

# SPA BEAUTY

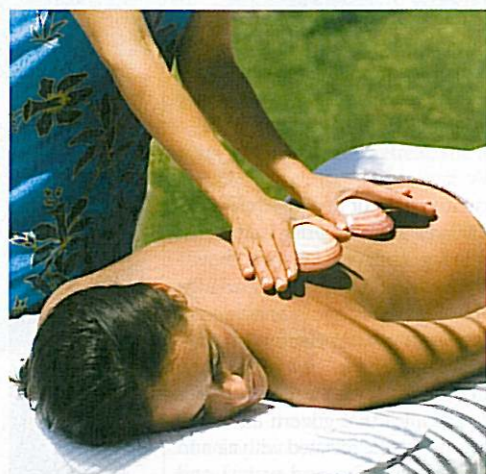


# Massaging

## THE FIGURES



Whether it's using heat, poultices or top-quality skincare, massage is the key to relaxing and effective spa treatments. Annette Hanford reports on the latest innovations that leave clients looking good and feeling great



**N**ot since stone therapy has there been such a development in the world of massage – Lava Shells, a self-heating massage tool made from tiger striped clam shells from the South Pacific.

Launched in the UK by spa professionals Clare Anderson and Alison Gibbs for Shared Beauty Secrets, the hollow shells are fused together, polished and filled with sachets of Lava Gel which, when activated, provide heat.

The exothermic heat is naturally created when the minerals, sea kelp and algae are activated with the saline solution.

The clam shells are obtained from villages in the Philippines where they were previously regarded as rubbish once the clam meat had been eaten.

Hand-selected for their size and structural integrity, the shells are light and fit perfectly in the palm of the hand. They have a narrow edge for targeted deep work and a smooth, rounded surface for even pressure and long strokes. They can be used to massage clients through their clothes (think seated massage, for example) or with oil on the body.

A full-body massage can last from 60 to 90 minutes using two or four shells. During treatment, the shells are worked over the palms, arms, neck and shoulders, before gliding along the solar plexus to release areas of stress. The massage concludes with focus on pressure points in the feet, and deep tissue work on the back and shoulders to warm and ease away the tension, knots and stress.

Boasting all the benefits of hot

stone massage, the shells offer additional advantages, such as being totally portable and not requiring a power source or other equipment (hot stones need a heater).

And while stones gradually lose their heat and have to be swapped, the shells provide heat for more than an hour, allowing the therapist to maintain contact with the client for the entire treatment.

Over the course of the massage, the temperature of the massage shells will fluctuate slightly as the body absorbs the heat, but will soon reheat if set aside for a brief period. Equally, submerging the shells in a bowl of water will cool them down.

Unlike hot stones, the shells are non-porous, which means they can be cleaned easily and there is no risk of cross-contamination. To clean them, simply remove the rubber seal (which stops the solu-

tion from escaping) and take out the biodegradable Lava Gel sachet, before washing the shell with soap and water.

As well as a stand-alone treatment, the shells can also be incorporated into manicure, pedicure and different massage techniques to enhance the results.

Traditionally, massage treatments haven't leant towards product sales and homecare. However, retail packs containing a smaller shell and heat sachets, or just the sachets, allow the client to recreate the benefits at home.

The shell treatment is available in a range of top-quality spas as well as on Richard Branson's Necker Island. The homecare kit contains one shell, four lava charges and a bottle of massage oil, RRP £29.99.

■ **Contact:** [www.sharebeautysecrets.com](http://www.sharebeautysecrets.com), tel 07815 786 201.

### HERBAL BLISS

Ytsara's facial Taolay is packed with natural ingredients to help firm the skin and correct signs of ageing.

Treatment begins with a cleansing foot ritual, traditionally thought to ward off negative energies and impurities. The therapist bathes the client's feet in warm water while massaging each foot with fragrant lemongrass oil to prepare the rest of the body for total relaxation.

Using 100% natural ingredients, a herbal blend is smoothed into the skin allowing the plant extracts to stimulate cell renewal to give brighter, younger-looking skin. After the skin has been deep-cleansed and purified, a poultice infused with vitamin-rich sesame seeds is dipped into warm rosewood oil and used to massage the face.

While the sesame seed oil helps improve skin elasticity and corrects wrinkles, the rosewood oil is highly regenerative and a great cell stimulant. Using the poultice, the combination of the two ingredients is glided over the face to tone facial muscles and activate microcirculation.

For the final touch, one of the world's most expensive oils is used on the skin to enhance the anti-ageing benefits of the facial. Neroli essential oil, extracted from orange blossom, develops a glowing complexion while softening wrinkles and blemishes.

■ The treatment takes 75 minutes, costs £100 and is available at the K Spa at K West Hotel & Spa in West London.

■ **Contact:** [www.ytsara.com](http://www.ytsara.com)



### ANGEL FACE

Fancy a facelift in your lunch break? Heaven's Angel Face Lift is a quick-fix treatment to tone, firm, and lift – all within an hour.

Devised by Deborah Mitchell, the facial hydrates the skin, keeping it well-nourished during the drying summer months. It combines lymphatic drainage and acupressure techniques to stimulate the facial muscles, for smoother, younger-looking, toned skin.

The treatment works to reduce the appearance of fine lines, wrinkles and other tell-tale signs of ageing by helping to reduce stress levels and promises instant results.

The effects of stress show in the face and Angel Face aims to lift away tension by relaxing it where the skull tightens – under extreme stress the chin comes forward, releasing cortisol into the system, which can accelerate the ageing process. The treatment eases pressure on the skull, allowing the jaw to relax. It is also said to improve the release of anti-ageing hormones into the skin.

Each treatment is tailored to the client, so the choice of natural organic products used will vary. However, Chamomile Desensitising Lotion is always used to prepare the skin and is often followed with Skin Polish Exfoliator. Rich in essential oils and vitamin E, Essential Moisturiser makes a good massage medium, while a soothing gel can be used to brighten the eyes at the end of the treatment.

■ The treatment takes an hour and costs from £45, depending on location. As well as a host of private and celebrity clients, Deborah also has a salon in Shropshire and works from The Hale Clinic in London.

■ **Contact:** 01952 461888

