

Body wraps

Body wraps are not new to the world of beauty as they have been around for centuries. They were used by the Egyptians for health benefits such as blood circulation, weight loss, detoxification and body contouring. Today, body wraps are a popular treatment in spas and health farms as well as many small beauty salons. They are used to induce sweating which helps remove toxins and introduce beneficial vitamins and minerals into the body to promote health and healing.

Body wrap clients usually fall into two different categories

- Those clients who want to be pampered and have a body wrap as part of a bigger spa or beauty package or in conjunction with an additional treatment such as heat or body massage.
- Those clients who want to achieve specific results, such as inch or weight loss, to make them feel fitter, healthier, firmer and with an improved body shape and they think of them as more clinical than beauty treatments.

Body wraps are used for different reasons

- As a pampering, indulgent treatment
- To help lose weight
- As part of an inch loss programme
- As part of a detox package
- To soothe aches and pains
- To rehydrate the skin

Originally body wraps were offered to those clients wishing to lose weight and inches but clients are now requesting more pampering treatments and many product manufacturers have responded to this by providing more luxurious wraps combining relaxation with results.

Cocoon wraps are very relaxing and usually start with a full body exfoliation before moisturising or hydrating products are applied and the client is then wrapped tightly in a warm sheet and blanket. Aromatherapy products are ideal for a cocoon wrap as the client can also benefit from the additional therapeutic effects of the chosen blend. Additional treatments such as a foot or face, neck and scalp massage may be applied whilst the client is cocooned in the wrap to make it even more luxurious and pampering.

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Inch loss wraps are a specialised wrap treatment using ingredients such as sea clay. Elastic contour bandages are soaked in the product and then wrapped tightly around the client before putting on a vinyl suit. The client remains in an upright position and will then stand, walk or do some light exercises whilst the wrap is working. Special care must be taken with this type of wrap to prevent a loss of blood circulation or feeling in the extremities if wrapped too tightly. A professional therapist will take all the required safety precautions and reduce pressure in sensitive areas. This kind of body wrap is highly effective if you need to lose inches quickly from some particular areas such as arms, thighs, hip, buttocks etc. This is more of a temporary wrap, good for losing some quick inches before any special occasion.

Detoxifying wraps using; herbs, essential oils, mud, or seaweed and heat, to aid the removal of toxins from the body. The application of this type of body wrap stimulates the lymphatic system of the body to remove toxins and fatty acids that are ultimately transferred into capillaries and removed from the body as waste. Reducing the amount of toxins in the body will improve energy and promote a healthier body.

Body wrap ingredients

Bladderwrack (Fucus Vesiculosus)

This is a common form of kelp or seaweed that has been used medicinally for centuries. Naturally rich in minerals including iodine, iron, potassium, sodium, sulphur, silicon magnesium and calcium, kelp is often used to help maintain normal thyroid function and thyroid hormone production. The main use of the kelp has been for the stimulation of the thyroid gland. The high iodine content of the herb stimulates thyroid function which boosts metabolism and is useful in combating cellulite and weight gain. It is also believed to help relieve symptoms of rheumatism and rheumatoid arthritis. Contraindications include; hyperthyroidism, cardiac problems, pregnancy and breast feeding.

Bentonite clay

It is able to absorb up to fifteen times its volume in water and is thus used to draw out impurities externally from the skin. It may be used either as a face mask or a full body wrap. Because of its strong drawing power, it is one of the most popular body wrap clays; it deep cleanses, tightens, softens, exfoliates and firms the skin. When applied to the skin, oxidation and circulation are increased, defensive functions stimulated and body temperature is lightly raised, it also has an astringent action on sagging tissues.

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Essential oils

May be used for their therapeutic effects and many spa product companies make wrap products with their own special blends.

- Pine and rosemary may be used to ease, rheumatism, arthritis, muscle fatigue and spasms
- Juniper, fennel, cypress or lemon to help decongest the body's systems, reduce cellulite and water retention.
- Lavender, patchouli and sandalwood to soothe the skin

Benefits of body wraps

- The skin retains moisture more effectively
- The skin is exfoliated leaving it smoother in appearance and texture
- Improves skin colour
- Soothes aching muscles
- Relieves arthritis and joint pain
- Helps reduce water retention
- Stimulates the blood circulation bringing nourishment to the area
- Stimulates the lymphatic system, increasing the removal of toxins from the body
- Increases metabolism slightly
- Contributes to a weight and inch loss programme of treatments

Wrap systems can also be bought for home use.

They are easy to use on a part or all of the body, especially the nourishing and pampering variety. Make sure you have a warm room and you have prepared the bed with a protective covering. Find an old sheet or other wrapping material. A thermal foil blanket is ideal to keep you warm over the wrap as you will be lying down for about 45 minutes or more.

Procedure

Exfoliate your skin with a loofah or exfoliating mitt or use a body brush.

Take a warm shower to open the pores.

Cover the entire body or area to be treated with the ingredients that have been prepared according to the manufacturer's instructions.

The skin needs to be warm to stimulate toxin removal.

Wrap your body in the sheets and relax for about 45 minutes to an hour your bed lying on a protective covering.

Drink plenty of water before and after application of the wrap to help flush the toxins from your body.

After treatment, avoid coffee, alcohol, and spicy foods for the next couple of days.