

Indulge in DIY Home-Spa Treatments

Many of us who lead hectic, fast pace lives would agree that there are days, especially stormy, rainy days, when nothing feels more pleasurable than staying at home and chilling out with a good book and a cup of tea or coffee. Far from being boring, time spent at home can actually be very rejuvenating for the mind and spirit. If one lives alone, this 'me-only time' can be used for quiet contemplation and total relaxation. If one lives with the family, there is the additional bonus of catching up with loved ones after one has had enough of his or her own company.

For the same reason, DIY home-spa is getting more and more popular even with the proliferation of day spas all over the world. Far from being a time-consuming hassle, those who swear by DIY home-spa treatments actually enjoy the process of preparing these treatments. The following are also often cited reasons:

- The processing of grinding, mixing and processing the fruits, herbs, oils, and other natural ingredients can be very therapeutic.
- It brings out one's 'latent creative ingenuity' as preparing DIY home-spa treatments are all about creativity and improvisation, within certain parameters of course!
- With DIY treatments, one knows exactly what goes into every formula. For people with sensitive skin, this helps to eliminate potentially-sensitizing ingredients like synthetic fragrances, colors and other chemicals which are used in commercially-prepared treatment products used in most spas.
- With the right choice of ingredients, one can be assured of absolute freshness and quality in every treatment.
- DIY home-spa treatments can be done at your own pace and adapted to suit your personal whims and needs. For example, you can do a body scrub followed by a herbal bath in the evening as a ritual to prepare yourself for a good night's sleep and then go to bed soon after without having to deal with the hassle of driving or public transport after a session at the spa.



How to Get the Most Out of Your Home-Spa Treatment

Like any spa treatments, to get the best out of your home-spa, it is good to set aside one or two hours of private time. Decide on what you want to do. Do you simply crave a nice, warm soak in a herbal bath to soothe those aching muscles or do you want to include a scrub and a massage? If you have a partner and your partner is in a generous mood, get him or her to pamper you with a massage. You can always return the favor another time! In fact, experts have always encouraged partners to give each other massages as a way to foster intimacy and closeness. So perhaps, a DIY home-spa session is the perfect way for couples to bond.

In any case, don't be overly ambitious (unless you have plenty of time and energy) and attempt to do too many treatments at one session. The whole idea is to slow down and savor the process at a relaxing pace.

Basic Dos and Don'ts

The therapeutic quality of home-spa treatments lies in the freshness and purity of the ingredients. Therefore, always use the freshest possible ingredients. Make sure that ingredients like fruits, vegetable and herbs are washed thoroughly before processing so that you can be sure that what you apply on your face and body are free from pesticides and herbicides.

In addition, ensure that the kitchenware and utensils used for preparing your home-spa treatments are clean and dry as excess moisture will encourage bacteria growth. To avoid cross-contamination, it is a good idea to avoid using the same kitchenware that is used for processing meats and seafood.

Sample Spa Sessions

Spa Session 1: Relaxing Session

Purpose: Relieve Stress, Promote Better Sleep

Recipe: Calming and Relaxing Herbal Bath

(Page 113, Nature's Spa: DIY Beauty Treatments)

Ingredients:

<i>Albizia bark</i>	<i>He huan pi</i>	<i>5 qian</i>
<i>Spiny date seed</i>	<i>Suan zao ren</i>	<i>5 qian</i>
<i>Biota seed</i>	<i>Bai zi ren</i>	<i>4 qian</i>
<i>Dried rose buds</i>	<i>Mei gui hua</i>	<i>4 qian</i>
<i>Poria</i>	<i>Ful ling</i>	<i>3 qian</i>
<i>Polygonum vine</i>	<i>Ye jiao teng</i>	<i>3 qian</i>

Application: 1

Preparation:

- 1. Wash herbs thoroughly by rinsing a few times.*
- 2. Place all the herbs in an earthen or glass pot.*
- 3. Add 10 bowls of water and soak for 30 minutes.*
- 4. After soaking for 30 minutes, place on the stove and bring to a boil with high heat.*
- 5. Reduce to low heat and brew for 35 minutes.*
- 6. Remove from heat and allow to cool completely.*
- 7. Steep to remove the herbs from the liquid.*

How to use:

- 1. Fill your bathtub with warm water (water temperature should be between 38°C to 41°C).*
- 2. Pour herbal extract into the bathwater.*
- 3. Enjoy!*

Note: Not recommended for people experiencing insomnia due to excess heat in the body.

Other Tips:

1. *This spa bath is best taken at night 1 or 2 hours before bed-time.*
2. *Massage your limbs gently while soaking in the bathwater to promote the removal of excess toxins from your body.*
3. *Meditate on happy, positive thoughts while enjoying your spa bath.*

Spa Session 2: Hair Treatment Session

Purpose: Treats and repairs dry, damaged hair

Recipe: Banana Hair Mask

Ingredients:

Large, fully ripen banana

*1 or 2, (depending on
the length of your hair)*

Honey

3 teaspoons

Extra-virgin olive oil

2 to 3 teaspoons

Application: 1

Preparation:

1. *Remove skin from banana.*
2. *Mash banana with a mortar and pestle until you obtain a smooth paste.*
3. *Stir in honey and olive oil. Mix thoroughly.*

Application:

1. *Dampen hair thoroughly with warm water.*
2. *Squeeze away all excess water.*
3. *Apply banana hair mask evenly onto hair shaft. Do not apply directly onto the scalp.*

4. *Roll up your hair if you have long hair. Secure with a clip and cover with a shower cap.*
5. *Let the mask work on your hair for 45 to 60 minutes. In the meantime, relax, read a book or listen to some music.*
6. *To remove the hair mask, rinse your hair and scalp thoroughly with warm water. Massage with a small amount of hair conditioner if necessary. Rinse thoroughly follow with a light shampoo.*

Last but not least...

Have fun and enjoy your DIY Home-Spa!

