What Are the Health Benefits of Himalayan Salt Lamps?

*By Gail Cohen*

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*Call them new age, old age, or anything in-between, fact is, Himalayan Salt Lamps are just the latest, albeit most exotic, forms of negative ion delivery systems. There's scientific evidence floating about the holistic health community that claims a lamp or two installed in one's home can offer amazing health benefits—particularly if you suffer from a variety of bronchial and sinus conditions. Looking for a natural comparison? Imagine standing atop a mountain and breathing rarified air. Exposing oneself to a Himalayan Salt Lamp is regularly compared to this type of experience. If you need more energy and less congestion in your life, converts are convinced that you're just one Himalayan Salt Lamp away from Xanadu, so try it out if you can't afford the visit to Kathmandu.*

**History of Salt Therapy**

- Generations ago, people regularly turned to salt water, mineral water and salt mines to seek remedies for chronic congestion problems. Distances were often prohibitive—particularly for folks suffering a variety of illnesses – so clinics were established in towns around the globe to deliver salt-based remedies to sufferers. The name given to this type of rehabilitation? Speleotherapy. Salt has been used over so many centuries to dry bronchial tubes and rid sinus cavities of bacteria and microbes; it's a natural evolution to the Himalayan Salt Lamp, which uses a low-wattage light bulb and/or candlewick to disburse negative ions emanating from the salt crystals.
What to look for when you shop for Himalayan Salt Lamps

- Since the object of your search is to remedy an ailment, choose a lamp that offers the largest salt surface for ion-disbursement. Your lamp should be UL/CSA tested and approved and the best units are constructed using stainless steel or other material that won't rust or decay. Eschew lamps that show signs of being thrown together (e.g., light bulbs haphazardly shoved into the lamp's salt crystal cavity and held in place with clips). Ill-fitting bases may allow potentially dangerous water seepage. Choose a complete unit (base, salt source, bulb) in any of the soft pinks and oranges most commonly found in Himalayan Salt Lamps. The redder the color, the higher the mineral content, so if you have a choice, goes for the most intensity. Let your creative spirit be your guide when you choose from the many shapes and sizes on the market.

Why Himalayan salt has more therapeutic properties than others

- Touted as the most pollutant free form of salt on the earth, Himalayan salt contains over 84 minerals and trace elements. Found at locations so high there's not a trace of pollution or environmentally compromised material in the air, Himalayan salt is light years away from the chemically-altered salt reduced to a sodium and chloride mix most commonly found on grocery shelves and rarely touted as being beneficial to the human body. Himalayan salt, some proclaim, approximates primal oceanic elements our bodies were exposed to during the earliest stages of man's evolution, which is why it claims to have so many healing properties when negative ions are disbursed from its crystals. To add to its mystique, authentic salt crystals come from the deepest mines on earth located under the foothills of the Himalayan Mountain range. Crystals are hand-harvested from mineral deposits on salt cave floors that have been dated by geologists to the Precambrian Age.

Where to place your Himalayan Salt Lamp for maximum benefits

- Place a Himalayan Salt Lamp in your bedroom to help clear sinuses during the night when the body's defense system is most relaxed and receptive and to help intensify your sleep experience. Install one in the room in which you relax — family room, living room, and den—to freshen the air and make family time, reading and hobbies more pleasurable. Enjoy reduced fatigue—especially during that 3 p.m. slump—by putting a Himalayan Salt Lamp to work in your home office. You'll not only transform the air you're breathing, but you'll reduce the amount of electro-magnetic pollution office equipment disburses. Keep a lamp nearby when you're studying to increase your powers of
concentration when you peruse material you're learning. Meditation practitioners extol the virtues of the Himalayan Salt Lamp when used in conjunction with yoga, deep breathing and other meditative efforts. Allergy sufferers are said to benefit greatly from exposure to this clean, naturally-ionized air.

**Add a Himalayan Salt Lamp to your work environment for increased productivity**

- No official "Bring your Salt Lamp to Work Week" has been declared so you might want to institute this practice if your home lamp proves beneficial. Massage therapists are adopting Himalayan Salt Lamps as the newest in their arsenal of relaxants by installing them in treatment areas. When placed in holistic and homeopathic medical clinics and practitioner's offices, employees claim they notice a difference when they treat patients after exposure. Finally, Feng Shui masters regularly introduce a Himalayan Salt Lamps into the mix when they stage rooms to increase and enhance the amount of chi (energy) present in the air. Where's your favorite place? Enhance it with a lamp.

**Conclusions**

- Since your objective is to be exposed to as many negative ions as possible being emitted from your Himalayan Salt lamp, it bears repeating: choose one with the largest amount of exposed salt surface and select a color by the most intensity in the hue. Additionally, place the lamp as close to the person in need of the therapeutic effects as possible, because even a large lamp will only positively impact the air of people in close proximity to it — perhaps a few feet at most. As with all alternative health treatments, apply due diligence when you shop because many folks are getting on the Himalayan Salt Lamp bandwagon and not all of them are constructing these with the safety of the user in mind.