

Facial Extravaganza!

at Vermont Center for Integrative Herbalism with Larken Bunce

Step 1: Steaming

Steaming opens our pores with heat, brings blood to the surface of the skin and relaxes us as we ease into our oasis of rest and luxury. Choose herbs for both their aromatherapeutic values and their action on your skin. You can use a few drops of essential oil for a quick “emergency steam”, but steaming dried herbs releases their volatile oils, so you get the same properties as you would from essential oils, but dried herbs are gentler and much less expensive. You can even do a quick steam over a mug of tea!

Herbs to consider:

1. Lavender flowers – relaxing, uplifting; relieve headaches; tone skin; good for all skin types
2. Rose petals – open the heart; anti-depressant; aphrodisiac; the ultimate luxury for skin, they are toning and anti-inflammatory; great for all skin types, especially “problem” & sensitive skin
3. Lemon balm leaf – uplifting; the “gladdening herb”; anti-depressant; relieves insomnia; good for oily skin
4. Rosemary leaf – invigorating; enhances brain function; good for headaches; great for dry, dull skin

Boil water and pour into stainless or appropriate ceramic or glass bowl. Blend herbs by small hand-fulls according to your skin type and pleasure. After adding to water, making sure herbs are moistened, sit comfortably at a table where you can lean over the bowl. Drape a large towel over your head so no steam can escape, then close your eyes and place your face over the bowl. Get as close to the bowl as is comfortable. Take breathers every few minutes, but stay under until you feel your pores open and your shoulders relax. Breathe deeply while you’re under—steams are good for our respiratory systems, too.

Step 2: Scrubbing/Cleansing

These scrubs are meant to very gently exfoliate dead skin cells, increase circulation of nutrients to the skin (and of wastes out of cells) and to lift dirt, debris and oils out of pores and from the skin’s surface. Many scrubs and cleansers are too abrasive and drying, leaving skin irritated. Both of these recipes include oil which actually attracts the dirt accumulated on the skin (also good to remove make-up), while maintaining a healthy layer of oil on the skin. This is actually fantastic for those with oily skin, as we actually produce *more* oil after aggressively astringing (drying) skin. Using oil-based cleansers helps break that cycle.

Purposes of each ingredient:

1. Corn meal/corn flour – gentle exfoliant, helping to remove dead cells and dirt and encourage new cell growth
2. Oatmeal – gentle exfoliant; soothes inflamed skin
3. Fixed oil – to moisten the grains, to remove dirt and dead cells (choose one or a combo from list at end of handout)
2. Essential oils – each plant has unique properties which can include promoting healthy skin cell growth, soothing inflammation, reducing bacteria, and regulating oil secretion, not to mention positively affecting mental and emotional wellbeing (choose one or a combo from list at end of handout)

Recipe #1-Cleansing Grains:

2 Tbsp cleansing grains (equal parts corn meal/corn flour and oatmeal, ground finely—can add lavender buds or roses, ½ part green clay if desired)

Enough liquid to make a paste - equal parts water and fixed oil (hazelnut or peach kernel oils)

A total of 2-5 drops of essential oils – choose oils based on properties listed at end of this handout

Stir ingredients with clean utensil. Apply to face gently and rub in circles with finger tips. Wipe face with paper towel, rinse and pat dry.

SAMPLE ESSENTIAL OIL COMBINATIONS:

These are good scent combinations and benefit each of the skin types...feel free to create your own!!!

Dry/Dull:

LAVENDER

ROSEMARY

Combination:

LAVENDER

GERANIUM

YLANG YLANG

Oily /Problem:

ORANGE

YLANG YLANG

Recipe #2-Almond Scrub:

1 Tbsp almond butter

1 tsp rosewater or couple drops rose oil

This scrub is inspired by Dr. Hauschka's wonderful almond cleanser. I've been told that using straight almond butter is the next best thing. The rose helps to make it a little more "lovely"—so you don't entirely feel like you're making a sandwich! You can also add other essential oils as in the combos above, but some may smell better with almond than others...

Step 3: Mask

The primary goal of a mask is to expose your skin to healing ingredients for an extended period. Some focus on toning pores, others focus on penetrating the skin with nutrients and moisture, while others focus on drawing wastes and exfoliating. Since masks are generally reserved for occasional use (1-4x/month), some folks will keep some available for spot treatment of blemishes. There are a zillion mask recipes out there; many include clay (which I find too drying), some include blended fruit!! But my all-time favorite, for all skin types, is a simple honey mask.

Honey, above all, is an excellent humectant, meaning it draws moisture to the skin. It is also antimicrobial (including bacteria, viruses and fungi), anti-inflammatory, anti-carcinogenic, anti-allergenic, an immune stimulant, and it promotes cell regeneration. It is also full of vitamins, minerals and live enzymes (if raw) which nourish and cleanse the skin.

To give yourself, or better yet a friend, a honey mask and massage, put 2 tablespoons of honey in a small cup and apply liberally! Massage the face gently and thoroughly--massaging the skin improves circulation, waste-removal and cellular regeneration. Allow honey to soak in for an additional 2-5 minutes--relax. Rinse with warm water and pat dry.

Step 4: Tone & Moisturize (Hydrosols)

We tend to think of toners as closing up the pores and so, sometimes this is a finishing step. However, others like to use this step not just to tighten up pores after opening them up and nourishing the cells, but also to add moisture (especially if you haven't done the honey mask). Toning also reduces inflammation and uneven texture and stimulates circulation. Our final step will be a cream or oil-based serum, which will seal the toner's moisture in and protect the face.

My favorite toners are hydrosols (floral waters), though often folks use witch hazel. Again, this is a little drying from my perspective. Another lovely toner is Queen of Hungary's Water. This generally involves some vinegar and witch hazel which have been infused with such herbs as rose petals, chamomile, calendula, rosemary, lemon balm, sage, comfrey, and lemon peel. To every cup of this strained infusion is added ½ cup rosewater (rose hydrosol). Delicious!! More astringing than straight hydrosols, but quite anti-inflammatory and healing to tissue, too.

You may choose either lavender or rose hydrosols as appropriate for your skin's needs or your scent preference. Other hydrosols include chamomile and yarrow (great anti-inflammatories).

Rose hydrosol: for all skin types; mildly antiseptic, soothing, tones broken capillaries, anti-inflammatory
Lavender hydrosol: balances all skin types; anti-inflammatory; soothes sunburned or irritated skin

I love to make refreshing sprays to use not just as a toning step, but also to use during the day as a pick-me-up, after sun and after cleansing before bed. These can be as creative as you'd like, including not just hydrosols, but also essential oils, flower essences, a bit of honey, and aloe gel. Divine!

Step 5: Seal & Protect (Cream/Serum)

Cream can be used to seal and protect the face. The lighter creams with more water content can also add moisture, especially if you haven't used a moistening toner. I prefer serums made with fixed oils and essential oils which simply protect and hold moisture in, while also often being antimicrobial and anti-inflammatory.

Choose one or more oils from the fixed oil list at the end of the handout. Blend a half ounce with 12 or so drops of essential oil. Apply in minute amounts using your fingertips. You will need approximately ½ tsp for your whole face.

Daily Facial Oasis:

This process represents the "long form" of facial luxury, to be performed 1-4x/month, depending on time and desire. To use these items daily, try the following in the morning:

1. Almond scrub
2. Hydrosol toner
3. Oil Serum or Cream

At night:

1. Almond scrub
2. Hydrosol toner
3. Serum or cream around eyes only

Other tips to remember:

1. Always be gentle with your skin! Massage lightly with fingertips.
2. Pat dry; never scrub or rub w/towel.
3. Don't forget your neck and collarbone area—these need love, too!
4. Never wash around your eyes—this skin doesn't have oil glands, so will be dried out by soap or lots of exfoliation. Add oil to eye area with serums or creams.
5. Don't forget lips. Exfoliation can be nice, as can honey treatment and sealing with a nice lip salve.
6. Try doing a warm oil or avocado treatment on your hair while doing the long facial at least once a month. Then rinse with vinegar—especially an herb infused vinegar—such as nettle or horsetail.

Fixed Oil Qualities:

1. Avocado oil – contains vitamins A, D, E; soothes sensitive skin; screens sun's rays; improves collagen production
2. Hazelnut oil – excellent for dry, irritated skin; filters sun; encourages cell regeneration & elasticity of skin; improves circulation; non-greasy feel
3. Hempseed oil – anti-inflammatory & antioxidant; especially healing for dry skin
4. Peach kernel oil – light & penetrating oil similar to almond oil; nice for sensitive skin
4. Jojoba oil – closest to human sebum, absorbs nicely/non-greasy
5. Rosehip seed oil –skin cell regenerator for dry, scaly skin, scars, burns and aging skin. Add to other carriers at 10% dilution
6. Seabuckthorn oil –nourishing, regenerative, and restorative; heals injuries, burns, wounds, eczema, sun damage; for wrinkles, acute dryness and prematurely aged skin; use in 10-20% dilution

Essential Oil Qualities:

lavender: good for all skin types; anti-bacterial; anti-inflammatory; good for eczema & psoriasis, as well as sunburn; relaxing, anti-depressant, aids sleep & relieves headaches
geranium: balancing to all skin types; anti-wrinkling; relieves anxiety & stress
ylang ylang: for all skin types; especially good for oily or “problem” skin; anti-depressant; sedative; aphrodisiac
orange: for oily skin; soothing & anti-depressant; invigorating
rosemary: for all skin types; especially for dry and mature skin; balances mind & body; enlivening; improves memory and alleviates headaches
peppermint: for dry skin; stimulates oil production; anti-inflammatory, antiseptic; uplifting; invigorating; counters mental fog and insomnia (don’t use too much, it can create a burning sensation on the skin)
helichrysum: best for traumas, bruises(internal, external), burns; acne, dermatitis, eczema; regenerating, aids broken veins, stretch marks, inflammations, warts, wounds, old scars
frankincense: tonic to all skin, but balances oily; anti-inflammatory, antiseptic, antidepressant, wound healing; good for acne, dry/mature aged skin, smoothes wrinkles, good for scars

Suggested Dilutions of Essential Oils:

Application	# of Drops	Amount of Carrier
Massage Oil \ Lotion (1.5% dilution)	50 - 60	4 ounces oil
Ointment (3%)	50 - 60	2 ounces oil
Topical Application (6.5%)	50 - 60	1 ounce oil
Compress	5	8 ounces water
Bath	5 - 15	tub full of water
Foot Bath	8 – 10	bowl of water
Facial Sauna	2 – 5	bowl of warm water
Facial Mask	2 – 3	1 tsp clay
Facial Oil	6 – 8	1 / 3 ounce oil
Cleanser (0.5%)	10 - 15	4 ounces oil
Hair Oil	10 - 20	1 ounce oil
Body Mist	10 - 20	4 ounces water
Room Spray	20 - 30	4 ounces water

1ml = 20-30 drops; 5ml = 1/6 ounce; 15ml = 1/2 ounce; 30ml = 1 ounce; 60ml = 2 ounce; 100ml = 3.5 ounce

**these are approximate and fluctuate depending on viscosity of oil

From Simpler’s Botanicals: www.simplers.com

Resources for Making Your Own Face Care Products & Exploring Herbal Medicine:

Aromatherapy Books:

Aromatherapy by Kathi Keville & Mindy Green

The Complete Book of Essential Oils & Aromatherapy by Valerie Ann Worwood

Aromatherapy for Healing the Spirit by Gabriel Mojay

Earthly Bodies, Heavenly Hair by Dina Falconi

Beginning Herb Books:

The Family Herbal by Rosemary Gladstar

The Roots of Healing: A Woman's Book of Herbs by Deb Soule

Flower Power by Anne McIntyre

An Encyclopedia of Natural Healing for Children & Infants by Mary Bove

Making Plant Medicine by Richo Cech

The Herbal Medicine-Maker's Handbook by James Green

Supply Sources:

Lunaroma, Burlington, VT – lovely local essential oil shop

Tulsi Tea Room/Green Mountain Medicinals, Montpelier, VT – local tea room and source for bottles, ingredients and bulk herbs

Floracopeia, CA (www.floracopeia.com) - high quality and organic essential oils

Essential Aura, BC Canada (www.essentialaura.com) - excellent organic supplies for Aromatherapy

ZackWoods Herb Farm, Hyde Park, VT (www.zackwoodsherbs.com) - family herb farm offering high quality fresh and dried bulk herbs

Mountain Rose Herbs (www.mountainrose.com) - high quality essential oils, base oil, supplies, herbs...EVERYTHING!

Avena Botanicals, ME (www.avenaherbs.com) - high quality organic herbal products

Pacific Botanicals, OR (www.pacificbotanicals.com) - high quality bulk herbs (1 lb. minimum)