

body + mind beauty

do-it-yourself *spa*

Save time and money with these easy, yet rejuvenating, at-home treatments.

By Wendy Gist



JAMIE CARRIER / GETTY IMAGES

With all you've got going on—work, family, training, friends—spending a day at the spa is probably low on your list of priorities. You just can't seem to spare the time, much less the money, for such self-indulgence. But our busy lives and active lifestyles can take a toll—dry skin, damaged hair, tight muscles—making regular self-pampering more of a necessity than a luxury. Don't fret, with just a few ingredients and in a few easy steps you can create a relaxing, rejuvenating spa experience at home. And the best part: It takes only 30 minutes.

"At-home spa treatments are fun and cost-effective, but one of the biggest benefits is the convenience," says Janice Cox, author of *Natural Beauty at Home*. "You don't have to make an appointment, and you can create your own products whenever you need them in the privacy of your own home."

It's simple to turn your bathroom into a soothing, spa-like environment.

Set aromatherapy candles around the edge of the tub or sink. Turn off the phone and turn on relaxing music. Follow these recipes to create hair-repair treatments, anti-stress baths, moisturizing facials or soothing foot soaks. You can find the ingredients at most natural food stores or locate suppliers on The National Association for Holistic Aromatherapy's Web site, naha.org.

Hair Therapy

Cold air, laps in a chlorine-filled pool or moisture-stripping shampoos can dry and dull your hair. To combat the damage, use rosemary, which is "superb for putting the luster and life back into your hair," says Cox. The fragrant herb offers other beauty perks: A strong tea made from fresh rosemary leaves can be used as a darkening hair rinse and may even help tone down grays—it takes a few applications to see results, however. To add shine, body and moisture to your hair, try Cox's conditioner recipe.

ROSEMARY HAIR REPAIR

- 2 tablespoons avocado oil
- 1 tablespoon castor oil
- 2 teaspoons rosemary tea, brewed from fresh rosemary leaves
- 2 eggs

Mix together all ingredients. Massage into damp hair and let sit for 20 minutes. Then shampoo and rinse.

Fragrant Soak

Lavender derives its name from the Latin *lavare*, "to wash." "A lavender bath before bed may help reduce insomnia and provide a peaceful night's sleep," says Shellie Enteen, the South Florida Regional Director of the National Association for Holistic Aromatherapy. "It also has stress-relieving properties and is well known for pain relief."

Use a high-quality, not fragrance grade, essential oil like **EO's French Lavender Essential Oil** (\$10, eoproducts.com). Try Enteen's recipe to relax and reduce stress just before bedtime.

LAVENDER MILK BATH

- 10 to 12 drops lavender oil
- 1/4 cup whole milk or cream

Combine lavender and milk or cream in a small bowl. Enter the bath, and then pour the mixture into the water. Inhale and relax. Hot water increases the rate of aromatic release so the soothing effects are strongest in the first few minutes.

Honey Hydration

For flaking or dry, cracked skin, honey offers healing benefits. It also contains a germ-killing substance called inhibine, which helps prevent infections. You can apply a small amount to relieve chapped lips or use it as a spot treatment for a pimple before bed. "Honey has a very high potassium content, which makes it almost impossible for bacteria to survive in," says Cox. "It contains many vitamins and minerals that benefit skin, and is one of the best-known humectants, materials that hold moisture."

For use on your face or body, purchase honey labeled "100% pure." Also try organic honey, often with hints of lavender, orange blossom or sage added. Cox created this recipe to add moisture to your skin.

HONEY FACIAL MASK

- 1/4 cup plain yogurt or sour cream
- 1 tablespoon pure honey
- 1 teaspoon vitamin E oil

Mix together all ingredients and spread onto clean, damp skin. Let sit for 15 minutes and then remove with warm water. Pat your skin dry and moisturize.

Treat Your Feet

A soak in fresh mint or pure essential oil of mint can take miles off weary, achy feet. For this recipe, use high-quality, not fragrance grade, essential oil of mint like **Aura Cacia Organic Peppermint Essential Oil** (\$9.35, auracacia.com).

MINT TREATMENT

- 2 tablespoons crushed fresh mint or 5 to 6 drops of essential oil of mint
- 1 to 2 tablespoons Epsom salts

Add ingredients to a small tub of warm water. Soak your feet. 

Wendy Gist, M.S. in Natural Health, is a Southwest-based freelance writer whose articles have appeared in such publications as *Alternative Medicine*, *Pilates Style* and *Today's Diet and Nutrition*.

Bottled Beauty

Don't want to make your own concoctions? Try these naturally good products.

AVEDA Rosemary Mint Conditioner This conditioner offers the tonic properties of rosemary and mint. The cooling sensation revitalizes, de-tangles and boosts shine. \$9, aveda.com

ALBA Botanica Very Emollient French Lavender Bath & Shower Gel For aromatic comfort and relaxation, purifying lavender combines with natural emollients, panthenol B-5 pro-vitamins and sea kelp extracts. \$8, albotanica.com

KORRES Honey Moisturizing Mask This all-natural honey extract mask is formulated with the natural ingredients of quince extract and spirulina to moisturize thirsty skin. \$24.50, dermstore.com

CUCCIO Milk & Honey Scentual Spa Kit Get pedicure soft toes and manicure smooth fingers with this fun kit. A pair of cow-print slippers is included. \$54, bebeautiful.com

BATH BY BETTIJO Fresh Foot Forward Soak This minty foot soak includes peppermint oil and grapefruit oil to relieve sore feet. \$22, bathbybettijo.com

BURT'S BEES Peppermint Foot Lotion This 100 percent natural foot lotion is enriched with beeswax and vitamin E oils to aid in moisturizing. Peppermint and parsley leaf oils combine with menthol and witch hazel to smooth cracked heels. \$9, burtsbees.com