

A SPA OF YOUR OWN

The most indulgent body polish, the richest hair mask, the facial that makes you think you're at a five-star retreat.... It really is possible to create treatments at home that rival the ultimate spa visit. **By Lindsay Van Gelder**

Let's just say it up front: This will not be one of those tedious articles about the joys of self-pampering. Instead, it's about the times when you want spa results without getting naked in front of a stranger or struggling to find a time slot in a schedule as complicated as the federal tax code. Spa treatments at home are cheap (you already have most of the ingredients you need), private (dub), convenient (no appointment necessary), and surprisingly effective, once you know what you're

doing. And no, we're not talking about slapping on a clay mask by candlelight while chanting "om."

To discover how to carry out spa-level services, we called on some of the world's top experts and threw ourselves at their impeccably groomed feet. They mapped out their methods for a skin-tingling body scrub, a meticulous facial, a streak-free self-tan, and more. Think of these treatments not as self-pampering (although they may feel great), but as self-help—in the best sense of the term.

The Best Body Scrubs

Even the most unwanted dead skin deserves a decent burial. That's where this intense scrub—used once or twice a week—comes in. "The key is to hydrate while you exfoliate," says body therapist Michael Simon of the Ole Henriksen Face/Body Spa in West Hollywood.

1 PLAY WITH PASTE Heat a cup of almond, sesame, olive, or vegetable oil in the microwave for about 30 to 45 seconds (although microwaves vary). These are preferable to mineral and baby oils, which don't have the same nutrients and can clog pores. Add roughly a cup of raw sugar or kosher, table, or Epsom salt, until the oil is just thick enough to

spread like a paste on the skin. (Be sure to test just a tiny amount of the mixture on the back of your hand to make sure it's lukewarm, not burning hot.)

2 RUB IT IN Scrub in circular motions, working your way up from your feet and ankles to your legs, then to your wrists, arms, and torso. If your skin is sensitive, use your hands; for a more intense rub, wear nubby gloves.

3 LOCK IN MOISTURE The oil in the scrub will hydrate your skin, but some of that will be lost in the rinse. So it's always a good idea to apply body lotion afterward; slap it on while skin is still damp to make the most of it.





Jersey swimsuit by
Tooshie. Color Fever Shine
in Steamy by Lancôme.
Details, see Credits page.

The Perfect Facial

Scrub. Steam. Soothe. Reap the rewards. A weekly home facial is a great investment in beautiful skin.

1 CLEANSE Wash your face as usual—twice. This fully removes dirt, pollution, and makeup, says aesthetician Chanel Jenae, owner of the Arcona spa in Santa Monica, whose clients include Katherine Heigl and Diane Lane. If you have dry skin, choose a milky cleanser containing fatty acids; a basic foaming cleanser works for normal skin; and one with salicylic or glycolic acid is best for oily skin.

2 EXFOLIATE “You need to remove dead skin so that you’re not just rehydrating it,” says aesthetician Renée Rouleau of the Renée Rouleau Skin Care Spas in Dallas. For most skin types, she recommends a facial scrub with round microbeads. Women with rosacea or sensitive skin are better off with a mild, nongranular cleanser containing lactic or salicylic acid.

3 PEEL Those with sensitive skin should either exfoliate or use a peel, not both. But if your skin is oily, select a peel with salicylic acid, retinol, or glycolic acid, says facialist Olga Lorencin-Northrup of the Kinara spa in West Hollywood. For dry or normal skin, she recommends going for a peel with the more hydrating lactic or malic acid, or a combination of them.

4 STEAM “Pores don’t open and close the way everyone says they do,” notes Rouleau. But steam is still a necessary step just prior to extractions. “Blackheads are the consistency of hard butter; raising the temperature melts that oil and sebum and makes ex-

tractions easier,” she says. You can buy a portable steamer for home use—Jenae likes the Jellen Products model (\$149). Or you could throw a towel over your head and hold your face six to eight inches from a pot of boiling water—just be sure to turn off the burner (and move the pot) so your towel doesn’t catch fire.

5 EXTRACT Do not touch pimples (picking only spreads the infection and causes scars). For blackheads, there are extraction tools one can buy (various loops and spoons), but they’re only “as effective as the person using them,” says Jenae, so follow the instructions. Come at the blackhead from different angles: Start by gently rocking with the tool or your fingers (wrapped in tissues) at three o’clock and nine o’clock, say, and then move to other positions.

6 ADD SERUM Extractions, however carefully done, will inflame the skin—and a serum will calm it. Even if you don’t need extractions, skin that’s clean and exfoliated is “in its most receptive stage to receive the benefits of a rich serum,” says Jenae. She suggests formulas with soothing botanicals such as willow herb and chamomile, and/or antioxidants like resveratrol, green tea, and dismutase. Let the serum sink into the skin for a few minutes.

7 APPLY A MASK Pick one that suits your skin type (see box) and rub on a thin layer once a week, leaving it on for 15 to 20 minutes, notes Rouleau. If you have combination skin, put an oil-absorbing mask on your T-zone and a moisturizing mask on your cheeks. Rinse well with tepid water. Finish with your favorite cream.



Feeding Your Face

The local Whole Foods is full of goodies that your face finds delicious (and nutritious). We asked three facialists for skin-mask recipes.

Anti-aging Mask

Mix one teaspoon of brown sugar (a gentle exfoliant), three teaspoons of honey (it’s naturally hydrating, soothing, and antiseptic), and three teaspoons of steel-cut oatmeal (another exfoliant that’s also soothing). Squeeze in the contents of a 10,000 IU vitamin A capsule and blend in a half teaspoon of vitamin C powder—both are antioxidants. Add in five drops of lavender essential oil, an anti-inflammatory. —Ole Henriksen of the Ole Henriksen Face/Body Spa in Los Angeles

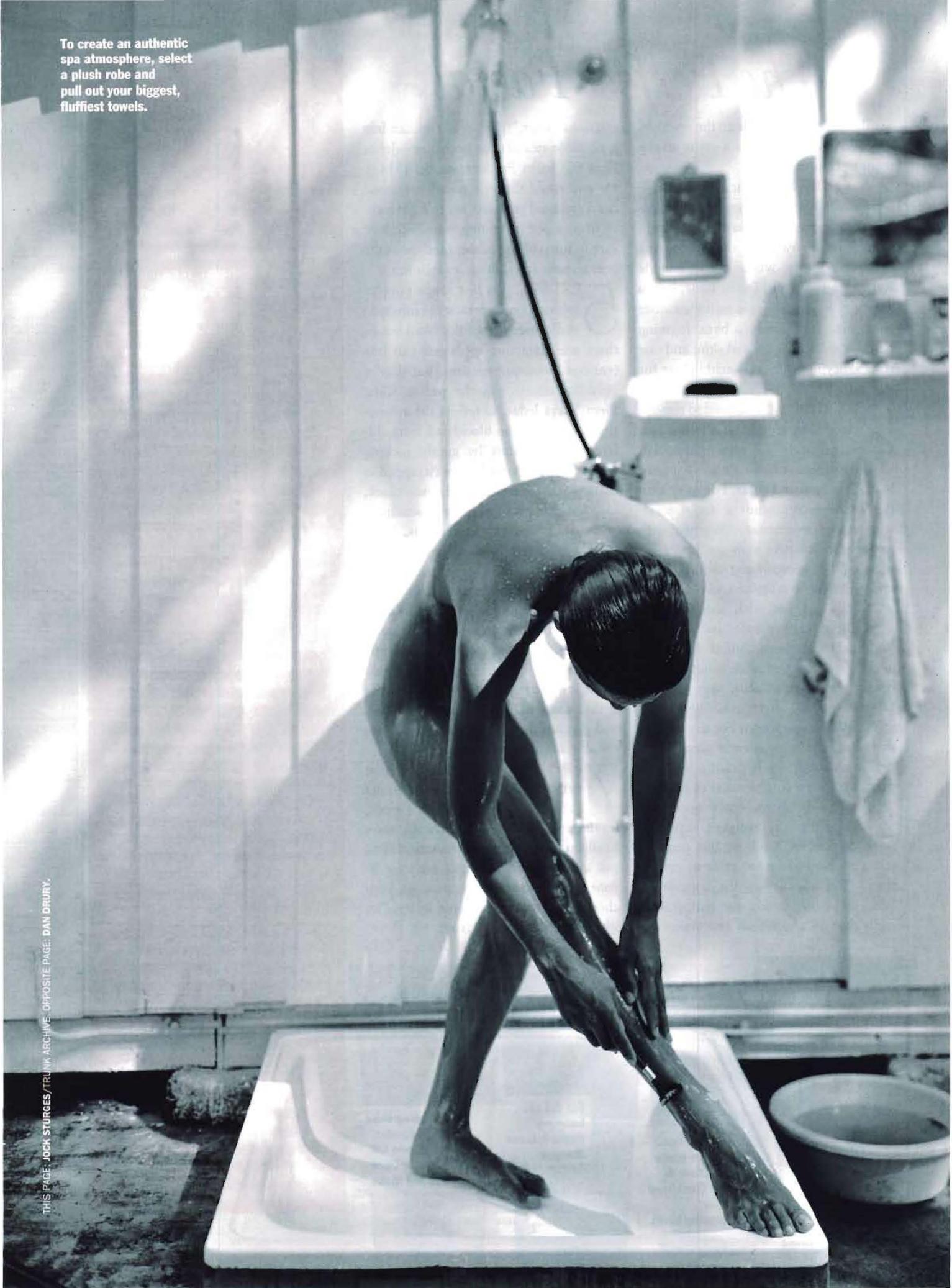
Anti-Acne Mask

Brew hot water with fresh thyme and oregano (both are antimicrobial). Strain out the herbs, and add the juice of one lemon to the remaining water, plus a few drops of organic lavender oil. (The lemon is acidic and helps clean the skin, and the lavender soothes.) Work in just enough hydrating aloe vera gel and either French green or kaolin clay (available at health-food stores and good at soaking up excess oil) to make a thick yet slippery paste. —London Elise of Soothe in San Francisco

Moisturizing Mask

Mix together two tablespoons of plain yogurt (this mildly exfoliates), a tablespoon of honey (which is moisturizing), half a mashed avocado (it’s full of vitamins), and a teaspoon of baking soda (it gives a silky feeling). The texture of the mask should be like cake icing. Add two or three drops of essential oil: lavender for normal-to-dry skin, coconut or frankincense for mature skin, and chamomile or evening primrose for inflammation or skin conditions such as eczema. —Oni Chaves of AmorePacific Beauty Gallery and Spa in New York City

To create an authentic spa atmosphere, select a plush robe and pull out your biggest, fluffiest towels.



THIS PAGE: JOCK STURGES/TRUNK ARCHIVE. OPPOSITE PAGE: DAN DRURY.

How to Do a Spray Tan *Deep-Condition*

How many activities give you an excuse to prance around the house naked? For the best self-tanning results, use a tinted spray, says Anna Stankiewicz, a tanning specialist at the Rita Hazan Salon in New York City, whose clients include Jessica Simpson and Jaime Pressly. Sprays, unlike creams, reach everywhere your hands can't, including your back—and the tint ensures you don't miss spots. Just remember to do all that bare-assing in an empty tub so it's easy to clean up afterward.

1 SCRUB Even the best tanners turn out splotchy if you don't scrub off dead skin cells first. So, before you start, exfoliate your body with an oil-free scrub (oil can prevent tanner from penetrating). It's also wise to wash off any deodorant (your underarms could turn green temporarily), pull your hair off your face, and put on a shower cap. And to keep the tanner from absorbing into dry areas, put a thin layer of body lotion on your elbows, feet, heels, and hands.

2 WORK FROM THE BOTTOM UP Do your legs and feet before your upper body—otherwise, you'll bend over and create weird tan lines. Spray in an up-to-down motion (from thighs to calves to feet) in slow, steady, even layers—like you're painting a wall. Hold the can at least eight inches away. Use less on the feet and ankles, where the skin is more absorbent than on the legs.

3 DO YOUR TORSO AND ARMS Spray the front and back of your torso in three sections (the middle, followed by both sides). Go lightly on the skin in between your breasts—it turns out that many women have a superabsorbent texture there from years of bra friction.

Then do your arms, going easy on the armpits—you don't want them to be as dark as the rest of your body. Also spray the wrists lightly—otherwise, you'll look like you're wearing gloves.

4 MIST YOUR FACE AND HANDS It may feel strange to shoot yourself in the face, but it looks more natural than the results you get with a cream. Spray your face in sections, just like your torso, but be careful around your eyebrows (cover them in a little moisturizer first to keep them from turning orange). Do the tops of your hands last, but as with the feet, the skin here is extra-absorbent, so don't overdo it. Dab off your inner wrists and the tops of your feet, hands, and nails with a dry cloth.

5 WAIT Some products claim to dry instantly, but your color will be more even if you wait 20 minutes for the tanner to set. You can speed up the process with a blow-dryer. Do not let water touch your skin during this time.

6 DRESS IN DARK CLOTHES Once you're dry, put on loose, dark clothes. Don't shower for eight hours. Then, if an area looks too dark, rub a slice of lemon over it—the acid will tone it down.

This treatment can “restore strength to weak, brittle hair,” says Frédéric Fekkai, hairstylist and owner of the product line and salons of the same name. Do it once a week for fine or oily hair, or two or three times a week for thick, curly, colored, or heat-damaged hair.

Apply deep conditioner to damp hair and gently rake it through with a wide-tooth comb. (Skip the roots—conditioner can weigh them down, although some new, lighter silicone formulas don't leave hair lank.) Keep it on for at least 20 minutes—or overnight if you can. The longer it penetrates, the shinier, healthier, and bouncier the hair will be. You don't need to cover your head, but you might want to pull back your hair in a ponytail. Rinse thoroughly with cool water.



Setting the Scene

You don't need to install a Vichy shower in your bathroom to create a little atmosphere. Follow these tips instead.

PICK YOUR PLACE Seek out “a quiet spot where you tend to go when you want to be by yourself,” says Sylvia Sepielli, founder of the spa-design consulting firm SPAd in Sedona, Arizona. For most people, the bathroom is the obvious location, especially for treatments that require water, but for those that don't—manicures and pedicures, say—a patio or bedroom may be better. Tidy up and unclutter the space as much as possible.

GET ORGANIZED Set up all your tools on a stool next to you (or next to the tub if

you're bathing) before you get started.

GO WITH GREAT LINENS If you don't already have a robe you love, Nicky Kinnaird, founder and creative director of the Space NK spas and beauty boutiques, recommends one that's slightly oversize and made of Egyptian cotton. (She's especially fond of Yves Delorme robes.) Pull out your biggest, fluffiest towels.

KILL THE LIGHTS Use a dimmer, table lamps, or candlelight if you're doing a treatment that doesn't require precise, close work. To set the mood, Kinnaird suggests an aesthetically pleasing cluster of candles of different heights.

MAKE SCENTS If you don't already have a

favorite essential oil, start with one that has been proven to be relaxing, such as chamomile, lavender, or sandalwood. All you need are three or four drops in a bowl of hot water placed near you (or, if you're taking a bath, just add them to the tub).

CUE THE SOUND Set up an iPod dock so you can listen to your favorite music without headphones, which can get in the way of certain treatments.

FAKE THE JACUZZI A Waterpik-style showerhead can massage your back or scalp with different strengths, says Susan Harmsworth, founder of the spa-design consulting firm ESPA International. She likes the Dornbracht MEM Hand Shower.

Manicure Tips

Out with the chipped; in with the clipped, nipped, and beautifully dipped—thanks to advice from Jin Soon Choi, manicurist and owner of the Jin Soon Natural Hand & Foot Spas in New York City, who keeps Anne Hathaway looking polished.

1 REMOVING Soak a cotton ball with nonacetone remover, which is less likely to dry out the nails. If you're taking off a dark color, you'll need four or five cotton balls to remove the stain. For color on the cuticles, saturate a cotton swab with remover.

2 TRIMMING AND BUFFING Clip your nails, then file them. If you have a buffing block or a fine-grade file, you can use a gentle back-and-forth action; otherwise, file in one direction.

3 SOAKING Place your fingers in a bowl filled with warm water plus either milk or a few drops of olive oil or essential oils (grapefruit oil is especially fresh). It may seem unnecessary, but it's actually crucial for softening the cuticles. After three to five minutes, blot dry and put on some cuticle oil or cream for a minute or so. Push back your cuticles with an orangewood stick or tool.

4 EXFOLIATING Make a paste out of olive oil and sugar, and rub it over your hands and forearms. Rinse, then wrap your hands in two damp washcloths that have been heated in the microwave for 30 seconds. Leave on hands for one minute.

5 HYDRATING Massage lotion into your hands and forearms. Wipe the nail beds dry and go over them once more with remover.

6 POLISHING Apply a basecoat, then two coats of polish. Be careful not to glob on too much. Instead, dip the brush into the polish and swipe one side against the neck of the bottle.

7 TOP IT OFF Finish with a topcoat. (Use an anti-yellowing formula for sheer colors.) Then wait 30 minutes for it to set, or at least 10 minutes for a quick-dry formula. Don't dig in your purse or text-message anyone for another 20 minutes, because with speed formulas, only the outermost layer dries quickly.

The Spa Pedicure

Those feet of yours saunter, salsa, and occasionally kick ass. Keep them pretty—as well as productive—with this pedicure every three weeks. We asked Ji Baek, owner of the Rescue Beauty Lounges in New York City and author of *Rescue Your Nails* (Workman Publishing), to explain how.

1 CLIPPING Remove old polish, then cut your toenails straight across, as short as is comfortable. File just enough to smooth the rough edges, but don't overfile the corners or the sides of the nails—that's an invitation to ingrowns.

2 CUTICLES Rub a cuticle cream on the nails and the cuticles. Fill a basin or the bathtub with hot water and soak the feet for at least three minutes. (You can add a cup of microwaved milk if you want extra exfoliation.) Dry the feet, and gently push back the cuticles with an orangewood stick or cuticle tool.

3 CALLUSES Your goal is to get rid of that hard, dead skin—not to remove calluses, which you need to run, walk, and otherwise function. Put a paper towel under your feet. Use a foot file dipped in water to

scrape the tips of the toes, the sides of the feet, the heels, and the balls of the feet, where high heels take their toll. Refill your tub or basin, and rub an exfoliating scrub on toes, feet, and legs. Dry and moisturize the skin.

4 PREP Separate the toes with a twisted paper towel or foam separators. Starting with the big toe of each foot and working toward the pinky, apply a basecoat on every toe. Pick a polish shade—many women find that a dark color best covers bruises and masks ridges on the nails.

5 POLISH The key to a professional pedicure is keeping the polish coats thin. It's a good idea to brush off any excess polish on the neck of the bottle—it should not be dripping off the bristles—and fan the brush out against the base of your nail as you drag it up toward the tip. Once the first coat of polish has dried (give it a full two minutes), layer on a second thin coat (again, wait two minutes) and then a topcoat. Let the nails dry for at least 30 minutes to an hour. Even if you use a quick-dry topcoat, only the top layer will dry—you can still easily nick or smear the whole toenail.



CND Citrus
Moisture Scrub

Bliss
Diamancel
#20 The
Conqueror

Crabtree & Evelyn
Citron
Honey & Coriander
Rejuvenating
Hand Remedy
rejuvenating
hand remedy
100 mL e 3.4 FL. OZ

The Playlist

Even if you're not a fan of Tibetan wind chimes or dolphin calls, you might want to accompany your at-home treatments with music. We asked DJs DJ AM and Tracy Young for a few recommendations.

DJ AM:

- **"The Sea" by Morcheeba** "This song just sounds like a relaxing spa to me. And it's cool and timeless."
- **"Hearts on Fire" by Cut Copy** "Synth-pop at its finest. I am kinda obsessed with this band."
- **"If I Ever Feel Better" by Phoenix** "It's a fun song that makes you feel sexy. And it's about feeling better."
- **"Shooting Stars" by Bag Raiders** "It has a mellow, cool flow to it that sounds great while you're lying down."
- **"Rich Girls" by the Virgins** "Funky, sexy, and cool. To me, it's a chick anthem sung by guys."
- **"Tonight Is the Night (Pts. 1 & 2)" by Betty Wright** "A supergroovy '70s song that will relax you and make you beautiful and excited about the night."

TRACY YOUNG:

- **"Sólo Por Tu Amor" by Manuel Franjo** "One of the most sensual ballads I have heard."
- **Anything by Maria Callas, especially "La Traviata"** "Her voice is incredible—emotional but soothing."
- **The Café del Mar albums by the Buddha Bar** "These records are the original chill-out music."
- **"The World Is a Stage" by Terry Barber** "You can play this in a dance club or at a dinner party, and it's extremely moving and operatic."
- **"In My Life" by the Beatles** "One of the most beautiful songs ever written."
- **The Best of Joe Sample, especially the song "Ashes to Ashes"** "This is a jazz piano masterpiece, beautifully composed. I wore that album out."

To download our spa playlist, log on to allure.com/go/spa_tunes.

Set up an iPod dock so you can listen to your favorite music without headphones.

How to Do a Bikini Wax

Yes, you can give yourself a bikini wax at home, says Jodi Shays of Queen Bee Waxing Salon and Spa in Los Angeles, whose clients include Alicia Witt and Kelly Wearstler. (Just leave full Brazilians to the pros: They're too risky for amateurs.) If you're worried about pain, take two Advil about 20 minutes beforehand.

1 CHOOSE YOUR WEAPONS You'll need a wax that can be heated, a tongue depressor, and muslin or pella strips that are six to eight inches long and a half inch to an inch wide.

2 TIMING IS EVERYTHING Don't wax the week before your period, when you're most sensitive to pain. And wait until the hair is about a quarter-inch long, or it won't pull out properly. If you have any ingrown hairs, hold off on waxing until they clear up.

3 HEAT IT UP Read the package instructions, then melt the wax accordingly. Be sure to test a dab on your inner arm: It should be hot but not scalding. Sprinkle all areas to be waxed with a little baby powder to absorb oil and lift hard-to-see fine hairs.

4 ASSUME THE POSITION Stand, kneel, lie down on the floor, or sit in a chair—it's a personal thing. The important thing is to find the position where you can get your skin the tautest.

5 DIP AND RIP Working in one-inch sections, apply the hot wax in the direction of hair growth with a tongue depressor, erring on the side of thinner rather than thicker coats. Use one hand to pull the skin taut and the other to press down a muslin strip. Remove the cloth quickly and firmly in the opposite direction of the hair growth. (Pulling in the same direction can break the hair at the top of the skin rather than at the root.) Repeat the same technique to remove hair from the top of the bikini area. If the wax gets stuck, don't panic. Sprinkle a little more powder on it, then reapply a very thin layer of wax on top and remove.

6 GROOM If you miss a few hairs, give the raw skin a minute to calm down, then yank out the stray hairs with tweezers. Avoid washing with really hot water or wearing tight clothes for a few hours afterward, because the skin will feel too chafed. Apply cortisone cream to soothe any redness.

Completely Bare Wax Works. This kit includes everything you need—strips, spatulas, its own wax heater, and even a hair-minimizing lotion.



Tweezerman Point Tweezer. The pros love pointy-tipped tweezers for their precision.