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What is Beauty Therapy?

It is hard to find a true definition of beauty as everyone has their own perception of what beauty means but after reading many different definitions I feel the following provides a simple but accurate description.

BEAUTY - A quality or feature that gives pleasure to the mind or senses.

THERAPY - A healing power or quality.

Put the two words together and it describes what we as beauty therapists are hoping to achieve, using our practical skills and knowledge to provide a therapeutic treatment for our clients to achieve outcomes that will improve and enhance facial and body conditions, relax, de-stress and improve their confidence. Beauty treatments are many and varied and a common complaint from clients when faced with a long list of treatments to choose from is that they do not understand what they entail, in fact some say it may even deter them from booking an appointment. The following descriptions may help when making your choice.

Manicure

This is a cosmetic treatment designed to improve the appearance of the hands and nails. The skin is cleansed and moisturised, the nails are shaped and polished and the cuticles (the skin surrounding the base of the nail) are moisturised and tidied up.



There are additions to this treatment offered by most salons to provide a more de-luxe, in depth, or more therapeutic treatment, these may include heat treatments such as paraffin wax, oil, or thermal mittens. Special exfoliating products may be used to improve the condition of the skin and anti ageing treatments are available to counteract the environmental damage that the hands are exposed to.

Pedicure

I often hear a client complaining that her feet are so awful she couldn't possibly have a pedicure. My response is always that if you feel this way then you must need a pedicure desperately. Although this is a cosmetic treatment to improve the appearance of the feet, it is also extremely relaxing and therapeutic. When feet are tired and sore and swollen from hours of standing, the rest of the body suffers with aches and pains making you feel tired and irritable. A pedicure usually starts with a



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warm soak in a foot spa, this starts the relaxation process and softens the skin. The therapist will improve the skin condition by exfoliating and reducing the areas of hard skin and moisturising with the use of rich creams and oils. The condition of the cuticles is improved and the relaxation process is completed with the inclusion of a foot and leg massage. Finally the nails are polished and in the summer as the feet are on show French polish or nail art is a popular addition to this treatment.

Manual facial

The hands are powerful tools used to relax and remove tension from the muscles of the face and neck. A facial consists of several stages, skin cleansing, exfoliation (removing surface

dead skin cells), manual massage using different techniques, muscle manipulation, pressure point or lymph drainage massage. The products used will vary according to the client's skin type and the techniques taught by the company supplying the products. Masks may be used throughout the treatment for tightening, hydrating or firming purposes and finally the skin is hydrated and protected.



Specialised manual facial

These facials may incorporate special techniques such as lymph drainage or acupressure or they may use specific products designed to repair, protect or prevent further environmental damage. Many salons offer special facials which combine the use of alpha hydroxy acids to reduce the signs of ageing, repair sun damage or clear an acne skin condition with a manual or electrical facial treatment.

Specialised electrical facial

These facials are often classified as; anti-ageing, regenerating, firming, tightening, refining or deep cleansing. Manual techniques are employed but in addition a specific type of electrical equipment will be incorporated into the facial to increase the effectiveness of treatment or to achieve a specific effect. Micro-current or 'Non Surgical facelift' treatment is one of the most popular facial treatments available in salons at the moment as it helps to lift and firm the facial contours and improve skin texture.



Microdermabrasion

This is a specialised treatment designed to remove surface dead skin cells, improve the texture of the skin, refine areas of scar tissue and fine lines. This is achieved by using crystals to 'sandblast' the skin and removing them by means of a vacuum. It is an ideal treatment for acne scarring, congestion, large open pores, sun damaged skin, uneven pigmentation and fine lines. It is a quick procedure lasting for 20 - 30 minutes or an hour if it is combined with other treatments such as masks or massage.

Treatments are recommended every two weeks as part of a course of six to eight treatments. More recently a special resurfacing treatment has become available using diamond tipped wands instead of

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crystals to exfoliate the skin and a vacuum to remove the skin cells. Microdermabrasion also stimulates the elastin and collagen in the skin making it healthier and firmer in appearance.

Hair removal *(Image below courtesy of Gabriella Fabbri)*

Salons have been using hot and warm wax to remove superfluous hair, temporarily for many years and in recent years sugaring has been added as an alternative by those therapists who prefer it. Any area of the body can be treated, the most popular areas are legs, underarms and bikini line but many clients are using this method of hair removal on the eyebrow and also on the lip and chin. The hair takes longer to grow back than with other methods, such as shaving and depilatory creams, normally between three to six weeks. The wax is applied to the hair using different techniques



depending on the manufacturer and the hair is removed from the root with as little discomfort as possible. The whole treatment is very quick and provides smooth hair free skin with a much finer regrowth than with other methods. There is a current trend for specialised bikini wax treatments including; Brazilian, Hollywood, Playboy, Las Vegas, Bollywood and Shaping. These styles vary from - all hair off completely, sometimes with the addition of a henna tattoo - to a small line or shape, possibly with adornment such as crystals to finish off the look!

Men are following the trend in hair removal and enjoying smooth hair free bodies as well as the 'Speedo' the equivalent of the ladies' bikini wax. There are many salons now specialising in waxing for men and offering an all over removal advertised as the back sac and crack.

More recently laser hair removal has been advocated as a more efficient method of permanently removing superfluous hair. It is advised that the client attends for a course of treatments, this will depend on the individual client's hair growth. After this initial course, the hair is either permanently removed or weakened, to such a degree that it rarely grows back, or is very fine and over time with more treatments will diminish even further.

Eye treatments will include:

Eyebrow shaping using tweezers, wax or the specialist technique of threading to reshape the brow completely, or just to remove stray hairs that spoil the overall look of the brow. The odd hair that is too long, an odd white hair amongst the dark may cause this, or they may be appearing on the upper lid area preventing the smooth application of eye shadow.

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Eyebrow and eyelash tinting is a method used to temporarily colour the brows and lashes to match hair colour. It also adds depth and intensity to existing colour or for clients who don't like wearing makeup, cannot wear mascara or do not want to e.g swimmers, when on holiday, participating in a particular sport and contact lens wearers.



Eyelash perming is a treatment offered to clients who have short or very straight eyelashes, it is similar to hair perming but the products used are safe for the eye area. Ideal for clients who use eyelash curlers on a regular basis as the temporary curl will last for several weeks or for those with very straight short lashes.

Eyelash extensions are individually applied lashes attached to the real hair one at a time, using a special bonding agent. There are different lengths, textures, colours and thickness to choose from. This is classed as a semi permanent treatment as the lashes if well applied could last up to six weeks. It is recommended that infills are applied after three weeks to replace the lashes that fall out with normal wear and tear. Aftercare advice must be strictly followed to ensure the lashes remain in place for the time specified by the therapist

Makeup application

Makeup applied well can enhance attractive features and camouflage problems. There are several types of makeup application available and they may include:

Wedding makeup, when the therapist provides a trial run through before the event and makeup on the day usually in the bride's home. She will discuss with the bride before the event, the design of the wedding dress, the colour scheme, what jewellery and accessories will be worn and any personal preferences before trying out the suggested makeup. This allows the bride the opportunity to change anything she feels is not suitable. A good bridal makeup will provide a natural and flawless look and be long lasting and easily retouched throughout the day. The bride may wish to purchase the lipstick used so that it can be reapplied for photographs or after eating and drinking.



Special occasion makeup when a more dramatic look is required for a party, anniversary or other special occasion.

Photographic makeup particularly when black and white photos are being taken as special shading and colour schemes are required to achieve the best results.

Cosmetic camouflage to disguise birthmarks or blemishes on the skin using specialised products to create a natural look. This type of makeup can also be used to cover tattoos, particularly for a wedding

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or special occasion when a low cut dress may be worn exposing a tattoo that may normally be hidden. An expert may also be able to cover burns, scars and unsightly veins.

Makeup lessons are very popular with women of all ages. The therapist will demonstrate how to apply the makeup and at the same time teach the client what makeup to use to suit her colouring and facial features and how to apply it correctly.

Permanent makeup is a type of cosmetic tattooing and is often referred to as micropigmentation. It is used to enhance features by depositing tiny amounts of pigment into the dermal layer of the skin. It may be applied to the eyebrows, as eyeliner and also to outline the lips. It is popular with clients who take part in sport, want to add colour, have allergies to cosmetics or find it difficult to apply makeup.

False tan application *(photo courtesy of Heather Sorenson)*

This has become a very popular salon treatment for those clients who want an all year round tan, without damaging their skin by sunbathing for hours on end! It provides a healthy looking sun kissed glow in a very short period of time, if applied using an airbrush spray. It is recommended that the client exfoliates their skin before they have the treatment to prepare their skin for an even application. It may also be applied manually by the therapist. This will take a little longer as the therapist will exfoliate and moisturise the client's skin first and then massage the false tan cream into the skin for a lovely relaxing treatment. Aftercare advice includes moisturising your skin daily after the salon treatment to prolong the life of the tan.



Body massage

Massage relaxes both body and mind, restores energy and is an antidote to a stressful life. Stress can lead to imbalances within many areas of the body's systems. Massage helps to reduce this stress and therefore leads to the re-balancing of the body. This, in turn, contributes to improvement in the function of all major body systems.

Massage may be defined as a series of non invasive manual techniques that affect one or more structures of the body - muscles, joints, skin, fatty tissue, fasciae, blood and lymphatic vessels, etc, - in order to release pain, reduce swelling, enhance mobility of joints and alleviate emotional and mental tension. There are different forms of massage, employing different techniques, offered in salons and they include; Swedish, Aromatherapy, Lymphatic drainage, Balinese and Hot Stone.

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Swedish massage is a deep manipulation of muscles and skin tissue, using oil, cream or talcum powder. It is a relaxing and uplifting treatment and the therapist uses a combination of massage movements from fairly superficial and soothing stroking movements to more vigorous deep pressure movements designed to remove tension nodules in the muscles and stimulate the blood circulation. It is called



'Swedish' massage because, it was developed by a Swedish gymnastics instructor, Per Henrik Ling. It is he who defined the techniques that are used today and devised a massage system using the positions and movements of his gymnasts and his knowledge of the circulatory and lymphatic systems. It is used by both massage therapists and physiotherapists today and is a form of massage that adapts the depth and pressure of treatment for each individual client.

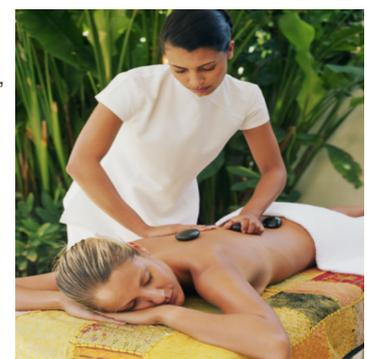
Aromatherapy massage is a form of massage that is relaxing and uplifting as it combines the therapeutic effect of a gentle massage with the specific effects of essential oils mixed into a carrier or base oil. The essential oils have specific properties, which may be used to benefit the psychological and physical well being of the client.



Lymphatic drainage is a gentle form of massage designed to stimulate the lymphatic system, the body's natural waste disposal system. A Danish medical doctor E.Vodder and his wife developed this relatively new massage technique, in 1932. Vodder, who also discovered and developed a new branch of medicine called Lymphology, created this method primarily to treat patients with swollen necks or limbs due to poor lymph flow. He applied a series of particular rhythmic, light strokes along the lymphatic vessels and surrounding tissues to help the flow of lymph toward the heart thus reduce swelling in the affected area. It also helps to flush toxins out of the body and this form of massage is particularly helpful in improving the dreaded 'cellulite' condition.

Balinese Massage is a massage therapy that has been passed down through generations using a combination of stretching, skin rolling, acupressure and deep pressure techniques, it works very deeply to ease muscle and joint pain. It is an ancient system of healing which relies upon deep pressure massage to break down tensely knotted tissue and promote harmony of body, mind and soul, it improve circulation and calms the nerves.

Hot Stone Massage is a therapy that is becoming widely available and is known for its deeply relaxing benefits. It employs a technique that uses smooth, heated basalt stones, which are placed on specific acupressure points on the body to melt away knots, tension and stress. It can also be applied as a relaxation technique using hot essential oils. Hot Stone Massage is based on "anma", the oldest form of East Asian massage, a kneading, rotation and



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vibration-based massage. It is one of the most powerful, therapeutic treatments and was introduced to the Western world, not only as a form of massage, but as a traditional art and ancient wisdom.

Mechanical massage may be applied using a heavy duty G5 machine that increases circulation and lymphatic drainage whilst helping to break down fat and improve a cellulite condition. It provides a deep tissue massage and helps to relax contracted muscles and reduce muscle spasm as well as having an exfoliating effect on the skin leaving it feeling smooth and even textured. Audiosonic massage is an electrical device that emits sound waves and is applied to the skin without much pressure. It is generally used to treat tension nodules in the muscles. The effects are deep but as the massage does not create much friction it is ideal for sensitive skin.

Heat Treatments

These may include, sauna, which is a dry heat with low humidity, steam, which is a wet heat with high humidity and Infra red, the application of heat through radiant heat lamps. The application of heat helps to relax the body, deep cleanse the skin, soothe aches and pains and prepare the client for further treatment. It also speeds up the blood and lymph circulations, increasing nourishment and oxygen in the tissues and speeding up the removal of toxins whilst boosting the immune system.

Body firming and toning treatments

These are very popular and include muscle contraction treatments, to tighten and firm muscles and lose inches and anti cellulite treatments to improve the texture and look of the skin in the areas of the body affected. The treatments exercise the muscles helping to tighten and firm, stimulate the lymphatic system to remove accumulated waste products and stimulate the circulation thus improving skin texture. Micro-current treatments are also available to lift and tighten body contours whilst improving skin condition, without any contraction of muscles.

Body masks and wraps

After a thorough body exfoliation the body is covered with a thick application of specially prepared masks or treatment products made from ingredients such as; clay, mud, minerals, sea algae, salt, or fruit acids and then wrapped in a warm cocoon to allow the body to absorb the products and benefit from the therapeutic effects of the ingredients. Whilst in the cocoon the therapist may provide a face and scalp massage to further aid relaxation. The main benefits are an improved skin texture and tone, to aid lymphatic drainage, eliminate toxins, revitalise and nourish the skin

Wraps are also used to eliminate toxins and help to lose inches, after covering the body in a paste of salts and clay it is then wrapped in warm cotton bandages that are also soaked in a solution containing the salts and clay. The effects of this treatment are exfoliation of dead skin cells and the drawing out of impurities leaving the skin firmer and tighter.



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Intense Pulsed Light

This is a non invasive treatment that uses high intensity pulses of visible light to improve the appearance of some skin problems, such as; rosacea, vascular lesions, broken capillaries on the face, thread veins on the body, acne, age marks, lines and wrinkles and for unwanted hair removal.

Specialised Anti ageing treatments

Some of the most popular anti ageing treatments include non surgical treatments and therapies that help to reduce facial lines and wrinkles and counteract the signs of ageing. These treatments although non surgical must be carried out by a qualified medical practitioner. They include; Laser treatment, Botox® anti wrinkle injections to soften fine lines and wrinkles, Juvederm, Restylane and Perlane to fill deeper lines and restore volume, or a natural collagen stimulator. Many clients feel more comfortable having these treatments in the spa or salon environment where they have their other beauty treatments and there are many salons now that have a specialist Doctor visiting the premises to provide these treatments for the clients. Alternatively beauty therapists are working in conjunction with dermatologists and cosmetic surgery practitioners within their medical practise to provide post and pre operative beauty treatments.

Before embarking on any cosmetic procedure, invasive or non invasive, it is important to research the market thoroughly and make sure the practitioner you use has the right qualifications and experience to carry out the work involved. There are several professional organisations to contact such as; the British Association of Cosmetic Doctors and The British Association of Aesthetic Plastic Surgeons. It is also important that they have the Quality Care Commission stamp of approval.