



Unconventional Wisdom

Marma treatments bring Eastern medicine to Buckhead

STORY: Jennifer Bradley Franklin

Even after a massage or lying on a beach in some far-flung locale, I never felt this relaxed. But rather than sipping a cocktail on the white sand, I'm reclining on a table in a tiny room in Brookhaven: It's a wonder, as I've had one of my most stressful weeks in recent memory. As I breathe in lavender essential oil and feel the coolness of gemstones on energy points on my neck, rib cage, head and in my hands, I realize a marma session with Gedaliah Genin, who holds a Ph.D. in Traditional Naturopathy, is unlike anything I've experienced.

While I wouldn't describe myself as an official skeptic (I write about wellness, after all), I wasn't sure what to expect from a marma session; I'd never even heard of the practice before embarking on research for this story. On the phone before our meeting, Genin described the practice and its benefits as "a bit like acupuncture, but without the needles." For me—a huge needle-phobe—that sounded just my speed.

A 5,000-year-old art of Ayurvedic medicine, marma involves a therapist working to bring calm to a patient, often with gentle touch (on chakras, or energy points on the body) and the use of tools, such as the gemstones and a tuning fork sound instrument, which provides gentle vibration on the body. "Marma helps with many conditions like stress, headaches, weight loss, digestion, sleep, hormonal balance, pain, ADD and even paralysis," Genin explains. "What I see mostly when patients come in is stress, anxiety, worry, grief and often a sense of disconnect from themselves." The initial evaluation session (45 minutes to an hour) is \$120, and subsequent sessions start at \$50 for 30 minutes; Genin likes to see patients every week or every other week.

The only therapist practicing marma in Atlanta, Genin trained at the Ayurvedic Institute in New Mexico and honed her craft in energy medicine for more than 15 years in California before opening her practice in

Atlanta. Later this year, she'll spend six weeks with Vasant Lad, a renowned Ayurvedic teacher in Pune, India. While she's a thin, stately woman with a supportive demeanor that invites open dialogue, it is her direct insightfulness that stunned me most. During my session, she asked if I had a difficult birth (as a possible cause for my frequent migraines). I didn't know the answer, but asked my mother, and sure enough, she was in labor for more than 30 hours with me. I walked away with some tips on ways to reduce stress, including practicing yoga, drinking alkaline water and regularly applying essential oils to my temples and pressure points on my wrists.

"Marma is golden in helping one feel a sense of mental clarity and self compassion," she says. "Who doesn't need some of that today?" After such a stressful week, I walked out of the Brookhaven office with a sense of calm. I'm well on my way to being a believer. ■

A marma session with Gedaliah Genin involves gemstones and sound vibrations to promote energy flow.

Photos by Sara Hanna



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