

an improvement in other typical hay fever symptoms," says Carole.

Carole Symons practises from *The Third Space Medicine* ([thethirdspace.com](http://thethirdspace.com); 0207 439 7332).

## Dry/itchy throat

### Try this: Halotherapy

Spending an hour in a 'salt cave' might sound pretty wacky, but this new therapy is said to be very effective for treating the itchy, dry throat and mucus build-up experienced by many a hay fever sufferer. Known as halotherapy, the treatment simply involves sitting inside a room where the walls and floor are coated with salt.

Particles of dry rock salt are ground up in a special machine and released into the air, which then penetrate the respiratory system, helping to clear the airways of mucus and reducing inflammation. Halotherapy has long been practised in Eastern Europe but Britain's first salt cave was opened at the Allergy and Asthma Drug-Free Treatment Centre in Wandsworth, south London, earlier this year.

Owner Sofia Benke says: "Salt therapy can be used for relaxation, preventative or therapeutic purposes. It is 100 per cent natural, safe and drug-free." A session in the salt cave lasts for an hour and a course of between five and 20 sessions is recommended. Comfortable armchairs are provided, whilst low lighting and relaxing music help to make the experience all the more soothing. The first introductory session is free and further sessions cost £35 each. Visit [saltcave.co.uk](http://saltcave.co.uk) for more information or call 020 8870 6006.

## Banish hay fever fast!

We take a look at three top natural hay fever products

**The Cisca Saltpipe**, £29.99, contains tiny salt crystals which, when inhaled, are said to soothe respiratory disorders such as hay fever.

**HayMax**, £6.80 for 5ml, is an organic drug-free balm which is applied to the nostrils to trap pollen and soothe a sore nose.

**The Qu-Chi band**, £12.95, is an elasticated band with a pressure button which stimulates an acupressure point in the crook of the elbow thought to ease the symptoms of hay fever.



## Under pressure

The following acupressure points can be massaged to provide some relief from the symptoms of hay fever, says Traditional Chinese Medicine practitioner Laurie Ayres ([easternhealingarts.co.uk](http://easternhealingarts.co.uk); 020 8348 5552).

- For itchy eyes, a runny nose and a headache, massage the tender point on the back of the hand in the web between the thumb and index finger.
- If you have a runny nose, try massaging the points at the side of the nose level with the nostril, in the groove that is formed when you smile.
- To clear the eyes, nose and head, massage the points on the back of the neck in the dips at each side of the base of the skull.
- For itchy eyes, massage the points at the outside of the eyes, just on the bone which



forms the eye socket.

- To clear the nose and head, massage the point in between the eyebrows.

## Foggy head

### Try this: Aromatherapy

A number of essential oils can help to relieve the foggy head or loss of concentration experienced by hay fever sufferers. Aromatherapist Kate Mullis recommends the following:

- **Rosemary** – This has a pronounced effect on the brain and central nervous system and is an excellent oil for promoting mental awareness.
- **Basil** – Often used to clear the mind, especially from mental fatigue, and give clarity of thought.
- **Peppermint** – This is an excellent oil for headaches and migraine as well as sinus congestion and general respiratory disorders.

### Methods of application:

Try blending one or two essential oils into a carrier oil (such as sweet almond, grapeseed or sunflower) and massaging into the temples, neck and sinuses. This can boost the circulation

and help relieve congestion. As a general rule one to three drops of essential oil should be used to every 5ml of carrier oil.

Inhalations are also effective, but care should be taken with those who suffer with allergies. Add about five drops to a bowl of boiling water then cover the head and bowl with a towel and deeply inhale the steam for 30 seconds to a minute initially, to ensure there is no reaction. The time can be increased gradually to a couple of minutes.

While the oils suggested above are recommended for use with hay fever, some essential oils may not be appropriate with other medical conditions. Check with a qualified aromatherapy practitioner to ensure that the essential oils chosen are appropriate in your particular case.

Kate Mullis is based at *Kilver Court Wellness Centre* in Somerset ([kilvercourt.com](http://kilvercourt.com); 01749 340 424).

