

Seaweed & Other Body Wrapping Skin Benefits

Soft and Beautiful Skin are Always in Style

By: R. Renée Bembry

Seaweed modern day body wraps continue to take body wrapping systems where “old school” skin wrap techniques wished they could’ve have gone. The old systems’ archaic attempts to instigate weight loss by dilating blood vessels couldn’t hold a fork to today’s systems involving various types of wrapping procedures that utilize wrapping products to smooth and exfoliate skin, instigate body trims, as they soothe and relax clients. No wonder a plethora of clients continue to subject their bodies to seaweed wrapping whether the product is painted over their skin with brushes or smoothed on by a spa worker’s soothing palms.

What exactly is seaweed?

Anyone who has been to a beach has probably seen seaweed hanging around but what exactly is that green or brown funny looking stuff anyway?

Seaweeds are multicellular algae consisting of several groups; red algae, green algae, and brown algae.

Red algae, or Rhodophyta, encompasses a large group of mostly multicellular marine algae including several kinds seaweeds.

Brown algae, or Phaeophyceae, also consists of a large group of primarily multicellular marine algae that includes several seaweeds.

Green algae, however, are microscopic “protists” – meaning they (1) possess both plant and animal characteristics and (2) do not actually include any form of seaweed in their classification.

What this means is that seaweeds may be categorized with certain species of algae, however, algae do not fall under seaweed classifications. For this reason, both seaweed and algae are used to create special wrapping solutions. To complete each product, a host of other primary ingredients such as mud, clay, and paraffin, a waxy substance, are mixed in with seaweed body wrapping solutions.

What’s it like to undergo a seaweed body wrap?

Seaweed body wraps tend to take place in steps.

Preparation – During the initial phase, the client’s skin is either dry-brushed or scrubbed using one of several scrubbing aids to incite exfoliation. The exfoliation process helps to remove dead layers of skin. Dry brushing skin simply means to brush skin with a special body brush. Proper brushing involves gentle massaging motions using natural bristles from boar, goat or loofah. Once dull dead top layers of skin are removed, smoother, livelier looking skin is revealed. [In addition to exfoliating the skin, this process is believed to aid in cellulite control.]

Types of Scrubbing Aids

There are many different types of skin scrubbing aids a beauty therapist may use while preparing skin for seaweed wrapping. A selection of which scrub to use is usually based on therapist preference and what is best for individual client skin needs. Depending on which scrub the therapist thinks is suitable for a particular treatment, the scrubbing agents incite glorious improvements to the skin. [Some of these scrubs may also be used in preparing skin for application of sunless tanning products.]

Salt Scrubs also known as salt glows and sea salt scrubs are means of hydrating skin, exfoliating skin, providing minerals to skin, and drawing water impurities out from skin in a detoxifying sort of way.

Sugar Scrubs often used because simple sugars are part of skin's genetic make-up. It is of the belief among beauty therapists that scrubbing with sugar products imitates or reinforces the moisturizing plumpness effect skin's natural sugar provides.

Coffee Scrubs are primarily intended to take advantage of caffeine's diuretic process of drawing excess water and impurities from the skin.

All of these scrubs are effective in exfoliating and rejuvenating dry, dehydrated, sun-damaged, rough, uneven, psoriatic skin. Skin suffering from smoke exposure (smoker's skin) may benefit from these scrubs as well. The applications cause skin to look healthier, feel smoother, as they prepare skin to penetrate essential oils, moisturizers, and antioxidants.

The Body Wrap Procedure

Following the preparation process, a client's skin is subjected to the benefits of the actual body wrap; and as stated earlier, there are a few primary types of wraps to choose from in addition to seaweed.

Seaweed Wraps: A moist seaweed paste is applied all over the client's body that is either nude or dressed in disposable underwear. Then the client is wrapped or covered in a warm sheet, towel, or plastic and kept warm while relaxing for at least twenty minutes. After sufficient time has elapsed, the client showers to remove the seaweed paste. Benefit-wise, seaweed body wraps detoxify, purify, aid in the combat against cellulite, and help restore sun-damaged skin. Seaweed contains high levels of iodine which helps to draw water impurities

from the skin.

Mud and Clay Wraps: Once again, the products are applied all over a client's cloth-less body and the client is wrapped or covered and kept warm for at least twenty minutes. The type of mud used determines its effectiveness and benefits to the skin. The idea is to use mud that is rich in minerals and trace elements. Mud could be sea mud or volcanic ash (also called Fango) both are mineral rich; or it could be Moor mud which is high in decayed plant materials and minerals from bogs. Mud and clay wraps are not only detoxifying, they also tighten, re-mineralize, and fight against cellulite. After the time expiration, the client rinses the product from the body in a shower. This kind of wrap is also beneficial to anyone wanting a detoxification.

Herbal Linen Wrap: During an herbal linen wrap, linens saturated in hot tea concocted from seeping detoxifying herbs are wrapped around clients for approximately twenty minutes. A major difference between herbal linen wraps and wraps that require a product to be smoothed all over the body is that one does not shower immediately following a linen wrap. In fact, the intent is for the herbs to rejuvenate the skin for the remainder of the day until bedtime. These wraps are also good for aiding detoxification.

Paraffin Wrap: During a paraffin wrap, moisturizers are massaged into the skin. Afterwards, warm paraffin wax is smoothed over the entire body using a wax-dipped paintbrush or gauze dipped in wax. The waxy wrap is removed after about twenty minutes and thus like the herbal linen wrap, showering is not necessary. Paraffin wraps are recommended for those with excessively dry and dehydrated skin.

Gel Masks: Before wrapping, gel masks are smoothed over the skin. Sometimes exfoliating products like hydroxy acids and enzymes are added to gels prior to application. Gel wraps are also intended to remain on the body for about twenty minutes

prior to showering. These wraps also benefit the skin by moisturizing and hydrating it. They also add anti-oxidants to the skin, have a cooling soothing affect, and are good for applying during detoxification.

Rubber Mask: During a rubber mask wrap, detoxifying anti-cellulite products are smoothed over the skin and mixture of diatomaceous earth clay and water is applied over the detoxifying ingredients. As the masks sets it becomes rubbery like scuba diving outfit. The mask is eventually peeled off and again no shower is needed.

Shea Butter and Lotion: The primary purpose of Shea butter and lotion wraps is to soften the skin as opposed to detoxifying wraps like seaweed (and the other types stated above) that aim to rid the body of toxins via metabolic stimulation.

Although the benefits of seaweed body wraps and the other detoxifying wraps outweigh the benefits of the butter and lotion wraps, all of these wraps leave clients feeling relaxed and their skin feeling smooth and soft.

Benefits from seaweed and other detoxifying wraps listed above also include circulation stimulation, increased metabolism, sagging skin and stretch mark improvement, and a possible inch or two off a client's waistline.

Warnings

Despite the benefits of seaweed and other types of body wraps, wrapping products are not necessarily beneficial to everyone. So, as a precaution to women who are or may be pregnant, menopausal, menstruating, and to anyone with high blood pressure, certain heart conditions, varicose veins in the legs, and a hyperactive thyroid, seaweed and other types of body wraps and skin treatments may have adverse affects due to the nature of your condition. It is best to consult with a specialist before submitting to a wrapping procedure because the type of wrap used should be determined by an individual's

treatment needs, health conditions, and an agreed upon plan between the patient and a specialist.