

SALT TO THE RESCUE

NIGGLING COLD AND COUGH, SEASONAL ALLERGIES, SINUSITIS, ASTHMA, ETC ARE CONDITIONS URBANITES HAVE LEARNT TO LIVE WITH. BUT WHAT IF YOU COULD GET RID OF ALL THESE BY JUST INHALING MICRO PARTICLES OF SALT? THAT'S A POSSIBILITY NOW WITH SALT THERAPY.

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A children's room at a salt therapy centre



Soft lighting helps set the mood



The salt room at Naad Wellness

SALT ISN'T JUST FOR SPRINKLING over dinner or a soothing bath anymore. It can even relieve you of ailments such as inflammation, loosen congestion and allow easier and improved breathing. It is believed to be so beneficial that some spas are devoting entire rooms to salt cave therapy. Salt therapy is catching up in India, although Europe is far ahead of the game with thousands of salt rooms spread everywhere.

So what exactly is salt therapy? Salt therapy is a natural drug-free therapy that has been practiced for over 100 years. One of the first known positive effects was noticed on Polish salt mine workers who had a very low rate of respiratory diseases. Salt therapy involves relaxing in

a salt cave or room constructed with sea salt bricks lining the walls and a looser grain of salt on the floor. The air in the room is dense with dry salt particles. A typical salt session runs from 20 to 45 minutes. In some salt rooms the lights are dimmed so you can sit back and relax in the comfort of a massage chair. Some like to read, whilst others enjoy a period of quiet rest and relaxation. At the salt therapy room at Naad Wellness in Sonipat the walls are made of bricks of Himalayan pink salt while the ceiling too is covered with white salt. Aside from making the rooms look hugely Instagrammable, the soft golden lighting from the Himalayan salt helps set the mood of the treatment. The peaceful music and comfortable

LITE BITE FOODS



Kids playing at Salt Escape



DOS AND DON'TS WHILE UNDERGOING SALT THERAPY

- Wear comfortable clothing to ensure a relaxing session.
- Drink one or two glasses of water before entering a salt cave.
- No food or water is allowed in the salt cave. If there is a medical condition that demands the use of water during the session, it is provided outside the salt cave.
- Be heedful of salt cave interiors as they are delicate.

lounge chairs help to deeply relax the mind and body. The atmosphere inside Salt Escape, a salt spa in Mumbai, mimics a natural salt mine or cave where micro particles of salt are constantly dispersed into the air. The size of the particles vary according to the ailment e.g. for respiratory issues the particle size is small enough to be absorbed in the lungs and for skin conditions the flakes are large enough to be absorbed by the surface cells. The spa room has over 2.5 tons of sieved soft salt on the floor and walls. These are more for aesthetic purpose as the main therapy is offered through the micro salt particles released in the air. "The salt that is used is very different from table salt. It is 99.5 percent pure NaCl (Sodium Chloride) and is pharmaceutical grade salt, free from any impurities," says Jamsheed Mehta, Director, Salt Escape.

A typical session lasts for 60 minutes and all you have to do is just sit back on the red lounge chairs and breathe normally. Dim lighting and soft music that sounds like waves help to calm nerves and help believe that you are at the beach. You

could read, listen to music on your headphones, go through emails (Wifi is available), or take a nap. The children's salt room has a number of books, games, puzzles and TV programmes to keep them occupied. The effect is similar to spending time near the ocean. So what exactly are the benefits of surrounding oneself with floor-to-ceiling slabs of salt? "Salt therapy can help relieve the symptoms of a wide range of respiratory and skin conditions. The dry salt particles when inhaled deeply into the lungs help relieve inflammation, loosen congestion, and allow easier and improved breathing. Because salt is anti-bacterial and anti-inflammatory, the salt particles help to open up the airways, increase oxygen intake and cleanse the airways of smoke, dust, pollutants and other allergens," explains Dr Rishikesh Ashok, Chief Ayurveda consultant, Naad Wellness. In addition to breathing in the salt, the dry salt particles also land on the skin and help relieve symptoms of sore, flaky, red and irritated skin often associated with psoriasis and eczema. Additional benefits are reduced stress and headaches with better sleep patterns. "I have been living with acute rhinitis and sinusitis since age three. My allergies worsened in my late 20s and mornings involved continuous sneezing. I started salt therapy with 25 sessions paced out in a month. Allergies can never disappear completely, but salt therapy helped clear my nose from within as well as increase my lung capacity," says Nitasha Arora, a Mumbai-based public relations professional. Although many salt therapy clients will notice some immediate improvements, consistency is important when it comes to salt therapy. After regular salt therapy, breathing can become easier and shortness of breath, wheezing, coughing, congestion and irritated skin may gradually be alleviated, adds Dr Rishikesh.