

# Dry skin brushing for healthy skin

by Ingri Cassel

Few people realize that the skin is our body's largest organ and an important avenue for oxygen and nourishment to enter the body as well as a means for the body to eliminate accumulated toxins.

As a part of any colon-cleansing program or other modified fast, we always recommend that the person purchase a skin brush with a handle on it that is available from most health food stores. Once you experience the exhilaration that comes with skin brushing the entire body, you will want to incorporate this ritual into your daily routine prior to bathing. From experience, I would have to say that dry skin brushing is the most underrated of health regimens today and is in definite need of a "revival."

## **Our largest organ**

Since our skin is the largest organ we possess, it is important to understand the multiple functions of our skin and how it works to maintain health. Following is a summary of this miraculous "organ."

**Armor**—The skin's surface is very much like "armor" made of overlapping scales. When the skin is unbroken, it protects us against pathogens that would otherwise have access to the body. For optimal functioning, the skin should be slightly acid. This is one reason that alkali-based soaps should not be used on the body.

**Thermostat/radiator**—The most vital role of the skin is to maintain even body temperature. Nerves in our skin can dilate or contract its blood vessels to control about two million sweat glands. When the weather is hot during the summer months, the blood vessels expand to allow heat to escape with our sweat glands pouring out as much as two quarts of fluid a day in order to cool the body. When the weather is cold, sweating diminishes and the blood vessels contract. So precise is this mechanism that a person in good health maintains a steady body temperature of 98.6 degrees, regardless of outside temperature.

**Complex sensory functions**—The skin also serves as a sense organ by and through which stimuli are received. In the deepest portion of the epidermis are a network of nerves and special nerve endings, hair follicles, blood vessels and the lymphatic and sweat glands. Nails on our toes and fingers, hair and hair follicles, sweat and oil glands, though closely associated with the epidermis, are more accurately referred to as "appendages" of the skin. Each hair in our skin has a small blood vessel, several sacs of oil to lubricate it, a nerve to send an impulse if it is pulled or damaged, and a small muscle to tighten the pores when a person is cold or scared.

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**Self-lubricating**—The skin contains about two million tiny oil glands to keep its surface from drying out. It is due to these oil glands that we can remain submerged in water for long periods of time without becoming "water-logged." The insulating layer of fat underneath the skin's surface decreases in illness and old age, causing the surface of the skin to fall into folds or wrinkles.

**Eliminative superhighway**—Besides providing protective "armor" and heat regulation, the skin is a major eliminative organ. According to Dr. Bernard Jensen, an adult body can actually eliminate between two to four pounds of toxic waste daily through the skin. Perspiration is 99 percent water, the remainder being mineral salts and complex fatty substances. It also contains waste acids being eliminated by the body. Under normal conditions, our bodies release about one-and-a-half pints of moisture through the skin every 24 hours. However, emotional stimulation, exercise, certain drugs and higher external temperatures will increase the amount of perspiration and waste being eliminated.

**Antiperspirants, deodorants**—Blocking underarm perspiration with antiperspirants or even deodorants also blocks elimination from these large pores. But what is most dangerous about antiperspirants is that the active ingredient used is always an aluminum-based compound. The most common ones used are aluminum chloride, aluminum zirconium trichlorohydrate, aluminum chlorohydrate and aluminum hydroxybromide and are always listed as the first ingredient.

If unpleasant body odors are an issue, normalizing body chemistry through modified fasting followed by a whole foods diet will eliminate the problem.

**Eliminative synergy**—There is an important relationship between the skin and other eliminative organs, especially the kidneys. In Dr. Bernard Jensen's book, "You Can Master Disease," he relates several people's experiences that illustrate the vital importance of the skin:

I once witnessed an experiment in which a man took a soapy tub bath, dried himself, and then entered a steam cabinet. When he began to perspire after about 15 minutes, he was covered with soap bubbles. Where did all the soap come from? He had wiped his body dry with a towel. We concluded that the heat of the bath had opened the pores of his skin and the soap had been absorbed by it. The skin has the ability to absorb materials placed upon it, especially oily substances.

In another experiment performed at an Eastern sanitarium, a man's feet were placed in water containing baking soda. In thirty seconds baking soda was found in this man's urine. Thirty seconds after turpentine packs were applied over his kidneys, turpentine was present in his urine. It is difficult to believe that the skin could be so absorbent.

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Another example occurred in a small California town following a parade of floats, on which was a child model whose body was covered with silver "paint." A short time later she died from uremic poisoning because, with the channel of elimination through the skin blocked, too great a load of uric acid was forced upon the kidneys, and the excess was released into the blood. Death has occurred to various dancers and performers whose bodies were covered with "gold" or "silver" paint, and such cases demonstrate the importance of skin function not only to well-being but to life itself.

The proper functioning of the skin can also be blocked by excessive use of toxic cosmetics. Health Crusador Greg Ciola covered this issue extensively in his Dec. 2005 special cosmetic report, "Chemical Warfare Hits Home". In this highly recommended expose, Ciola reveals how the chemicals in our tap water, shampoos, household cleaners and cosmetics are absorbed via the skin, contributing to the epidemic of cancer and chronic diseases we are witnessing today.

Dr. Bernard Jensen believes that death will result if a person loses more than a third of his skin. This is based on his experience of a friend whose body was severely burned from the hips down. Although his friend appeared to be responding well to treatment, he ended up dying of uremic poisoning.

## Third kidney

Due to his extensive clinical experience, Dr. Bernard Jensen believes the skin should be considered a third kidney. He believes all four eliminative organs—intestines, lungs, kidneys and skin—must be functioning normally in order to experience optimal health. If they are not, the liver will become congested and the bloodstream unclean; a clean bloodstream being a sound indicator of health and well-being. But if the skin is treated properly by allowing it to carry out normal eliminative functions, the result is improved functioning of the intestines and every other organ in the body.

In fact another aspect of the multiple functions of the skin is its ability to regulate and control to a great extent the acid-alkaline balance of the body. By wearing clothes made of synthetic fibers, we hinder the body's ability to eliminate and utilize oxygen contributing to acidosis. This is the reason master herbalist Dr. John R. Christopher emphasized the importance of only wearing clothes and undergarments made from natural fibers that allow the skin to "breathe."

## Skin Brushing

As our environment and food supply become more toxic, our lives become more artificial and "out of touch" with nature. One of the simplest ways to counteract the toxic effects of "civilization" is through the ritual care of our skin through daily skin brushing. Instead of the

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standard cup of coffee or tea, try starting out the day as soon as you jump out of bed with an invigorating three to four minutes of dry skin brushing. Once you do it, you will be amazed at how addicting this beneficial habit can actually be. Every single person who we have coached through a seven-day colon cleansing program comments that the favorite part of the routine is the discovery of skin brushing. It is so vital that our readers understand that we are talking about dry skin brushing with a natural fiber brush. You will receive none of the therapeutic benefits of skin brushing by doing it with a nylon brush or "loofa" in the bath or shower.

In "You Can Master Disease," Dr. Jensen relates the secret of a world champion:

Sandow, the Saxon Giant, who performed almost incredible feats of strength, had a skin of velvety softness. Part of his training to keep himself fit was the regular use of a hard coarse flesh brush. In his diary he stated that one time when he lost the world championship in weight-lifting by a couple ounces it was because he had been neglecting the care of his skin.

Daily brushing from head to toe will do more to make the skin active and will remove more dirt and waste material than a bath or shower with soap and water. Brushing removes the loose surface layer of skin and cleanses the pores. The warmth experienced after skin brushing enables you to enjoy an "air bath" – spending a few minutes after brushing simply being naked. Aside from the exceptional good health you will experience, you will also find that you will need less clothing in the day to be warm and fewer blankets at night.

## Seeing the difference

Another result of skin brushing is a clear complexion. In one office a woman improved her complexion so much that her co-workers noticed. They soon followed her example and noticed that evening brushing removed the effects of fatigue at the end of a workday. This is because fatigue at the end of the day is not due to exhaustion of the muscles or nervous energy as much as it is due to the accumulation of waste acids that are attempting to be eliminated through the skin. This is why skin brushing is so beneficial and the effects palpable.

We once met a middle-aged tile setter from Florida named Rickey who had soft, beautiful skin and very few wrinkles on his face. He credits his youthful skin to the advice he received from a naturopath while still a young man: "Brush your skin every day and it will last you a life time."

After sharing the value of skin brushing in my monthly newspaper column, "Back to Basics", I heard from a prisoner in North Carolina who related that his full-blooded Cherokee

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grandfather scrubbed his entire body with sand by the river everyday and had excellent health, beautiful skin and lived a long, healthy life.

The blood continually brings catarrhal wastes to the skin to be eliminated. Daily skin brushing prevents the accumulation of catarrh and mucous in the body. This is why skin brushing is essential as an aid in the eliminative function of this organ and also acts as a blood cleanser. As a result of proper skin care, bronchial, kidney and stomach conditions are often prevented or "cured."

The problem in Western culture of improper skin care can be validated through iridology, the study of the iris of the eyes. If you look into a friend or family member's eyes, you will notice what iridologists refer to as a "scurf rim"—a dark black outline surrounding the perimeter of the iris. The thicker and darker the scurf rim is, the more congested your skin is. Dr. Jensen has witnessed the scurf rim virtually disappear in patients who incorporated daily skin brushing along with organic foods and a healthy lifestyle.

Inexpensive, long handled, natural fiber skin brushes are available in most health food stores. We have a complexion skin brush that we use on our face and a long handled larger brush for our entire body. The brush may seem rough for the first couple days. If you feel the brush is too rough, dip it in hot water prior to use and allow it to dry thoroughly before skin brushing with it. Once you become accustomed to it, you will actually look forward to brushing your skin for three to four minutes in the morning and in the evening.