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## **Hair and Skin Care Tips from Around the World**

For years, people have asked me about my youthful-looking skin and long hair. I want to share with you my knowledge in this area acquired throughout the years, including beauty secrets revealed to me during my journeys to foreign lands.

Gorgeous hair and beautiful skin are two of our most visible assets. Healthy skin feels great. Confidence that your hair is lovely and well-arranged will free up energy to use in other areas of your life.

A mind-boggling array of techniques and care products are available, and because each person's hair and skin are unique, it is important to find the ones that work well for you. Choose natural, plant-based products. Avoid products with potentially irritating synthetic ingredients, as well as petroleum-based products that the skin cannot absorb. Avoid products with parabens and sodium laurel sulfate.

[Robert Marikawa Davis](#), [Diplomate of Chinese Herbology](#) and [Diplomate of Acupuncture](#), practicing at [Midwest Therapeutics](#), says, "In [Chinese Medicine](#) the skin and hair are connected to the lungs and kidneys. The lungs are represented through the skin and kidneys and reflect the quality of the hair. By treating the source through herbs, diet, and [acupuncture](#), one can induce a change or balance."

Did you ever notice that some people radiate beauty? [Sat Inder Khalsa](#), Co-director and Teacher at [3HO Foundation of Missouri](#), reports, "A familiar yogic expression is, 'Your greatest gift of life is the breath.' Our ability to accept this gift is reflected in our skin. When we breathe effectively, pranic energy circulates more powerfully throughout the body, and our skin becomes radiant. Our electromagnetic field expands, giving us a more clear and powerful projection. When we combine movements, such as neck rolls, with the breath, blockages to the flow of energy into the head are removed, and the full benefits are realized. Other helpful practices are maintaining a healthy diet, including drinking plenty of water, avoiding sugar, and keeping a positive attitude."

Providing more information from China, Jean Zhao, owner of [Happy Feet and Hand Spa](#), says the Chinese recommend a good head massage daily for five to ten minutes for healthy skin and hair. (Mark Twain was famous for his thick head of hair, which he attributed to a daily five-minute head massage.) Zhao also emphasizes that eating plenty of fruits and vegetables is essential for beautiful hair and skin.

## **Skin**

To have skin like a baby's bottom, treat it like a baby's bottom—very gently. [Nutrition](#) and [hydration](#) are important, according to [Laura Rues](#), [naturopathic](#) physician at [Kansas City Integrative Health](#). She says, “The skin is the largest organ of the body, and it often is a window into a person's internal environment. Acne, dry skin, and yellowing of the skin can be signs of other health conditions, including hormone irregularities or liver disorders.” Even dehydration affects the skin. [Dr. Rues](#) continues, “Many of us don't get enough water throughout the day. Dehydration makes your skin look dry, dull, and wrinkled. Ensuring adequate fluid intake (half your body weight in ounces of water daily) is not only good for the health of your skin, but also your overall health.” Healthy skin feels vibrant and alive.

Skin care is made up of four parts: cleansing, moisturizing, protecting, and decorating.

**Cleansing:** Each morning and night, cleanse the skin. To avoid transferring unhealthy elements from your hands to your face, wash your hands repeatedly until the soap bubbles appear white. Rinse thoroughly. Then, wash your face and neck with a product of your choice, using your hands or a clean, white cotton washcloth. Nian Zhao of [Happy Feet and Hand Spa](#) said that her mother uses rice water (the water left from rinsing rice) to wash her face, a custom common in China. After washing, gently pat your skin dry with a clean, white cotton cloth. The final step in cleansing is toning. Put a small amount of toner on a cotton pad. Then use upward motions over the face and neck to remove any remaining residue. Discard the cotton pad.

French women, who are known for their attention to beauty, recommend having a professional facial at the change of each season. Becky McCarty, a [licensed aesthetician](#) at [Lotus Skin Care Studio](#), says that regular facials will deeply clean and moisturize the skin to maintain its natural beauty.

**Moisturizing and protecting:** A variety of products are available for moisturizing. Robert Marikawa [Davis](#) says, “Coconut oil is amazing in its qualities. Used as a lotion, it increases elastin of the skin and reduces wrinkles.” Phoenix at [Spirited You](#) loves using coconut oil instead of soap to bathe her body. Since coconut oil is solid at room temperature, she puts some in a small plastic bottle with a screw top and tosses it into the bathtub before showering or bathing. The heat from the water liquefies enough oil by the time she is ready to cleanse and moisturize her skin. This leaves the skin soft and supple. [Jeanette Knittel](#), owner of [Avoru](#), has very sensitive skin and enjoys using argon oil from Morocco on her body.

Sensitive eye areas may require specially designed moisturizers. Apply eye creams with the ring finger, moving toward the center of the face from the edges. During the day, use moisturizers with sunscreen. At night, use a richer cream. Nurturing serums and neck creams are also available. Layering moisturizing products can promote youthful-looking skin for your unique skin type. Feel free to experiment with combinations of products and techniques.

**Avoiding and reducing wrinkles:** The sun wreaks havoc on skin, adding years. Use sunscreen as well as moisturizers and foundation with sunscreen. Stay out of the sun between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. (adjust for daylight savings time). Use broad-brimmed hats and sunglasses that block sunlight from

all sides. Flat-brim hats stay on better in the wind. Wearing gloves when driving can slow aging on your hands.

When touching your face, move up whenever possible. Gravity needs no help to create sagging. Avoid rubbing your eyes. Use eye drops in the case of dryness.

While traveling in Thailand, I met a beautiful young woman who had the habit of raising her eyes and keeping them in that position for a prolonged period when she was talking. She had deep lines across her brow! To eliminate unwanted wrinkles, try this. After washing and toning (and before moisturizing), place some high quality cellophane tape over a wrinkle (avoiding sensitive eye areas). Press gently until the tape is smooth. Leave the tape on as long as possible, removing immediately if it becomes irritating. In addition to reducing or removing wrinkles, this will adjust wrinkle-causing facial choreography.

***Sensitive skin:*** If you have sensitive skin, determine if a product is suitable before using it. Place a dab of product on the inside of the forearm. Cover it with a small round Band-Aid and keep the area dry for 24 hours. After removing the Band-Aid, examine the skin. If it is smooth, the product will probably be suitable for you. If it is bumpy or irritated, do not use it.

***Decorating:*** If you choose, use a foundation and fix it with powder. Blushes, eye colors, and lipsticks can enhance any face.

Japanese women, long known for their beautiful skin, carry a clean, white cotton cloth to wipe perspiration, especially during the summer. Flour cloth or a clean white wash cloth will serve this purpose. Avoid touching your skin with your hands. Think where they have been—door knobs, shaking hands, restroom doors ... and more. Keep your skin clean by keeping your hands off!

## **Hair**

Lackluster hair can be an indicator of stress, lack of sleep, and poor self-care habits. Hair is elastic and tears easily. Because it is cut regularly, short hair can better tolerate the damaging effects of hair dryers, as well as harsh treatments and products. Long hair requires special care because it is cut less often or perhaps not at all.

***Combing and brushing hair:*** Gently brush or comb long hair. Use a wide-toothed comb. Ms. Zhao said the Chinese use wooden or horn combs to avoid creating electricity, resulting in smoother hair. Use a natural bristle brush to keep hair long and strong. Avoid plastic bristles, which tear the hair. Leave any tangles in until you have plenty of time to gently remove them.

Once when I was traveling in India, a woman with long, thick, curly hair, told me she brushes her hair thoroughly no more than once a week. In this way, she avoided tearing her hair, which can happen when it is brushed or combed too frequently.

***Shampooing:*** Experiment with shampoos and conditioners to find one you like. Harsh shampoos, such as those used to eliminate dandruff, can dry the scalp. Steer toward gentle products such as baby shampoos and those made from natural ingredients. Change products from time to time.

Before shampooing, braid long hair loosely to keep it from tangling. When washing, start with the scalp first and work toward the ends. After rinsing, condition the ends first and work up the hair to the scalp. Some people like to put a small amount of beer or vinegar in the water used to wash hair.

**Drying:** Avoid using hair dryers, as the heat will cause hair to break. After towel drying, allow the hair to dry naturally. If you are going out while it is wet, put the hair up into a bun or use clips.

**Using oils:** Oil produced by the scalp rarely reaches the ends of long hair. Applying oils and conditioners keeps hair nourished and reduces splitting. While in India, I read an article in a national newspaper about an Indian movie star who was famous for her beautiful hair. She said that any shampoo and conditioner will do. Her secret was olive oil. Once I started using olive oil on my hair, it grew long, because it no longer broke on the ends. Skillfully using oils to treat the hair will result in soft, shiny hair.

Dousing the hair and scalp with ample cold-pressed virgin olive oil once a month will do wonders. Using oil heated to a comfortable temperature can be effective, as well. Ayurveda oil mixtures specifically for hair are available. [Davis](#) says that coconut oil “helps thicken hair and prevents hair loss if used on the scalp.”

It is amazing how much oil the scalp and hair will absorb. Work as much oil as possible into the scalp and hair. Then slowly and gently use a wide-toothed (wooden or horn) comb to cover each strand with oil. Work tangles out carefully to avoid tearing. Tie the hair up and leave the oil in as long as possible—up to 24 hours. Then use plenty of shampoo to wash the hair, being careful to remove excess oil from around the edges of the hairline. Otherwise, the hair will feel and appear gummy when it dries.

In addition, you can apply oil after each shampooing to keep the hair shiny and to avoid split ends. After the hair is completely dry, rub a few drops of cold pressed extra virgin olive oil between the hands. Then rub it into the ends and gently over the surface of the hair. If the hair still feels dried out, apply a few more drops. Repeat as necessary.

Another option is to towel dry and lean over to allow the hair to hang down in front. After rubbing a palmful of Moroccan oil between the hands, massage it on the back of the neck, along the back of the hair, and finally into the ends.

### ***Other Hair Care Tips***

While traveling in Turkey, I had an opportunity to be with a family. Some of the women used henna on their hair. I have always wanted auburn hair, so using henna fulfilled this dream. They mixed some dry henna with water in a metal bowl and set it in the hot sun for several hours. After adding some lemon juice, they rubbed the paste into their hair. Washing it out after a few hours or overnight, the hair is soft, shiny, and has a lovely hue of red. The color is more or less permanent until the hair grows out.

- Use clips that don't tear or one-time use rubber bands that can be cut or broken before removing.
- Wild, curly hair might be tamed by wrapping it around the head and covering with a towel.

- Covering the hair to protect it from the elements, like the sun and wind, can be protective. To avoid sun damage, use products with sunscreen.
- Before bed, braid the hair loosely to avoid tangles.
- One tablespoon a day of blackstrap molasses taken orally may help retain hair color and contribute to softer, smoother hair. [Davis](#) says, “Molasses (unsulfured) is a great way to reduce hair loss and regain the luster through taking it orally in a drink daily. The minerals will help with muscle spasms, sleep, and ensure a healthy head of hair.”
- To nourish and rejuvenate hair follicles, molasses can be diluted with water or coconut milk and applied to the scalp. It should be left in for 15 minutes before being washed out with warm water.
- For individuals with black hair, Ms. Zhao of [Happy Feet and Hand Spa](#) says that eating black sesame seeds and walnuts can keep hair darker and shinier.

### **Summary**

Beautiful skin and hair enhance our lives and well-being. Discovering and incorporating self-care habits that fit your unique needs will provide the freedom to more fully enjoy your physical being.

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