

# Foot spas can rub you the right way

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Jim and Karen Hampton slid back into their recliners at King's Foot Spa in Merrick, feet soaking in buckets of warm water.

"I like to relax by doing nothing," said Karen, 44, clearly slipping into the zone as the technician began to massage her feet. Jim, meanwhile, pecked away on his iPad as the kinks were worked out in his neck and shoulders.

The Hamptons aren't alone in their quest for a little pampering. Over the past year, foot spas have been opening up in strip malls all over Long Island, offering patrons an affordable respite from the daily grind.

## WHAT TO EXPECT

The setting at many of these foot spas is generally the same: modest but serene decor marked by a row of padded recliners and soft music playing in the background.

Customers choose a 30- or 60-minute treatment, priced from \$15 to \$28. In most cases, the treatment begins with a foot soak in warm water (crystals or Chinese herbal blends may be added by request) as the technician massages the head, neck and shoulders before working on the feet.

Although many foot spas describe their services as "reflexology" treatments - rooted in stimulating specific areas of the feet to naturally heal glands, organs or general ailments - such designation is only valid if a nationally certified technician is performing the work, said Angelique Clarke, president of the New York State Reflexology Association. Otherwise, she said, the service is "just a foot rub."

Either way, Clarke said, those with pre-existing medical conditions (including pregnancy) should check with a doctor before their session.

## A REAL INDULGENCE

After a recent day of shoveling out from under the snow, Joey Alcarese, 51, drove from her home in Bay Shore to Sunrise Foot Spa in Levittown.

"My back and my feet ache and I am looking forward to getting my feet in the soak," said Alcarese, 51. "They spend a lot of time making you feel good. It is a great way to calm down and relax."

Alcarese, who also suffers from chronic back pain, said the frequent foot massages have given her a sense of overall wellness. "I haven't been to a chiropractor in months, and so far this is keeping me going. I feel pretty good."

Grace Yakovich, meanwhile, has become a Friday night regular along with two of her girlfriends at Tranquility Foot Relaxation Station in Bellmore.

"We go to the foot spa and then go out for drinks," said Yakovich, 40, of Bethpage. "It's wonderful."

Men, too, are finding appeal in the experience.

"I always have a lot on my mind like everybody else - kids, work - but for a while during the massage, everything just leaves your mind," said Stuart Shapiro, 58, a certified public accountant from Jericho who gets a treatment at King's Foot Spa every few weeks. His last was particularly memorable.

"The man's hands were so powerful they went through my feet," said Shapiro. "I didn't want to be a wuss and say, 'Hey wait a minute you are killing me!' . . . It was incredible."

But for some, these inexpensive foot massages are not the end-all.

Marlene Eisner, 73, of Wantagh, went to a foot spa in hopes of making her sore feet feel better - but the treatment had the reverse effect. Said Eisner, "The foot rub just made my feet hurt even more."

## King's Foot Spa

**Info:** 2158 Merrick Road, Merrick, 516-808-0829, [kingsfootspa.com](http://kingsfootspa.com)

**Cost:** \$28 for 60-minute treatment (\$5 extra for hot stone, herbal and crystal add-ins)

## Sunrise Foot Spa

**Info:** 2717 Hempstead Turnpike, Levittown, 516-520-1363

**Cost:** \$28 for 60-minute treatment, \$20 for 30 minutes; \$5 extra for hot stone

## Tranquility Foot Relaxation Station

**Info:** 2916 Merrick Rd., Bellmore, 516-578-8809

**Cost:** \$28 for 60-minute treatment, \$18 for 30 minutes (includes hot stone or herbal soak)