

The Benefits of Facial Massage

Natalia Doran

A well-performed facial massage is a wonderful treat that will help relieve puffiness and improve skin tone and complexion. Other physical benefits of a facial massage include stimulation of the skin's immune mechanisms, firming of weak muscles, tissue regeneration, and antiaging effects. There are also many mental benefits, including stress relief and a greater awareness of the body-mind connection.

How the Skin Moves Nutrients

In order to fully understand the benefits of facial massage, it is helpful to understand the anatomy and physiology of the skin.

layer, the epidermis, does not have a direct blood supply--all nutrients, water, and oxygen needed to feed these cells must come from the dermis. If nutrients are lacking in the dermis, the skin cells will be undernourished.

To move from the dermis to the epidermis, nutrients must cross the basement membrane that joins these two layers. Small molecules, such as water, oxygen, carbon dioxide, and glycerol, can cross this membrane by diffusion. Larger molecules must cross by facilitated diffusion (being carried across by proteins). Nutrients or other substances that exist in lower concentrations in the dermis than in the epidermis must be moved into the



There are many physical and mental benefits to facial massage.

We all know that skin is a complex organ consisting of a number of specialized cells. Its functions include pH and temperature regulation, and sebum and sweat production. The condition of the integumentary system (the skin and its components) depends on homeostasis and the coordination of circulatory, nerve, muscular, endocrine, and lymphatic systems. The skin's outer

epidermis by active transport. Water, an effective transportation system, can pass through membranes in response to changes in ion concentration. Hormones and mechanical movements, such as massage, can regulate the rate at which water passes through the membrane.

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What about absorption from the outside of the skin into the underlying tissues of the body? Skin permits absorption, but the tightly located coenocytes and lipids between cells make absorption limited. When products are applied to the skin, certain elements play a role in the absorption rate, including the features of the skin, changes in skin barrier function, size of product molecules, and the type of delivery system used in the product.

Connective tissue also plays a role in how the skin moves nutrients. All substances that are transported in the blood must pass through the connective tissue to reach the cells or to be removed as waste. Connective tissue contains cells that produce collagen and elastin, and a half-gel, half-fluid binding mass called the ground substance, which surrounds every cell. Through the ground substance, nutrients are transported from the blood capillaries to the cell, and waste products are moved from the cells to the capillaries. The condition of the ground substance will affect the diffusion rate of nutrients and waste products, creating the cells' environment. This environment can be clean and healthy, or polluted with metabolic wastes.

Applying pressure and movement through massage can help to normalize the function and composition of the connective tissue, and free it of harmful substances.

Lymphatic Massage

The body's lymphatic system is responsible for draining away the debris from our cells. It transports water out of the tissue, along with waste substances: bacteria, cell fragments, immobile cells, inorganic substances, large molecular fats, proteins, and viruses. This process is constantly happening all over the body, as the lymph cleanses each cell and drains away the debris in a circulatory system powered only by breathing and muscle movements. With mechanical manipulation such as massage, the lymph system can move up to 10 times more fluid than it normally does.

Manual lymph drainage (MLD), which was developed by Emil Vodder, PhD, is a type of gentle massage that accelerates the natural circulation of the lymph and encourages its movement away from

swollen areas. MLD is firm, but gentler than ordinary massage. Because the lymph vessels are all interlinked, lymph flow will be affected in the entire region of the area being massaged. Other types of lymphatic massage include lymph drainage therapy, developed by Bruno Chikly, MD.

A facial massage that involves lymphatic work improves circulation to the skin, which increases nutrition to the skin cells and speeds up the filtering of water in and out of cells, removing waste products. The vasodilation of the surface capillaries during massage improves skin color, and facial massage also improves elasticity and suppleness of the skin. With facial massage, the skin becomes more balanced, less prone to breakouts, and more resistant to infection.

Natalia Doran, MD, is the founder and president of

the International Skin Beauty Academy in Illinois. She has a medical degree in dermatology and a master's degree in educational psychology.



Pamper yourself, and do a good thing for your body too!

Are Your Candles Safe?

How to Choose Toxin-free Flames

Glynnis Osher

There is nothing like the inviting glow of a candle to make us feel relaxed, guide us into a meditative state, or harmonize the ambiance of a room. With all these life-enhancing attributes, it is troubling to think that many candles are toxic and doing more harm than good--but that may be the case.

The Problem

Most candles today are made from paraffin wax, a petroleum by-product that emits toxic fumes and soot into the air. There are up to eleven known carcinogenic compounds in paraffin candles that are considered toxic air agents by the state of California. Burning these candles can cause harm to the heart, lungs, circulatory, and nervous systems, especially a concern for young children, the elderly, and those with asthma or other already established respiratory problems. In addition, the burning of the fragrant oils in scented candles can create significant air pollution, as well.

Another possible hazard: wicks. While U.S. candle makers voluntarily agreed 25 years ago to prohibit lead wicks, some imported candles may still contain lead. Ensure you're burning cotton wicks only.

The Solution

The good news is, you can still enjoy burning candles because there are safe and healthy alternatives. Conscious candle choices include beeswax and the increasingly popular soy wax. Unlike petroleum, soy is a sustainable and renewable resource. Soy wax is a vegetable by-product that is biodegradable and nontoxic. Many candle enthusiasts prefer soy candles because they burn clean and release very little or no soot into the air. Also, because soy wax is water soluble, clean up is easy and containers can be easily washed and reused. Another benefit of soy wax is the cooler burning temperature, making for a much longer burning candle.

For more information visit the website www.themysticmasala.com.



Candles are for relaxation, not toxification.

Shea Butter

For Your Complexion and More

Shelley Burns, N.D.

Shea butter comes from the nut of the shea tree (pronounced shay) found in the tropics of Africa, primarily West Africa. It offers many benefits as a topical moisturizer for skin and hair, and improves other skin problems and appearance.

As well as providing relief from minor dermatological conditions like eczema, lesser burns, and acne, shea butter can be used as a natural sunscreen and for stretch-mark prevention during pregnancy. Other benefits include the evening out of skin tone, reducing blemishes, and restoring skin elasticity.

Shea butter easily penetrates the skin, allowing skin to breathe without clogging pores. It contains high concentrations of linoleic acid, which provide skin protection at a cellular

level, as well as vitamins A, E, and F, which protect against premature wrinkles. Vitamin F in shea butter also soothes rough, dry, or chapped skin.

Healing though it may be, shea butter undergoes a rigorous path in its journey from overseas to the faces and bodies of your clients. The fruit from the shea tree is cultivated, cracked, grilled, pounded, and boiled. The shea butter is then scooped out of the nut and left to cool.

Properties of shea butter include unsaponifiables--substances that cannot decompose into acids, salts, or alcohol. For that reason, shea butter is extremely absorbable, even more so than soybean and avocado oils.

There are three types of shea butter

extraction and just two of the three end products of these extractions should be used. Unrefined shea butter in its pure form is yellow. Refined shea butter is processed but still contains many of its natural components. Either is fine to use. Highly refined shea butter may well have lost its healing properties and can include such solvents as hexane, which may cause nerve damage. It is pure white and should be avoided. Another note of caution: shea butter is not recommended for people with nut and latex allergies, and some experts also discourage its use by people with chocolate allergies.

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