

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.

lymphatic systems. The skin's outer 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

Happiness is not a state to arrive at, but a manner of traveling.

-Margaret Runbeck



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

concentrations in the dermis than in the epidermis must be moved into the 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

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which water passes through the membrane.

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.

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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!

Nuking Food Safely

How To Microwave with Care

The microwave oven--that ubiquitous appliance now found in every American kitchen--is, for the most part, safe. However, microwaves can come with some specific health risks--including microwave exposure and chemical contamination--if they are old, not used properly, or used with non-microwavable dishes or coverings. Fortunately, following a few guidelines can help you effectively avoid microwave leakage and prevent chemical exposure, while using your microwave safely and soundly.

Avoid Leakage

- Ensure a tight seal by regularly cleaning the door seal with water and a mild detergent.

- Avoid microwaves that have loose doors. If the door doesn't close tightly, don't use it.

- Keep your distance, standing at least two feet away from, and to the side of,

operating microwaves.

Prevent Exposure

- Avoid heating food in plastic or Styrofoam, which contain plasticizers. These leach into food during microwaving, creating xenoestrogens--substances that mimic hormones in the body and have been associated with birth defects, developmental delays, low sperm counts in men, early puberty in girls, and an increased risk of certain cancers.

- Steer clear of plastic wraps to cover your food during microwaving. Most of these also contain plasticizers that can leach into food, especially if they come in contact with hot, high-fat food.

- Use microwaveable glass cookware to ensure safe microwaving.

Microwave ovens are part of today's cook world and offer certain conveniences --there's little chance of escaping that

fact. But by taking a few simple precautions, you can ensure microwave cooking adds to your life--not take away from it.



A few simple tips will ensure microwave safety.

Probiotics for Skin Health

Trust Your Gut on This One!

Shelley Burns, N.D.

Digestive health plays an important role in how skin appears on the surface. When digestion is not working optimally, it allows toxins to be reabsorbed in the body instead of being eliminated. The body then mounts a state of emergency as it's overwhelmed by toxins, some of them bad bacteria. These manifest directly on the surface for all the world to see, in the form of wrinkles, blotchiness, skin rashes, and acne.

This is where probiotics come into play. Probiotics contain potentially beneficial bacteria found in the digestive tract--what some call good gut bacteria. They help strengthen the digestive system but they also play an important role in skin health. Probiotics consist of *Lactobacillus acidophilus*, *Lactobacillus*

bulgaricus, and *Bifidobacterium bifidum*. They have anti-inflammatory, anti-pathogenic, and antiallergenic properties and can be used prophylactically and therapeutically.

There have been many studies showing benefits of probiotics to skin health. For example, there's a correlation between an imbalance of good and bad bacteria and the onset of acne. When bringing natural bacteria back into balance with a probiotic intervention, acne improves, in some studies, as much as 50 percent of the time.

There is no recommended daily intake for probiotics, but good food sources include buttermilk, kefir, miso, tempeh, yogurt, and other fermented

foods. Supplements are generally higher in potency and are used for therapeutic purposes in treating irritable bowel syndrome, Crohn's disease, colitis, and many other conditions.

While probiotics are essential for healthy skin and digestive health, there are many other appealing benefits to encourage their use, such as strengthening the immune system, replacing good bacteria after a course of antibiotics, and contributing to general health and well-being.

One note: Some probiotic supplements come from dairy sources and may not be suitable for individuals with dairy allergies or sensitivities.

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