

Fit: Little Pieces of Summer

IT'S STILL WARM ENOUGH for sandals, but the truth is undeniable: Summer is on its way out. Goodbye, vacation-induced bliss; hello, evening dates with the computer. Want to bring back a touch of August's ease, but you've run the gamut of relaxation techniques (yoga, meditation, post-work cocktails)? You probably haven't tried these.

» **Craniosacral Massage:** Imagine that your brain is constantly producing and reabsorbing a fluid that cushions and protects it. Now imagine that the movement of the fluid creates a pulse that echoes throughout the entire body.

That's the theory behind craniosacral massage, a holistic technique that's had a small but devoted following for more than 30 years. Using an extremely light touch to feel for that pulse throughout the body, craniosacral practitioners say they can learn about and improve one's overall health.

"I can assess the patient's systematic health, how their nervous system is functioning," said **Nicole Maisel**, a practitioner at the **Washington Institute of Natural Medicine**, one of a few places in the area that offers the service.

Maisel adds that blockages or asymmetry in the body's craniosacral pulse can result in migraines or sleeping problems. If something feels off-balance, the practitioner will try to redirect the energy, though it's not quite clear how.

This all might be a little hard to visualize, but there's no doubt that it's extremely relaxing. Afterward, patients might feel more grounded and could expect to sleep better that night. But a few minutes of serenity before Washington takes over again are guaranteed.

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» **Dosha Balancing:** Are your eyes large and pleasant, or penetrating? Do you gain weight easily or have trouble keeping it on? So begins the Dosha Balancing Treatment...

Once one's type is known, the massage therapists get to work bringing out its best elements. They use dosha-specific scented oils and salts, focusing on particular pressure points throughout the body. Add in hot towels across the back and special attention paid to the tips of the toes (to release energy), and you leave with, at the very least, a euphoric glow...

» **Doctor Fish Pedicure:** At first glance, **Yvonne Hair & Nails** looks like a typical strip-mall beauty joint. But this little salon has become a crowded tourist attraction, thanks to an unusual pedicure. Tiny brown garra rufa fish — also known as "doctor fish" — nibble away dead skin cells on the feet for 15 minutes, leaving a smooth canvas for the standard buff-and-polish treatment. The fish's bites stimulate circulation and cell growth, says the staff...

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