

HEALTH

CURE FOR A STRESSED-OUT NATION: CHEAP MASSAGES

Getting your back rubbed can cost \$100 or more—which in itself can induce stress. Massage Envy, a franchisor based in Scottsdale, offers a low-cost work-over that has hit a nerve with Americans. The chain operates like a health club where members receive a massage as part of their \$49 monthly membership—less than half the cost at a high-end spa. The company reports that it has grown to 648 locations in 43 states from just 108 in 2006. “People understand that massage helps them address serious stress issues,” says CEO David Humphrey. Marketing hype? Maybe not. A new study by Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles found that just 45 minutes of deep Swedish massage results in a significant decrease in the stress hormone cortisol. —*Sheridan Prasso*