

In his desperate search for health, beauty and eternal youth, man has tried everything that nature has to offer as a possible therapy. It is therefore not surprising that nowadays the traditional mud-baths, face and body masks based on soils, exfoliants from sea and sand and other processes are gaining reincarnation.



by Shaheen Perveen

We are dust and to dust we will return is the universal belief. Still, there is an interval between the cradle and the grave which can amount to good many enjoyable years, joined to the glorious earth as element and as mythical origin. 5000 years ago, the Egyptians applied mud to their bodies to fight inflammations and rheumatism. Clay's antiseptic properties made it an ideal ingredient in the mummification process. Later Hippocrates used mud to relieve abdominal pain and rheumatic inflammation. The Greeks cured their fractures with clay bandages. Galen, introduced Armenian earth into medical practice to cure all sorts of ills, including acne and hemorrhoids. Clay has been used by many tribes and cultures in the treatment of anemia, constipation, poisoning etc. In cultures like Malaysia and New Guinea, pregnant women eat clay because they consider it good for the developing fetus. In Russia, women are known to place clay

tablets under their tongue to expedite birth and facilitate child birth. Animals are instinctively drawn to clay. Rats eat clay when they fear poisoning. Many animals are known to lick clay and at times they love to roll around to obtain relief from their injuries. Scarlet Macaws of the Amazon are best known clay eaters along the river bank. People in Kolopfurdo, Hungary discovered their livestock lived longer and healthier when they wallowed in the mud. Soon people joined in and were happy to experience the 'health and wellness' derived from mud therapy. Mud is certified 'curative' by the Hungarian Ministry of Health in Budapest. It is mined from the natural reserve and then sun dried before its milling and export. A recent study by scientists at Bristol and University College London found evidence that bacteria found in soil and dirt improved people's health. The action of the bacteria (*Mycobacterium vaccae*) on the brain was shown to be similar to that of commonly used anti-depressants.

Other scientific studies reveal the impact of bringing up children in 'over hygienic conditions' which witnessed the surge in asthma and eczema. Mud contains a wide range of minerals like Silicon dioxide which is good for joint regeneration and anti ageing, Calcium oxide which strengthens bones, Magnesium oxide which improves blood and boosts the immune system and Ferric oxide which helps in cell regeneration and improves circulation. One of the main Characteristics of clay is its elementary particle size below 2 microns, minute enough to penetrate the inner layers of the skin and draw out impurities and toxins. The best of clays have particles as fine as mist in fog bank. People in Kolopfurdo, Hungary discovered their livestock live longer and healthier when they wallowed in the mud. Soon people joined in and were happy to experience the 'health and wellness' derived from mud therapy.

Clay is used both internally and externally. It helps in detoxification of heavy metals and chemicals. Cosmetic facials, clay wraps, body masks and clay baths are common to all the health spas. Clay helps in poultice and compresses for bruising and injuries (including bee and insect stings). It serves as an excellent complement to sweat therapy.

People visit the Dead Sea to benefit from the therapeutic powers of water and mud of the Dead Sea, which is the lowest point on earth (400 meters below sea level). Cleopatra and Queen Sheba are known to have used Dead Sea black mud and salts,

which contain more than 26 types of health giving minerals, for their relaxing and beautifying properties by way of cell metabolism and moisture stabilization.

The renowned Jordanian Dead Sea mud and salts are marketed throughout the world. They are believed to be ideal for treating acne, eczema, psoriasis, athletes' foot and several other skin ailments. The most popular is the mud masque which helps to tighten pores and stimulate as well as nourish the skin for a radiant and more youthful appearance. Coating your body with the Dead Sea black mud can provide relief from skin and physical ailments such as black spots, acne on the back, arthritis, muscle stiffness, chilban and rheumatism.

Once the type of clay has been chosen, from among the incredible variety of possibilities, a paste is made of appropriate thickness for the part of the body that is to be treated. Applications can be made in very specific areas, such as face, abdomen or legs. In general, clay has an astringent effect upon the skin; as it dries it contracts the tissues, giving them firmness and eliminating fat and dead cells. Apart from this effect, minerals and other nutrients, components of the clay itself, are absorbed by the skin in pursuit of its natural urge to regenerate. Clay also has qualities as a thermal element, which can at times help to fix the body's internal heat (mud poultices on the stomach have always been considered an effective remedy for reducing high fever).

Besides pampering the skin, clay eases rheumatic aches, pains and stimulates the circulatory system and relaxes the nerves.

Certain exfoliation methods, applied to the face or the body, can be performed with sands that remove dead tissue, activate blood circulation and help to keep your skin healthy and robust.

In spite of the marvellous results of these therapeutic procedures, the over use of this type of bath, mask or application can result in excessive drying of the skin, and it is therefore advisable to moisten it after each treatment to avoid possible stretching and similar counterproductive complications.



The properties of the soil will always be beneficial and enriching for our bodies, mostly now when urban pollution affects the normal development of our organism more and more every day and the rhythm of modern urban life keeps us so far from nature.

■ **An ideal mask for the oily skin**

The simplest way is to soak Fuller's Earth (or any other clay) for 10-15 minutes and apply the paste on the face. Allow it to dry and then wash it off with luke warm water. A teaspoon of curd and a pinch of mint powder (or rose water) added to the paste makes it refreshing. You can also include egg white and blend the ingredients thoroughly. This imparts a luxurious glow besides enhancing skin elasticity. Most of the clays have a common feature of absorbing oil and dirt from the skin. They are natural deep cleansers and dermatologically well tolerated.

■ **Mud from around the world**

There are many different types and classes of clays throughout the world, all of which provide great benefit to the health. Here is a sample of the world's best

■ **Fullers Earth**

The heavy stratified Fuller's Earth (Multani Mitti) is a well known traditional cosmetic that dates back to the ancient Romans. It is a natural, sedimentary clay (calcium montmorillonite) which is composed mainly of alumina, silica, iron oxides, lime and magnesium in variable proportions.

At its earliest Fuller's Earth was used to absorb and remove oil and dirt from wool so that it could be processed into cloth (Fullers' refers to cloth makers). It was so valuable that the English law forbade its export until the early 18th century. Fuller's Earth serves as a base ingredient for facial clay and best suited for oily skin and those prone to acne. It has been used by women for washing hair which renders it soft and shiny. It serves as Nature's

baby powder. A paste prepared by steeping it in water and then applied over affected areas. It is also used as a base for various face packs which draws oils from the skin and serves as a mild facial bleach.

■ **Kaolin**

Kaolin – the fluffy white clay comes from the Chinese town of Kao-Ling in Jiangxi Province of southeast China, famous for its porcelain. Kaolin or China clay comes in various colours like white, pink, red, yellow and black. The most common constituent is the mineral kaolinite, which helps to absorb toxins and bacteria. It is also added to food supplement due to its mineral content. It also acts as a bulking agent and serves an antidiarrheal purpose. Used in all types of cosmetic products, this fine powder is found in masks and is suitable for all skin types. It is an astringent and mops up excess oil. You can make a kaolin based mud mask with tablespoon of a suitable herb tea mixed with enough kaolin to make into a paste.

■ **Green Clay**

Most of the green clay comes from Montmorillonite in France and Illite from the US. This light green clay originates in the volcanic region and is composed of volcanic ash which is rich in magnesium and a variety of trace elements which varies from region to region. Green clay is used in facemask by many reputed cosmetic companies. They detoxify and act as an ideal absorbent and an effective exfoliator. It can be used at home with honey and lavender oil to make a simple mask

■ **Pyrophyllite Clay**

Pyrophyllite clay is a very rare and unique amorphous silica clay that comes from North America.



Pyrophyllite gets its name from the fact that it exfoliates when water is driven off upon heating, leaving a flaky mass. A thermal vent around the Crater Lake allows the mineral rich magma from deep within the earth to rise to the surface. It contains over 50 minerals and trace minerals in

a natural, well proportioned balance. It is almost 60 % silica. This exceptional clay owes its origin to the underground boiling lava which eventually cooled due to interaction with underground aquifer water.

■ **Rhassoul Clay**

The luxurious, mineral rich, reddish brown clay comes from the depths of the Atlas



Mountains in Morocco. It has traditionally been used as a natural beautifier which helps in exfoliating and cleansing of skin. It has excellent astringent and absorption properties which makes it ideal for normal and oily skin. It is rich in a variety of trace elements like silica, magnesium, iron, calcium, potassium and



■ **Dead Sea Mud**

The largest selling black mud in the world coming from the region around the Dead Sea (Israel and Jordan).

This marks the lowest place on earth and is the deepest hyper-saline lake

in the world. The Dead Sea contains 26 minerals and trace elements that are known to improve cell metabolism and stabilize the moisture content of the skin. Dead Sea mud smoothens and clarifies skin and is saturated with several minerals and trace elements.. It works well for most skin problems. Products containing Dead Sea mud are said to be effective in treating pimples too.

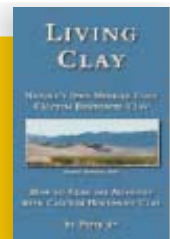


■ **Bentonite Clay**

Bentonite clay owes its name to a place called Fort Benton in the USA, where it was discovered amidst cretaceous rocks. It is a combination of montmorillonite and volcanic ash and much used in industry. It is a highly absorbent clay that pulls out oils and toxins from the skin and is most suited for making poultices. Calcium Bentonite clay is also used in all stomach, gas and acid remedies.

Take care, sodium bentonite may clog the drain after a bath. ☒

Living Clay
by Perry A



What if there was a natural substance to be found on our planet that really would fix what ails you and not harm what's not broken?

Living Clay reveals her own secret miracle cure for healthy living. For centuries people have used Clay for health and beauty. You'll discover not only the history of healing clay, but also instructions on using clay for optimal health and beauty today. If you're ready to place your trust in Mother Earth, instead of the pharmaceutical Industry, then this book, and the fountain of knowledge within its pages, is exactly what you are seeking. Discover why natural Calcium Bentonite Clay is the premier healing clay, and why you should settle for nothing less.

Caution : Do not purchase clay products that are sold in unsealed containers, as there is a strong chance that the clay will have become contaminated during shipping and storage. Avoid clay products with additives of any kind, unless one is certain about the compatibility of the additives and clay for human use.