

NATURAL HEALTH



CLEANSE KIT

4/07

De-stress and detox at home with these 5 spa treatments for body and mind.

BY MARYANN HAMMERS
PHOTOGRAPHY BY ALEXANDRA GRABLEWSKI

Until recently, a detox spa treatment meant being cocooned in a cozy Mexican temescal or plastic-wrapped in chocolate--anything to raise your body temperature so you'd sweat out the bad stuff. The incubator effect worked to make you feel better but didn't always affect the way you looked. Now savvy spa goers say they want to look and feel better. Spas are responding with a new generation of treatments that combine purifying and cleansing with beautifying benefits. "Fluff and pampering is over," says certified skincare therapist Annet King, director of training and development for the International Dermal Institute, which provides advanced education for skin professionals. "Clients want to see changes." Although our bodies have mechanisms for flushing out toxins, spa treatments can help the process along. "Organs such as the kidneys, liver, and skin all have detoxifying roles," says Sharon Norling, M.D., a Westlake Village, Calif., mind-body specialist who is board-certified in holistic medicine and acupuncture. "Spa treatments support that natural cleansing process by increasing circulation and stimulating skin renewal."

To bring the spa to you, we talked to spa directors, physicians, and aestheticians about the latest treatments and products that will cleanse and rejuvenate body and soul.

Facials

CLEANSING, EXTRACTING, exfoliating, and moisturizing are all good detoxifying strategies--and the basis of most facial rituals. "Steaming and extraction are helpful for removing blackheads and whiteheads," says Hema Sundaram, M.D., the Washington, D.C.-based author of *Face Value: The Truth About Beauty--and a Guilt-Free Guide to Finding It* (Rodale, 2003). "Antioxidants can be used during a facial to calm inflammation. Facials also help relieve stress, thus reducing production of free radicals."

The Alpha-beta Peel Facial at the Four Seasons Scottsdale at Troon North (www.fourseasons.com/scottsdale) in Arizona, includes a combination of alpha and beta hydroxy acids. By "peeling" away surface skin cells, these acids improve skin texture and firmness and can help reduce the appearance of fine lines, wrinkles, sun damage, brown marks, and roughness. "They stimulate the skin's natural exfoliation process," Sundaram says.

Facials can be both relaxing and rejuvenating, says Laurie Steelsmith, N.D., a naturopathic physician and licensed acupuncturist in Honolulu. "Not only do they help remove toxins, but they also help us decompress from our busy lives."

Take It Home (previous spread, from left)

- The M.D. Forte line of lotions, cleansers, gels, and creams include potent glycolic and hydroxy acids to diminish lines and wrinkles. Skin Rejuvenation Lotion II (\$60; www.mdforte.com) with alpha hydroxy acid and vitamins A and E nourishes skin.

- The Healing Garden Organics products are packed with organic ingredients such as aloe to moisturize, wheat proteins to firm, and vitamins A, C, and E for a restorative at-home facial. Try the reFortify Anti-Wrinkle Cream (\$14; at drugstores) to give aging skin a boost.

- Naturopathica's all-natural blends make them a popular spa pick. The Cleansing Facial Scrub (\$52; www.naturopathica.com) is a perfect first step for any kind of facial treatment, containing jojoba beads to exfoliate and oat beta glucan to help moisturize skin.

Body Scrubs

"Skin is a self-renewing organ, with dead cells continuously being shed from the surface," says Sundaram, who has offices in Maryland and Virginia. "But as we age, our skin becomes less efficient at it." Exfoliating spa treatments, such as body, back, foot, and leg scrubs, slough off dead cells to reveal smooth new skin underneath.

Many spas incorporate indigenous ingredients--from crushed conch shells to coffee--that boost a treatment's effectiveness while infusing it with local flavor. At the Hyatt Regency Tamaya Resort & Spa (www.tamaya.hyatt.com) in New Mexico, scrubs include ground blue cornmeal and anasazi beans. The Ojai Valley Inn & Spa (www.ojairesort.com) taps the rich agricultural resources of the central California coast by adding locally grown, organic ingredients such as ground pumpkin seeds, lavender buds, or the peel and pulp of pixie tangerines. "We use the freshest ingredients possible, whether in food our bodies digest or in products our skin absorbs," says Spa Ojai director Kasia Mays. "The ingredients' mildly abrasive quality, natural antioxidants, and acidic compounds also help exfoliate and detoxify."

Take It Home (from left)

- Spa Ojai's Signature Scrubs (\$20; www.ojairesort.com) are available according to the season; they include pumpkin-melon, pixie tangerine (pictured; created for spring), and avocado-oat.

- Tres Vivant (\$8; www.tresvivant.com) handmade scrubs, made from raw sugar or Dead Sea salts, boost circulation and recondition the skin with essential oils and natural ingredients such as sweet almond oil, apricot kernel oil, fruit seeds, kukui nut oil, rosemary seed extract, and grapefruit seed extract.

- Baudelaire Sea Sponges (\$11.50 to \$19; www.baudelairesoaps.com) are sustainably harvested off the coast of Florida and gently scrub away dead skin.

Massages

A spa staple, massages work out kinks, tension, and stress. "They can help relieve pain, release lactic acid and endorphins, and improve flexibility," says certified massage therapist Stephanie Lakhani, owner of Breathe Wellness Spa (www.breathetoheal.com), which has day spas in Boise, Idaho. "And just as important, a massage may be the only time you turn off the outside world and go inward while someone helps you relax."

In addition to the feel-good benefits, massages increase circulation and lymph flow, which promotes detoxification. "As the tissues are massaged, toxins are pushed out of the interstitial space between cells into the [lymphatic system](#), where they are processed by the liver and moved out of the body," says Steelsmith.

Swedish and lomilomi massages, with their long, sweeping strokes, offer the biggest circulation and detoxifying boost, Steelsmith says. You should come out of a massage feeling longer, looser, and taller, all of which lead to better posture. As a bonus, the creams and oils used during massage help skin feel baby soft.

Take It Home (clockwise from left)

- The Body Shop Energizing Bergamot Massage Oil (\$10; www.thebodyshop.com) makes at-home massage easy.

- Dermalogica Stress Relief Treatment Oil (\$22.50; www.dermalogica.com) is crafted with essential oils to soothe and condition skin.

- The Body Shop Massage Muscle Rub Cream (\$10.50; www.thebodyshop.com) relaxes and soothes.

- Olive, coconut, jojoba, and sweet almond oil from a health food store are favorites of Idaho massage therapist Stephanie Lakhani because of their smooth consistency.

Hydrotherapy

Water is the theme at the new spa at The Coeur d'Alene Resort (www.cdaresort.com) in Idaho. There are waterfalls and streams at every turn, clear-bottomed pools over skylights, fountains, waterbed massage tables, and eye-popping lake views from soaring windows.

The spa's signature hydrotherapy treatments are the real stars--especially the computer-controlled Pure Essence \$100,000 shower (that's the price the spa paid for it; clients get to enjoy it for \$25). With the push of a few buttons, it adjusts to your desire, whether it's premassage relaxation, preworkout exhilaration, or (temporary) toning. A rain showerhead drenches from above; another jet massages your shoulder and neck, and 16 sprays target specific areas of your body.

"Showers are historically a part of naturopathic medicine," says Steelsmith, author of Natural Choices for

Women's Health (Three Rivers Press, 2005). "The pulsating actions of the showerhead increase the movement of lymph (a clear fluid that circulates around the body tissues) and help draw fat-soluble toxins out of the skin."

You can also relax in the spa's signature "flow-through" deep-soaking tub: Fresh, thrice-filtered, chlorine-free water lights up in a rainbow of hues, continuously runs over your back and shoulders, overflows the rim, and disappears. "Water reduces stress and detoxifies. It relaxes muscle tension and increases circulation," Norling says. "And because of the bath's flow-through feature, water isn't reused, so toxins go down the drain."

Take It Home (from left)

- Aspara Aromatics Mandi Flora Bath Soak (\$18; www.aspara-aromatics.com) is a sea-salt-based soak that combines essential oils and dried flower petals that open up in the tub. In Asian spas, the lavish floral bath represents a symbolic purging of our earthly impurities.

- The name Wild Woozle may sound silly, but its products are handcrafted and totally natural. The Lotus After Yoga Fizzy Hydrotherapy Bath Powder (\$9; www.wildwoozle.com) is concocted from Epsom salts and pure essential oils of ginger, lavender, and sweet orange.

- Jamu Blessings Bath Salt (\$25; www.jamuspa.com) is an aromatic combination of crushed Bali flowers, Indian Ocean sea salts, and ylang-ylang, packaged in a pyramid-shaped, cork-stopped colored glass bottle tied with a prayer string and a silver bead.

Aromatherapy

Based on essential oils (highly concentrated plant extracts), aromatherapy is typically used in conjunction with spa treatments. "Some oils have antibacterial, antimicrobial, antifungal, and antiviral effects," says supervising research nurse Cherie Perez, R.N., who teaches classes on aromatherapy at the University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston. "Peppermint stimulates blood flow; lavender and chamomile soothe irritated skin. Oils like pink grapefruit and birch encourage lymph drainage. Bergamot is an antiseptic and can also be used for acne, [eczema](#), and psoriasis."

Most spa menus offer aromatherapy facials, massages, wraps, and scrubs. At the Willow Stream Spa at The Fairmont Scottsdale Princess (www.fairmontspahotelsandresorts.com) in Scottsdale, Ariz., ginger and lemongrass are used in the Revitalizer wrap and massage, while rose geranium and rose flower oil are used in the Rose Retreat treatment. The Hawaiian Healing Experience at The Ritz-Carlton, Kapalua (www.ritzcarlton.com/resorts/kapalua) on Maui offers guests a choice of several different essential oil blends, derived from tropical flowers. You can select according to scent or to which life issues they address, from promoting harmony in relationships to relieving stress. The blends are massaged into the skin via Swedish, lomilomi, and other massage techniques.

For at-home aromatherapy benefits, look for products that contain only pure essential oils, not artificial fragrance. Or add three or four drops of your favorite essential oils to unscented bath salts, lotions, or massage

oils.

Take It Home (clockwise from left)

- The Origins Sensory Therapy line includes stress-busting picks like the Peace of Mind Stress-relief Oil Diffuser (\$10; www.origins.com), in which the aromatherapy oils are heated with a candle to create a relaxing aroma for the whole room. The [Sleep](#) Perchance To Dream Pillow Mist (\$20) with valerian, orange, cinnamon, neroli, and vanilla will help you nod off to sleep.
- Source Vital carries aromatherapy supplies, pure essential oils, and face- and bodycare products like its Serene Bath Oil (\$26; www.sourcevital.com), made with artemisia, lavender, sage, petitgrain, and chamomile essential oils to relax and de-stress.
- If you're on the go, Origins Resume the Position Back-to-Sleep Bedside Diffuser (\$12.50; www.origins.com) can make any room--or desk--smell like a mini spa.
- Essencia Aromatics is an aromatherapy-based skincare line. Its Green Tea & Lemon Moisturizing Facial Cleanser (\$30; www.essenciaonline.com) combines green tea with moisturizing avocado, borage and shea oils, and antiseptic lemon essential oil that makes it good for all skin types.