Himalayan Salt Lamp Benefits + Real vs. Fake Salt Lamps

What on Earth is a Himalayan salt lamp? Himalayan sea salt is believed to be composed of dried remnants of the original, primal sea dating back to planet Earth’s creation. I’ve talked before about the health benefits of Celtic sea salt and Himalayan salt, but what if I told you that there are actually lamps made from Himalayan salt?

It’s true! They’re called salt lamps or salt rock lamps, and yes, they’re actually made from pink Himalayan salt and are able to light your surroundings — but they’re really not bought for their moderate lighting abilities. There are major claims that a Himalayan salt lamp does much more than provide you with a pretty glow. Himalayan salt lamp benefits supposedly include decreasing air pollution, negative ions and electrosmog caused by electronic devices in addition to symptom reduction for people suffering from from asthma, allergies and other illnesses.

Are there really healthy Himalayan salt lamp benefits, or are they just a glowing, earthy addition to your home? And how can you tell if your salt lamp is the real deal or a fake? I’m glad you asked.

What Is a Himalayan Salt Lamp and Does It Work?

Real Himalayan salt lamps are actually solid blocks of Himalayan salt that have been hand-carved. Deep underground mines in Khewra, Pakistan, located on the western edge of the Himalayan Mountains, are the only source of true Himalayan pink salt. The color of Himalayan salt lamps ranges from a light pink to a pinkish orange with the hue a result of the mineral concentration. Within the hollowed-out center of this block of salt is a light bulb that emits both light and heat. A salt lamp is not a lamp at all if it doesn’t have the light and heat source within it. Without that, it’s just a block of salt.

Salt is hygroscopic, which means it attracts water molecules to itself. Being the big hunk of salt that it is, a Himalayan salt lamp is believed to work by attracting the water molecules. This water vapor can also carry indoor air pollutants like mold, bacteria and allergens. Once the water vapor comes in contact with the salt lamp, the pollutants are believed to remain trapped in the salt. Since the lamp is heated, the salt dries out and is able to continue the cycle of attracting water vapor and pollutants, releasing the water vapor back into the air but holding on to the health-hazardous pollutants.

Just looking at the glow of a Himalayan salt lamp can be calming, which is therapeutic in and of itself, but what about the other health claims? To date, there aren’t any scientific studies focusing specifically on Himalayan salt lamp benefits. However, there is good reason to believe that a real Himalayan salt lamp may provide some health benefits given the other salt research out there as well as many encouraging user testimonies.
According to the Lung Institute, salt (in general) has the following health properties: (1)

- Antibacterial
- Anti-inflammatory
- Loosens excessive mucus and speeds up mucociliary transport
- Removes pathogens (ie., airborne pollen)
- Reduces IgE level (immune system oversensitivity)

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**Himalayan Salt Lamp Benefits**

1. **Air Purification**

Out of all of the possible Himalayan salt lamp benefits, air purification is often the quintessential goal for most buyers. Air-purifying house plants are often bought for this reason as well. There is no doubt that cleaner air in your home is better for your health.

According to research published by the American Society for Horticultural Science, the main component of air pollution or smog is ozone, which is most commonly linked with outdoor air, but it also makes its way into indoor living spaces like your home or office. (2)

As I described earlier, a Himalayan salt lamp by its salty nature is able to easily attract water vapor to it. With this water vapor often comes indoor air pollutants, including allergens, mold and bacteria. When the water hits the heated lamp, the salt traps the pollutants but releases the water vapor. This cycle repeats while the lamp is on and warm. By removing pollutants from the air, the salt lamp leaves you with cleaner, healthier air.

2. **Reduction in Electromagnetic Radiation and Airborne Infections**

So many things around us nowadays release electromagnetic radiation in the form of unhealthy positive ions — things like your cell phone, computer and television, just to name a few. This electromagnetic radiation (EM), aka electrosmog, may be invisible but is believed to cause some serious long-term effects. Constant exposure to EM radiation is known primarily to cause fatigue, increase stress and weaken the immune system.

There have been more than 2,000 studies exposing the toxic effects of electromagnetic fields from all sources. Scientists have come to the scary conclusion that “chronic exposure to even low-level radiation (like that from cell phones) can cause a variety of cancers, impair immunity, and contribute to Alzheimer’s disease and dementia, heart disease, and many other ailments.” (3)

An awesome way to increase exposure to negative ions is to spend more time in nature, especially around water. Himalayan salt lamps are said to emit negative ions in small amounts and cancel out positive ones. By neutralizing electromagnetic radiation, they may help reduce the
negative health effects of harmful electrosmog. Balancing positive and negative ions also may help reduce airborne infections. (4)
HIMALAYAN SALT LAMP BENEFITS

1. AIR PURIFICATION
   By attracting water vapor, the lamp also traps indoor air pollutants including allergens, mold, and bacteria.

2. REDUCTION IN ELECTROMAGNETIC RADIATION & AIRBORNE INFECTIONS
   Salt lamps balance positive and negative ions, which reduces radiation and airborne infection.

3. EASES ASTHMA & ALLERGY SYMPTOMS
   Himalayan salt is used in inhalers to bring relief to asthma and allergy sufferers.
3. Eases Asthma and Allergy Symptoms

Himalayan salt is now used in inhalers to bring relief to asthma and allergy sufferers. Salt therapy is also used to treat chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) patients. COPD is a debilitating and degenerative lung disease characterized by the restriction of airflow in and out of the lungs. According to the Lung Institute, “Some people have found salt therapy to be an effective option for relieving symptoms of lung disease, resulting in easier breathing.”

Numerous clinical studies have demonstrated highly impressive salt therapy benefits, including helping:

- 85 percent of mild and moderate asthma cases
- 75 percent of severe asthma cases
- 97 percent of chronic bronchitis, bronchiectasis and cystic fibrosis cases

Salt therapy for breathing problems is said to have begun with Siberian salt mine workers in the later 1800s who had a surprisingly small number of respiratory problems compared to people around them with less salty professions. Nowadays, you can find salt caves at various spas, and this salt cave experience is also trying to be re-created with the invention of salt pipe inhalers. Salt lamps are another smaller-scale way to bring the salt cave experience (and hopefully the health benefits) home.

4. Mood Booster and Sleep Promoter

Another possible health benefit of the Himalayan salt lamp is a reduction in anxiety symptoms. According to color therapy as well as general human enjoyment, the warm pinkish to orange glow of the salt lamp is a calming and happy presence in a room. Additionally, as a real piece of nature, Himalayan salt gives off negative ions like a waterfall (but in much smaller amounts). Since Himalayan salt lamps release negative ions into the air, they can help reduce anxiety and also encourage a relaxing atmosphere for sleep. Many people like to keep salt lamps in their bedrooms for their calming effect.

Why are negative ions so great? You can’t taste, smell or see them, but they’re some impressive molecules. Once negative ions reach the bloodstream, they’re believed to produce biochemical reactions that increase levels of the mood chemical serotonin, helping alleviate depression, relieve stress and boost daytime energy.

How to Tell a Real vs. Fake Himalayan Salt Lamp

If you’re in the market for a Himalayan salt lamp, you want to do your homework to make sure you choose the best option possible. There are said to be several ways to tell if you have a salt lamp that’s the real deal. Unfortunately, some of these characteristics will only be made known
to you if you read reviews very carefully or, the less desirable scenario, once you’ve been actually using it in your home for a while (so hang on to that receipt!).

Top signs that your Himalayan salt lamp is a fake include: (9)

1. Poor Return Policy

Real Himalayan salt lamps are made of salt so it’s not surprising that they’re fragile objects. A good manufacturer knows this and has return policies that are flexible since there could be some damage in transit. If a salt lamp’s maker is extremely strict (like a “NO RETURNS” policy), then it makes you wonder if it’s a scam operation. This might not necessarily be the case, but some fake retailers have been known not to permit any returns because they know they’re not giving you the real thing.

2. Highly Durable

As I just said, Himalayan salt lamps are inherently fragile. Once you own one, you definitely need to be careful not to drop it or bang it into other solid objects because the salt crystal can be damaged very easily. This is actually a rare time when durability is not desirable. If your salt lamp is unaffected by a collision, it could likely be an imposter.

3. Very Bright Light

If all you’re looking for is a bright light source, a salt lamp is not the way to go. Due to its high content of numerous minerals, a Himalayan salt lamp gives off light in an irregular and muffled manner. A true salt lamp does not give off enough light to completely illuminate a room. If yours does, then it’s most likely not the real deal.

4. Inexpensive White Crystal

You’ll typically find Himalayan salt lamps that give off a warm pinkish or orange hue. There is such a thing as a white Himalayan salt lamp, but it’s extremely rare and a lot more pricey than the colored ones. So if you find a white salt crystal lamp that’s not substantially more expensive than the pink/orange versions, steer clear because this is likely an imposter.

5. No Mention of Pakistan

Deep underground mines in Khewra, Pakistan, are the only source of true Himalayan pink salt. If you’re questioning whether you have a real Himalayan salt lamp, look for mention of Pakistan as the salt crystal’s country of origin. You can also ask the lamp’s maker about the salt’s origin, keeping in mind that it may list the country of origin as the location of the lamp’s assembly.

6. Moisture-Resistant
By its inherent nature, salt is an absorber of water. If your salt lamp has no problem being near a moisture source (like a shower), this is a good sign that you own a fake. A true salt lamp is prone to some sweating when exposed to moisture.

7. Not Experiencing Any Benefits

If you’re sure that you bought the appropriately sized salt lamp for the space you’re using it in and you’ve also been exposed to it on a regular basis and don’t see any positive effects whatsoever, then you may not have a real Himalayan salt lamp.

Why Himalayan Salt Is Good for You

Himalayan pink salt is an extremely pure, hand-mined salt that comes from ancient sea salt deposits in the Punjab region of Pakistan. It’s believed to be the purest form of salt available. As a pink salt, Himalayan salt is rich in iron, calcium, potassium, magnesium and copper. All these nutrients are actually what give Himalayan salt its pretty pink color. (10)

When ingested, real Himalayan salt is said to:

- Make drinking water alkaline water
- Provide essential minerals and trace minerals
- Balance the body’s pH
- Normalize metabolic functions
- Be readily absorbed by your body’s cells
- Increases energy flow and circulation
Signs of a Fake Himalayan Salt Lamp

1. Poor Return Policy
   As fragile objects, a good manufacturer has return policies that are flexible since there could be some damage in transit.

2. Highly Durable
   If your salt lamp is unaffected by a collision then it could likely be an imposter.

3. Very Bright Light
   A true salt lamp is not going to give off enough light to completely illuminate a room.
Himalayan Salt Lamp Buying Tips and Precautions

When it comes to buying Himalayan pink salt lamps, take into consideration the size of the room in which you wish to use your lamp. The coverage of a salt lamp is determined by the size of the salt crystal. For the average-sized bedroom, a smaller lamp is usually adequate, but if you’re looking to use it in a larger area like your living room, you want to go bigger. On average, to effectively cleanse the air of a space, you need one pound of salt rock for every 16 square feet (four feet by four feet) area. If needed, you can always use multiple salt lamps spread out in a single room.

Salt is hygroscopic, which means it absorbs water. This is why Himalayan pink salt crystals start to melt with prolonged exposure to high humidity. Thus, you should keep them away from household moisture sources like showers, dishwashers and laundry washing machines. It can be dangerous if the salt begins leaking onto the lamp holder. To avoid buying a substandard lamp holder, purchase a salt lamp that’s firmly connected to the base. It’s also ideal to find a salt lamp that has UL certification, which is an extra measure of safety assurance. (11)

As with any lamp, always practice proper fire safety, including keeping it in a place where a child cannot pull it down or knock it over.

Final Thoughts on a Himalayan Salt Lamp

So far, scientists don’t seem to be too interested in the therapeutic glow of Himalayan salt lamps. Hopefully some specific studies on the benefits of salt lamps will be conducted soon, but in the meantime, the other salt research that’s out there is quite impressive and encouraging.

If you’re looking to make a Himalayan salt lamp the newest addition to your home or office, just make sure you get the real thing. If you buy a true Himalayan salt lamp and use it regularly, you may just notice easier breathing, a calmer demeanor and better sleep in your near future.