

Body Wraps

Subcutaneous Fat – Yuck! That's the stuff we see bulging all over the place when we look in the mirror! It's the stuff that, as the fat cells become larger and fuller and the connective tissue becomes weaker, forms those ugly lumps and dimples of cellulite. It is the stuff that cosmetic surgeons liposuction out of thighs, butts and bellies, making a fortune.

Of course it has a role in the overall functioning of our body. Without it sitting would be very uncomfortable; it is the cushion between our bones and organs and the outside world. It insulates and helps the body maintain the constant temperature required. However, as usual, too much of a good thing always ends up becoming not so good!

As long as the skin and connective tissues are tight, firm and healthy, a reasonable excess of subcutaneous fat can look "pleasingly plump" and attractive. As age happens – and it always does –, the connective tissues loosen and allow everything to sag. Age and gravity are not even polite enough to be consistent over the whole body, so some areas look flabbier and/or lumpier than others do.

Weight loss, although healthier for the body in every way, doesn't address all the issues. Sometimes people think they look worse after losing a great deal of weight. Excess fat is unevenly distributed over the body and that becomes even more apparent as the fat cells lose their fat. The cells are still large and loose and the skin and connective tissues stretched, as they were to accommodate the extra fat. Although exercise strengthens and tones muscles and reduces fat, some of these spots cannot exercise away.

Also contributing to the problem are excess toxins, built up in the tissues, and edema due to poor circulation. These two things make us hurt and feel sick in addition to being unattractive.

Recently we've been discussing body wraps in my office. Several of my clients asked about them so I have been doing some research and learning many interesting things.

First, let me explain the concept. A mixture of natural clays (to absorb toxins) and herbs (to stimulate and nourish the body tissues) is spread over the body. Then hot, wet, cotton elastic wraps are wrapped tightly all over. There are many formulas that are designed to have different results. Sometimes the wraps are soaked in an herbal solution and wrapped on bare skin. Yes, the object is to end up looking like an Egyptian mummy!

Leave the wraps on at least an hour, and longer is better. Keep the wraps, and the body, warm and moist throughout the process. A vinyl sauna suit, donned over the wrap, allows freedom of movement without making a horrible mess. Exercising while wrapped increases the body temperature (so that more toxins are excreted) and stimulates circulation so that the nourishment absorbed from the herbs can be distributed more efficiently.

After removal, rinse and launder the wraps for reuse and shower the remaining mixture off the body. If the object is to lose inches, measure the upper arms, thighs

waist and hip before applying the wrap. After showering, the very same places should be measured again to determine the difference. If relaxation is the desired goal, one can be covered and kept warm while lying quietly.

One of my informational sources is my friend, Susie, who is a massage therapist. She does a lot of body wraps and is convinced of the benefits. She measures all her clients, before and after, and keeps a record over the course of multiple treatments. She says that she and her clients notice an immediate difference and that there is continuing improvement over the next few days. She says the inches removed are removed permanently, as long as the client maintains a healthy diet and exercise lifestyle. She verifies that the appearance of cellulite is dramatically improved and the skin becomes firmer, softer, smoother and more elastic.

Body wraps can be obtained in many ways. Most spas or private massage therapists offer them. Prices can vary dramatically based on the spa or therapist and the product used. Body wraps can be done at home. If you're a very private person, you can buy the products and wrap yourself. Or, get together with a friend (or many) and have a blast! Smearing each other with mud and wrapping each other with elastic bandages should be good for a lot of laughs. Then get out the "oldies" and dance! I would start with "The Monster Mash"!

I had a body wrap years ago with my sisters-in-law. We went to the place together, stripped to our underwear and let ourselves be wrapped into mummies. I remember being silly and having a lot of fun but I really wasn't paying attention to the results. At the time I was much younger and not very concerned about my health. I'll be trying it again very soon though.

In my online research, I found several products that looked interesting. I looked for reasonably priced products with the correct ingredients, excellent information and instructions and a "satisfaction or your money back" guarantee.

If you really want to be thrifty, or private, you can download an e-book. In "Wrap Yourself Slim: Body Wraps Exposed" the author, Danielle Sims, has included recipes you can easily make with ingredients from your local health food store. She says, "The ingredients in my formulas have been traditionally used for improving cellulite, conditioning the skin, tightening the skin, eliminating toxins, eliminating trapped fluids, relieving pain, and more... This is accomplished by applying these ingredients to your skin." Along with instructions and extra tips she also includes a money back guarantee.

So here's another natural way to detoxify and revitalize your body. Whether you want to have a spa wrap and feel pampered and relaxed or a kitchen full of laughing mummies, you can only feel better afterwards.

Patricia Kenworthy - September 2006