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spa & beauty therapy in practice

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Macademia oil – a carrier oil used in aromatherapy contains high amounts of a fatty acid normally found in sebum, this oil therefore has an affinity with our own skin.

Maceration – a method of extracting essential oils from flowers using hot oil, the flowers are soaked in the oil and their cell membranes rupture releasing the essential oil. The fragrant oil is then decanted ready for use.

Macrophages – part of the immune system, cells capable of ingesting micro organisms, dead cells and foreign particles in a process known as phagocytosis

Macule – a pigmented area of the skin that is not elevated above the surface

Magnesium carbonate – a light white powder used in cosmetics and an ingredient in face masks with absorbent properties

Magnifying light – a special glass lens with a light attached, used to increase the size of an object and improve clarity when viewed through the lens. It provides a more detailed view and is useful when analysing the skin before treatment or when providing a service such as epilation, that requires accuracy and careful probing.

Makeup – cosmetics used to enhance, change or camouflage appearance, used on the face or body. In the salon makeup is applied for different occasions, day, evening, bridal, party, photographic, camouflaging tattoos, catwalk or theatrical. Makeup chosen should complement the client's colouring, be suitable for the occasion, co-ordinate with clothes and accessories and suit the client's skin type.

Malignant – dangerous, or harmful, a disorder which may become life threatening unless treated.

Malignant melanoma – a cancer of the pigment producing cells (melanocytes) in the epidermis. Most common in white skin, the main risk factors in developing melanoma are; sun exposure particularly in childhood, blistering sunburn, especially when young, fair skin that burns easily, previous melanoma, family history, large numbers of moles(especially in excess of 100) and abnormal moles.

Manager – a person that has control of the resources and expenditure and directs the activities of a business or a department or part of it.

Mandible – the bone of the lower jaw

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Manicure – a cosmetic treatment of the hands and fingernails to include, filing, cuticle care, massage and enamelling

Manufacturer – a person, group or company that makes goods

Market niche – a small segment of a market

Market segmentation – breaking a market down into groups with similar characteristics

Marketing – the management process involved in identifying, anticipating and satisfying consumer requirements profitably

Marma pressure points – part of the Indian Ayurvedic system of medicine, they are 107 vital points in the body occurring where blood vessels, ligaments and nerve centres join. They correspond to internal organs and systems and these points are massaged to release blocked energy, restore normal function, energise or relax. Marma pressure point massage was originally used in ancient India for self defence, healing and to increase flexibility in martial arts.

Mascara – a cosmetic used to darken and thicken the lashes providing definition to the eyes. It comes in several forms, cream, liquid and block as well as a variety of colours. It is applied to the lashes with a brush or wand and contains, wax thickeners, film formers, emollients and preservatives and rayon or nylon fibres to add length

Mask – a product containing different ingredients and applied to the skin to achieve a specific purpose such as; cleansing, hydrating, nourishing, bleaching or toning

Massage – manual manipulation of the skin and muscles for a therapeutic purpose using different massage techniques. There are many different types of massage including; Swedish, Aromatherapy, Lymph drainage, Tui Na, Lomi Lomi, Hot stone, Neuromuscular, Rolfing, Shiatsu, Thai and Balinese. Most types of massage and in particular Swedish massage include effleurage, petrissage, tapotement and vibrations as part of the routine. Massage should be smooth and rhythmical with an even depth and pressure, which may be adapted for the size and condition of the person requiring treatment.

Massage cream – an emollient used to moisturise the skin an ideal massage medium over hairy skin. Absorbed into the skin more quickly than oil

Massage medium – a lubricant such as oil, cream, powder or lotion used sparingly during body and facial massage and applied from the therapist's hands, not directly onto the client's skin. The choice depends on client preference type of massage and skin type.

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Mast cells – part of the immune system, they originate from bone marrow they settle in connective tissue and play a key role in the inflammatory process. When activated, in response to inflammation or injury they release histamine and heparin amongst other things. Histamine causes swelling and itching of the affected tissue.

Matrix – root of the nail produces cells that form the nail plate

Matte polish – enamel or varnish applied to the nails to provide a non shiny finish. Popular in a male manicure or for those who do not want colour

Mature skin – a skin type that is dry and tight with a dull appearance, it is no longer supple and there is a loss of muscle tone, wrinkles are evident and there may be uneven pigmentation. It is caused by a lack of moisture, a decrease in sebum flow, reduced collagen and elastin production, all of which are normal effects of ageing.

Maxilla – the fusion of two bones that forms the upper jaw, it holds the upper teeth

Medi spa – an establishment that provides both medical treatments and spa therapies.

Medial – situated in the middle or towards the midline of the body

Medical referral – recommending a person to seek advice from a general practitioner

Medical spa – a day or destination spa that provides traditional and complementary medical services, administered or supervised by medical professionals. Treatments may include; diagnostic, preventative and cosmetic.

Medicated cleanser – a cleanser containing ingredients to counteract bacterial infection of the skin

Mediterranean skin – this skin type has a combination of both red and yellow pigment that provides the typical olive colour. This skin type is usually oily but not prone to spots and acne. It ages better than white skin and is protected from UV damage by its ability to tan quickly without burning. A problem for this skin type is sometimes an excess of facial hair which can be coarser and darker than other skin types.

Medulla – the inner core of certain organs or body structures e.g the hair

Melanin – pigment or colour found in skin and hair. Produced by special skin cells (melanocytes) that are sensitive to sunlight, melanin protects the body by absorbing ultraviolet radiation from the sun. The amount of melanin present determines the colour of a person's complexion, those with a large amount

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have darker skin, whereas those with very little have fair skin. Melanin also determines the colour of the iris in the eyes.

Melanocyte – a pigment cell in the basal layer of the epidermis that produces melanin to protect the skin from ultra violet radiation.

Melanocyte stimulating hormone – is produced by the anterior lobe of the pituitary gland, it stimulates the production and release of melanin by the melanocytes in the skin and hair. The level of this hormone increases during pregnancy, together with an increase in oestrogen this may cause increased pigmentation in the skin.

Melanosomes – pigmented melanin granules in the skin that provide the different shades of colour. In black skins, these granules are larger and heavily pigmented and in white skins they are much smaller, containing less melanin.

Melatonin – a hormone secreted by the pineal gland, its production is stimulated by darkness and inhibited by light, it reaches its peak in the middle of the night and then gradually starts to fall.

Menopause – the end of the menstrual cycle, or the last menstrual period when the ovaries are removed through surgery, or they spontaneously fail to produce the hormones oestrogen and progesterone, or after chemotherapy or radiotherapy. The average age of the menopause is 51.

Menstrual cycle – a recurring cycle of physiological changes in the female, associated with fertility

Menstruation – part of the menstrual cycle in which the endometrium (lining of the uterus) is shed monthly resulting in blood flow from the vagina.

Mesomorph – a strong muscular body type, angular with broad shoulders and narrow hips, usually well muscled with little body fat.

Metabolism – the result of physical and chemical processes in the body, by which material substances are produced, maintained and destroyed. It is the rate at which the body burns fuel and transforms it into energy.

Metatarsals – the five long bones in the foot connected to the ankle bones.

Microamp – a million times smaller than an ampere.

Microcurrent – low frequency, modified direct current that is much smaller than any other current used in therapeutic treatment, the current is thought to resemble closely the bio - electrical impulses of the

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body. It is used in the popular 'non surgical facelift' to tighten and firm facial and body contours and aid lymphatic drainage.

Microcurrent unit – the machine used to provide a tightening, lifting, firming treatment, it also helps to improve skin condition, in particular fine lines, scar and stretch marks.

Microdermabrasion – a cosmetic procedure developed in Italy in 1985, in which the stratum corneum is partially removed using, mechanical abrasion from jets of zinc oxide or aluminium oxide crystals. It is used to remove sun damaged skin, reduce fine lines and lessen scars, stretch marks and hyper pigmentation, it is a popular treatment used in salons for clients who do not want the higher risk treatments such as standard dermabrasion, chemical peeling and laser resurfacing. An alternative method is diamond microdermabrasion using diamond tipped wands and vacuum to exfoliate dead skin cells.

Middle note – this refers to the classification of an essential oil. The middle note oils evaporate at a moderate rate and are absorbed into the body fairly quickly.

Milium – a tiny white or yellowish bump just underneath the surface of the skin caused sebum from the sebaceous gland becoming blocked by skin cells covering the mouth of the follicle, it is often referred to as a whitehead, the plural of milium is milia.

Milliampere – one thousandth of an ampere.

Mineral makeup – made from minerals and pigments that have been micro pulverised to produce a makeup that has an ultra fine powder formulation, is water resistant, has staying power, with no added preservatives, talc oil or fragrances. It provides excellent skin coverage and is suitable for all skin types and ages.

Mineral oil – clear, odourless oil derived from petroleum and widely used in cosmetics as it rarely causes allergic reactions and doesn't become solid and block pores

Mitosis – the process of cell division by which the nucleus divides

Modesty – reserve or propriety in speech, dress or behaviour

Modification of treatment – this means to alter, adapt or change the treatment to suit the client's needs. This may be because the client has a bad back, she may be pregnant, elderly or disabled, therefore she may need additional support when lying or treatment may have to be performed in a sitting position. Certain aspects of the treatment may be changed in some way, intensity of a current reduced, certain movements removed from a procedure or specific products eliminated as they have caused an allergic reaction in the past.

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Moisturiser – is a cosmetic product designed to hydrate and lubricate the outer layers of the skin, to keep it soft and supple and prevent further moisture loss. There are many types of moisturiser available and they may include ingredients such as; humectants that attract water from the atmosphere, occlusives that provide an oily barrier on the skin to prevent moisture loss and other emollients such as lanolin and glycerine. They come in different formulations, creams, lotions, milks, special night creams, eye and neck creams. They are also effective in providing a smooth base over which makeup is applied and they may be translucent or coloured to suit different skin tones or used as a light covering for those people who do not like to wear foundation.

Mole – a raised or flat, pigmented or skin coloured, benign growth on the skin.

Molecule – chemical combination of two or more atoms

Monitor – to observe, oversee, supervise or regulate a business, procedure or people. The monitor or small screen on a piece of equipment, that provides information for the operator.

Monomer – a small molecule that may become chemically bonded to other monomers to form a polymer.

Motor nerve – an efferent nerve carrying impulses from the central nervous system to muscles or organs, stimulating movement in muscles and glands, to secrete hormones

Motor point – part of the muscle where the nerve enters and when stimulated by a faradic current produces movement of the muscle

Multiple sclerosis – an autoimmune disease that affects the central nervous system, it is believed to be caused by damage to the protective covering of the nerve cells.

Muscle fatigue – decline in the ability of a muscle to create force when it becomes tired after physical exertion.

Muscle tone – the ability of muscles to respond to a stretch or a state of permanent partial contraction of the muscles. Muscle tone helps the body maintain its posture.

Muscular endurance – the capacity of a muscle to repeatedly exert force or to maintain a fixed contraction for a period of time

Muscular strength – the capacity of the body's muscles to generate extreme amounts of force in a short period using anaerobic energy

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Muscular system – this system is composed of specialised muscle tissue that contracts and shortens to produce movement in the body. It contains both voluntary skeletal muscles attached to bones that produce conscious movement and involuntary smooth muscles that make up the internal vessels and organs such as; arteries, veins, digestive tract, and the urinary bladder. Cardiac muscle is unique to the heart, its function is to pump blood through the circulatory system and it is involuntary contracting without direct stimulation by the nervous system.

Myelin sheath – an insulating layer formed around nerves to allow rapid transmission of nerve impulses along the nerve cells