lot of tension there, especially when staring at a computer all day or when we are under a lot of stress." Not only that, but the scalp tends to get ignored on a daily basis. "It's tension we're not usually aware of," Wheeler says. "Many people feel that tension melt away when their head is massaged."