

## Health benefits of Gua Sha

**G**uasha is a traditional Chinese healing technique in which a smooth-edged tool, which looks like a smooth surfaced crystal, is used to stroke your skin with pressure. This motion raises small, red, rash-like areas that show under your skin called petechiae.

People use guasha to treat chronic pain all over their body. They often do it alongside other complementary treatments like herbal medicine, massage, acupuncture, etc. Many have started using this technique for face structure enhancement too which also improving circulation and thus, aiding in making the skin glow.

Gua Sha has proven to be beneficial in the treatment of the following:

1. **Migraines:** A study lead by Myriam E Schwickert proved evidence that guasha can be beneficial in treatment of migraine. The study involved a 72-year-old female patient. She suffered from chronic headaches. She profited from Gua Sha during her 14-day inpatient multimodal treatment therapy. This case provides first evidence that Gua Sha is effective in the treatment of headaches but further research and clinical trials are needed to support evidence.



2. **Hepatitis:** A study conducted by Suk-tak Chan and team, proves that guasha can probably be beneficial for the treatment of hepatitis. Heme oxygenase-1 (HO-1) has demonstrated hepatoprotective effect in animal hepatitis models and using guasha up-regulates the same, thus reducing the inflammation caused due to the virus.

3. **Neck pain:** A study lead by Maximilian Braun provided evidence for guasha being beneficial for neck pain. The research concluded that neck pain severity after 1 week improved significantly better in the Guasha group compared to the control group.

## Boxing may help with Parkinson's symptoms

**A** pilot study showed that a three-month community-based boxing program significantly eased both motor and non-motor symptoms in adults with early Parkinson's disease as per the news report by Rush University Medical Centre.

"There's a lot of growing evidence about the benefits of exercise in Parkinson's," said Roshni Patel, adjunct professor of neurology at Rush Medical College and study co-author. "This is another study that highlights the importance of exercise in the treatment of Parkinson's disease. It should be a part of our treatment, just like medicines are."

The study followed 14 par-



ticipants who completed the program, which had been specially modified for people with stage two Parkinson's disease, at Gregory Boxing and Muay Thai in Des Plaines, Illinois. Stage two Parkinson's is the second of five stages of Parkinson's, marked by motor symptoms like tremors, rigidity, walking problems and poor posture affecting both sides of the

body.

Researchers evaluated patients' Parkinson's symptoms both before and after the program. They focused on the patients' motor symptoms as well as non-motor symptoms, including problems like depression, anxiety, sleep problems, pain, apathy and memory problems. The study found significant decreases in the total score for motor symptoms, as well as several non-motor symptoms, including depression, anxiety, sleep and pain.

Patel said she believed that boxing may be a good exercise choice for people with Parkinson's disease due to its range of exercise types, including cardiovascular and aerobic

exercise, balance, footwork, hand-eye coordination and strength training.

“There’s a cognitive component to it, too,” she said. “If you’re do-

ing different types of moves, and sparring, and things of that nature, then there’s a cognitive component. And it’s just fun. People really like it because it’s fun; it’s not something

really repetitive. You’re with other people. There’s a social aspect and social engagement portion of this that is good for morale.”

### Benefits of Pranayama

Yoga, which has existed for more than 5,000 years and is world-renowned for its numerous benefits, is one of the best forms of alternative therapy. Pranayama refers to various breathing exercises that come under the yoga regime and as simple as it seems, there are multiple benefits that accompany this form along with its simplicity.

1. Pranayama is said to reduce stress and anxiety significantly as per the results obtained in a 2013 study by AzadehNemati and thus elevates one’s mood positively.
2. Pranayama betters the circulation of blood in the body, improves respiratory system and aids in pathological conditions like; asthma and rhinitis as per a study conducted by Yogeshwar Ashok Tikle in 2020.
3. As per the results obtained by ÖmerÖnderÖnder in his 2019 study, pranayama not only improves the sleep cycle, but also helps with sleep disorders.
4. Pranayama can be an adjuvant and not a therapy



for the management of diabetes mellitus Type II as per the study conducted by Suman Rai et al. In 2015.

5. Pranayama along with other yoga poses when practiced regularly improves antioxidant status, immune function, and stress hormone releases according to a study conducted by Sung-Ah Lim and Kwang-Jo Cheong in 2015.

### Pressure points for Pain and Headaches

Acupressure is based on the traditional Chinese medicine practice of acupuncture. With acupressure, you put pressure on certain places on your body called acupoints. Pressing these acupoints can help your muscles relax and improve your blood flow. It can also help with many common side effects of chemotherapy, such as pain and headaches.

Pressure point LI-4 is also called Hegu or union val-

ley points. It is found on the back of your hand. It is between the base of your thumb and index (pointer) finger. Doing acupressure on this point can help with pain and headaches.

Drilling bamboo (UB2) points are located at the indentations on either side of the spot where the bridge of your nose meets the ridge of your eyebrows. Touching these pressure points can relieve headaches that are caused by eyestrain and sinus pain or pressure.

The gates of consciousness (GB20) pressure points are located at the base of the skull in the parallel hollow areas between the two vertical neck muscles. Applying a firm touch to these pressure points can help relieve headaches caused by tension in the neck.

The third eye (yin tang) point can be found between your two eyebrows where the bridge of your nose meets your forehead. Firm pressure applied to the third eye pressure point is thought to relieve eyestrain and sinus pressure that often cause headaches.



The shoulder well (GB 21) is located at the edge of your shoulder, halfway between your shoulder point and the base of your neck. Applying firm touch to the shoulder well pressure point can help relieve stiffness in your neck and shoulders, relieving neck pain and preventing headaches caused by this kind of sensation.

The science behind pressure points and headaches: there are a few studies that have looked into how massage therapy on the head and shoulders can relieve headaches which sometimes involves stimulating pressure points on the head, etc. Researchers in a 1990 study found that 10 intense massage sessions led to a lowered

occurrence, duration, and intensity of headaches. In one small study from 2002, scientists investigated how massage might help four adults who were experiencing chronic tension headaches, defined as experiencing tension headaches two to three times per week for 6 months. In the study, the massages lowered the number of headaches in each study participant within the first week of treatment. By the end of the treatment period, the average number of headaches each study participant experienced fell from almost seven headaches per week to just two per week.

### Health benefits of infrared Sauna Therapy

Whole body thermal therapy has been used for thousands of years in healing and as part of cultural and spiritual traditions, such as the Native American sweat lodge, the Turkish hammam, and the Russian banya.

“Infrared saunas have been studied for a variety of problems, such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic pain syndromes, and injuries,” says Melinda Ring, MD, the executive director of the Osher Center for Integrative Health at Northwestern University in Chicago.

A meta-analysis of nine studies on patients with heart failure, published November 2018 in the journal *Clinical Cardiology*, concluded that taking an infrared sauna for 15 minutes five times a week for

two to four weeks improved certain heart biomarkers and measures of heart function in the short-term.

A small study published in SpringerPlus on 10 men found that using a far-infrared sauna for 30 minutes after a strenuous hour-long strength training workout helped improve neuromuscular recovery.

Another small study, published in September 2020 in the *Korean Journal of Family Medicine*, concluded that infrared sauna use among 38 obese individuals improved their quality of life, less anxiety and depression.



As a review published in April 2018 in *Evidence-Based Alternative and Complementary Medicine* points out, sauna bathing might release endorphins, strongly support you to stop and practice mindfulness, reduce stress and improve relaxation, and can simply give you a break in your day for self-care that’s psychologically beneficial.

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