

Herbal Manicure & Pedicure, Anyone?

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A well-turned out appearance imbues you with a sense of confidence. One aspect that makes for an appealing personality is a manicured hand. A manicure involves trimming the nails, shaping the nails, pushing back the cuticle, or removing any type of hang nail you might have. This also helps your nails grow by pushing the skin that comes off the nail plate. Beautiful nails impart your hand with a character and, obviously, are good at look at.

A manicure treatment, of course, goes beyond the treatment of nails. It could involve a massage of the hands too with a softening substance. This procedure can also be applied to the toenails and feet and is referred to as a pedicure.

A pedicure involves shaping and cutting the toenails, pushing back the cuticles, and taking off unwanted calluses on the feet. A pedicure, thus, improves the appearance of the feet and the nails. Additionally, leg care below the knee is also commonly included in pedicures. Leg care includes depilation through shaving or waxing followed by granular exfoliation, application of moisturizing creams and a brief leg massage.

But why always rely on synthetic creams when you could use plant oils and chemicals derived from several plants to accomplish your manicure and pedicure? There are several plants extracts from which could help take good care of your hands and feet. Take a look at some of them.

ONION (*Allium cepa*): Roast an onion, make a paste and use it on the cracks on your feet. The cracks will disappear within a month's time. In many parts of the world, onions are used to heal blisters and boils. A traditional Maltese remedy for sea urchin wounds is to tie half a baked onion to the afflicted area overnight. In the United States, products that contain onion extract are used in the treatment of topical scars and may also act as a skin anti-inflammatory.

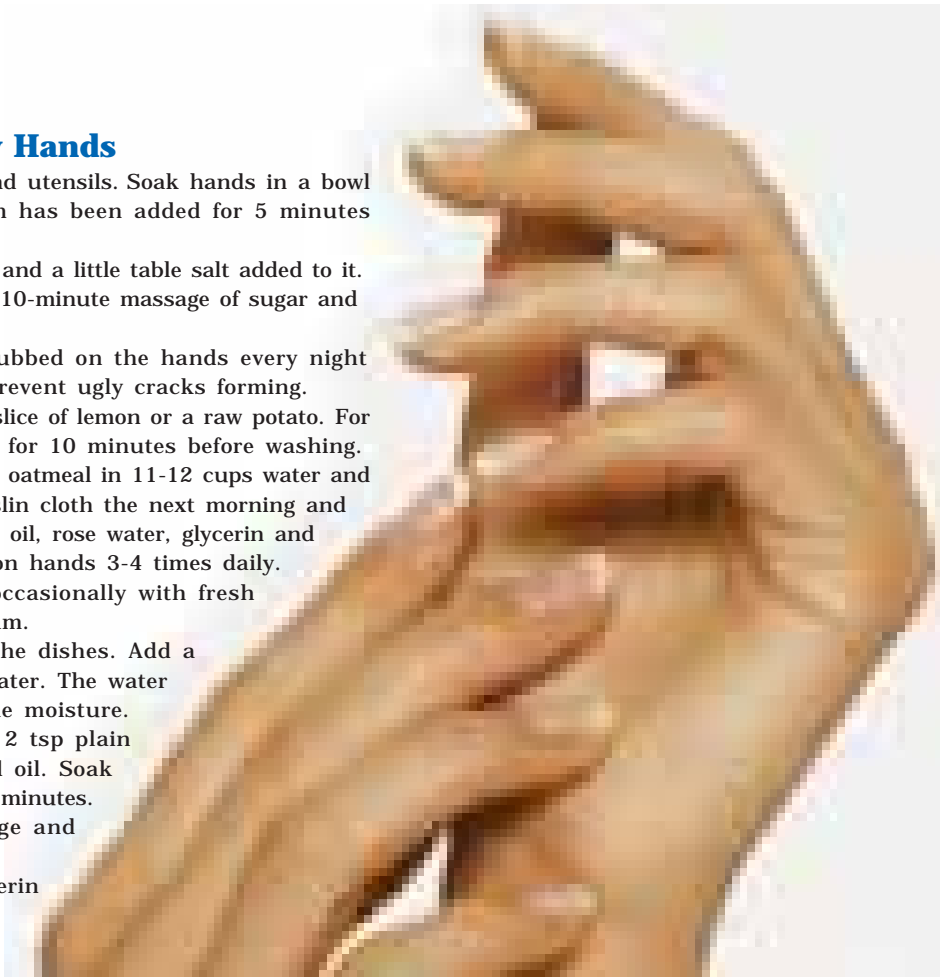
ALOE (*Aloe vera*): *Aloe vera* is a medicinal plant that has been used for curing many skin diseases for centuries. Aloe is used for healing cuts and bruises. The most

common form of Aloe is topical ointment as aloe jelly. These are natural extracts of leaves of *Aloe vera* plants. The vitamins and soothing coolness of the aloe gel relieve swelling of the skin. The gel is also known to soften the skin as well as repair the cells, so the skin heals faster. This gel can be obtained by cutting the leaves in half along their length and then rubbing the inner pulp over the skin of hands and toe for smoothness and softness.

PEPPERMINT (*Mentha piperita*): Peppermint relaxes the muscles and is also used to relieve itching, inflammations, and a variety of respiratory conditions. Peppermint, when applied topically, has a soothing and cooling effect on skin irritations. The essential oil can also be diluted with oil and applied to the hand and feet. Peppermint oil contains Menthol, which is good for the skin. It gives a cooling effect. Further it nourishes dull skin and improves oily skin. The peppermint oil is rejuvenating and is used in scented spa

Tips For Lovely Hands

- Always use gloves for washing clothes and utensils. Soak hands in a bowl of warm water to which 1 tsp of cornstarch has been added for 5 minutes daily after finishing the household chores.
- Massage hands once a week with olive oil and a little table salt added to it.
- Remove ingrained dirt from hands with a 10-minute massage of sugar and butter.
- Glycerin, rose water and lemon juice rubbed on the hands every night during winter months keep them soft and prevent ugly cracks forming.
- To remove stains from hands rub with a slice of lemon or a raw potato. For nicotine stains, apply lemon juice and leave for 10 minutes before washing.
- To keep hands clean and soft, soak 250 g oatmeal in 11-12 cups water and leave overnight. Strain it through a thin muslin cloth the next morning and add 1 tsp lemon juice and 1 tsp each of olive oil, rose water, glycerin and diluted ammonia. Store in bottle and apply on hands 3-4 times daily.
- Keep knees smooth by rubbing them occasionally with fresh limejuice or massage with a nourishing cream.
- Soften your hands even while you do the dishes. Add a little almond oil (about a teaspoon) to dishwater. The water will soften rough skin while the oil seals the moisture.
- Take 1/2-cup warm milk, 2 tsp sugar, 2 tsp plain yogurt and a few drops of lavender essential oil. Soak your hands/fingers in this mixture for about 5 minutes. Then do a scrub, nail/cuticle care, massage and polish.
- For rough palms, use a mixture of glycerin and limejuice in equal proportion.



treatments, lotions, scrubs, and massage blends.

APPLE CIDER (Cider vinegar, ACV, Acetic acid): Apple cider vinegar is a type of vinegar made by the fermentation of apple cider. During this process, sugar in the apple cider is broken down by bacteria and yeast into alcohol and then into vinegar. Apple cider vinegar contains acetic acid (like other types of vinegar) and some lactic, citric and malic acids. Natural Apple Cider Vinegar is a wonderful natural cure for a number of ailments that usually require antibiotics and other medications that have a number of side effects. In particular, hand and feet massage by apple cider vinegar has been known to cure skin conditions, fight allergies, prevent muscle fatigue after exercise and increase stamina.

LEMON (*Citrus limon*): Lemon is a cheap and easily available citrus fruit, known for its medicinal and culinary uses. Lemon is a rich source of vitamin C, riboflavin and vitamin B, minerals such as phosphorus, calcium etc and carbohydrates and proteins. Skin problems can be cured with

the help of lemon juice since lemon is a natural antiseptic. Rubbing and scrubbing the hand and feet with lemon can help you get rid of dead cells. Lemon water can also lighten burn scars and reduce burning sensation of the skin of either hand or toe.

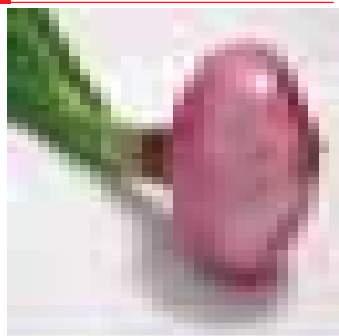
TOOTHACHE PLANT (*Spilanthes acmella*): *Spilanthes* contains an essential oil, spilanthole, which is anti-inflammatory in action. It also contains tannic acid, which has an astringent action. Traditionally it has been used externally to relieve pain and swelling. An Indian tribe used the herb to treat fungal skin conditions, and also formulated the herb into a tincture to be used for external fungal infections such as athlete's foot, ringworm and nail infections.

Nail Fungus (also called *Tinea unguium* or onychomycosis) affects the fingernails and toenails. This disease is commonly misunderstood and left untreated for various reasons. The fungi that cause toenail fungus are related to those that cause ringworm, athlete's foot, and other common fungal infections. Toenail fungus, in particular, is notoriously difficult to treat. Leaves of the toothache plant can be

applied to the affected parts to get rid of these problems.

OLIVE OIL (*Olea europaea*): In addition to the internal health benefits of olive oil, topical application is quite popular with fans of natural health remedies. Extra virgin olive oil is the preferred grade for moisturizing the skin, especially when used in the oil cleansing method (OCM). OCM is a method of cleansing and moisturizing the face with a mixture of extra virgin olive oil. In many countries, women regularly use the oil of olive to take care of their hands and legs.

LAVENDER OIL (*Lavandula officinalis*): Lavender flowers have long been known for their healing properties. When infused in oil, lavender soothes sore, aching muscles and creates a mentally soothing environment that relaxes both the mind and the body. Lavender oil can be added to bath water, homemade soaps and used in facial products. Commercially, lavender massage oil is available, which is specially formulated for using in massage and aromatherapy. Lavender essential oil is excellent for the skin. Adding its extract to soaps and



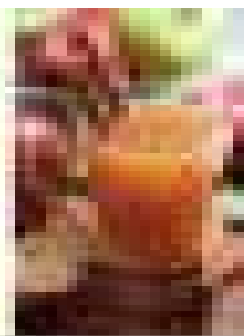
Allium cepa



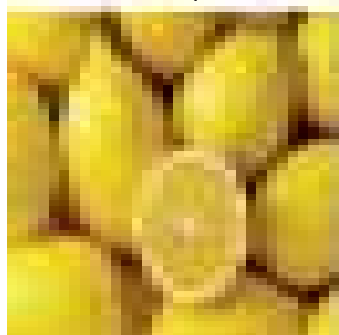
Aloe vera



Mentha piperita



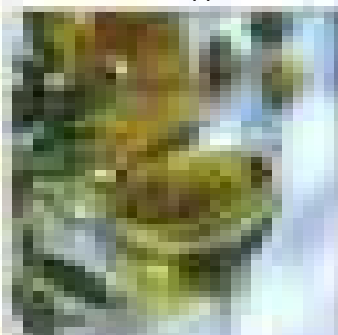
Cider vinegar



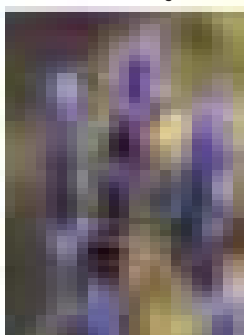
Citrus limon



Spilanthes acmella



Olea europaea



L. officinalis



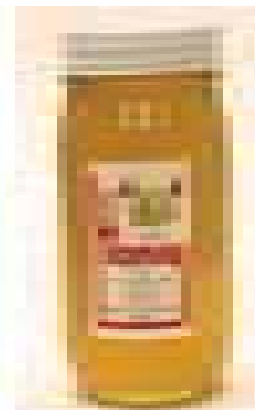
Origanum vulgare



Helianthus annuus



Borago officinalis



Honey

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bathwater gives off a fresh fragrance. It also helps repair skin problems while making the skin feel invigorated and fresh as a bumblebee.

OREGANO OIL (*Origanum vulgare*): It is a species of *Origanum* of the mint family and a perennial herb. It is effective in fungal infections of nails and skin. When spread over the affected area, the oil penetrates through the nail to kill the fungus underneath. When rubbed between the toes the oil can relieve athlete's foot problems. Oil of Oregano can be applied directly onto the skin to treat itches, skin infections but only if it has been diluted. Always follow the instructions on your particular bottle before applying topically

onto the skin, since highly concentrated oils may first need to be mixed with Olive Oil or Coconut Oil before application (usually one teaspoon of Olive Oil or Coconut Oil per one drop of Oil of Oregano).

SUNFLOWER OIL (*Helianthus annuus*): Sunflower oil is the non-volatile oil expressed from sunflower seeds. It is used as an emollient. Sunflower oil is high in the essential vitamin E and low in saturated fat, which helps to retain moisture in the skin of hands and feet.

PEPPERMINT OIL (*Mentha piperita*): Peppermint oil can be used externally for providing relief from pain. The essential oil

