

The Big 'Chill': Relax and rejuvenate in time for the holiday season in Madison!

By Jen Matteis



That first brisk chill is in the air and leaves are crunching underfoot. It's time to prepare ourselves, mentally and physically, for the impending business of the holiday season by first taking a moment for ourselves. In Madison, that might be accomplished by hitting one of several day spas or by taking in a movie at the downtown cinema. Below are a few ways to kick back, relax, and rejuvenate your body and mind for the upcoming holidays.

Relax

For many, relaxation means a professional massage to let out physical and emotional tension. In Madison, you can put yourself in the care of licensed massage therapists Dianne Berg of Heart in Hands, Angel Kane of Achie Therapeutic Massage, or Anne-Marie Mulholland of Celtic Healing Arts. Berg offers Swedish massage along with energy therapy, while Mulholland's goals are to treat your condition and also provide "a little experience of the warmth and spirit of the culture of Ireland," according to her website.

At the Mercy by the Sea Retreat and Conference Center, "A Day of Mindfulness" offers a spectacular opportunity to recharge—the next is on Saturday, Oct. 22. The full-day program provides an introduction to a variety of mindfulness and meditation practices, with silence observed for much of the day.

"This is not only a place to be quiet but to go a little deeper and do a little inner work," said Anne Simpkinson, director of communications at the Mercy Center. "I think that these days things are going so fast and life is so loud, that it's really good to know of a place where you can stop, and basically listen very deeply to yourself and reconnect with things that are meaningful to you."

At Mercy Center, people of all faiths participate in spiritual retreats, centering prayer groups, programs on bereavement, and more. It's a place to re-center yourself and refocus, such as through the "School of the Second Half of Life," where individuals in their 40s or older determine what they want to achieve in the next phase of their life. Mandala making, nature journaling, and—very popular according to Simpkinson—full moon labyrinth walks round out the many ways to recharge at Mercy Center.

For me, keeping it simple is the best way to relax. Madison is well-equipped for that, too. Catch a fall flick at Madison Art Cinemas, or select a book to disappear into at R.J. Julia Booksellers.

Rejuvenate

It's also important to keep your levels energy up, especially if you're like me and find that chilly weather slows you down. Bring your exercise routine indoors for the winter with Pilates or yoga. Both improve flexibility and build strength. For Pilates, choose from IM=X Shoreline Pilates, Madison Center Pilates, and Pilates Barn. There's also True Bikram Yoga, which offers morning and evening yoga classes to fit your schedule. Looking good can also help you feel renewed. The Healing Room on Wall Street offers "healing for the mind, body, and soul," with customized treatments that include everything from Reiki, meditation, and aromatherapy to facials, manicures, and pedicures. At Madison Med Spa, Dr. Susan O'Malley performs many rejuvenating procedures—all are nonsurgical.

"I help ladies look younger without surgery," O'Malley said. "The goal for them is the same as my goal for myself, which is to look like a more relaxed, less tired version of you." Their most popular services include Botox, Juvederm, and Juvederm Voluma, a dermal filler designed especially for the cheeks.

"The cheeks are where you lose the volume; when we put the volume back in your cheeks you look like you used to look," said O'Malley, who noted that anyone can stop by for a free consultation. Rejuvenating treatments are also available at Aria DermSpa in Madison, as well as the Madison Beach Hotel's Sounds of the Sea Spa.

Finally, kick back at one of the many fall events in town. The Madison Chamber is holding its seventh annual "Scarecrows Invade Madison" event during October, with scarecrows made by local businesses on display throughout the downtown. Winners are announced during the town's annual Trunk or Treat on Monday, Oct. 31 on the Green. For something a little different, check out the third annual Bed Race on the Madison Green on Saturday, Oct. 22.

Whether it's taking a stroll on the beach at Hammonasset Beach State Park (it's free now!) or curling up with a book in your favorite reading nook, here's to finding a way to focus on yourself during the spectacular fall season.