



Nature's Beauty Treatment

By *Alicia Doyle*

FIRST CULTIVATED FROM A TREE IN 6000 B.C., OLIVE OIL IS ONE OF THE MOST POPULAR INGREDIENTS IN COOKING. BUT IF YOU HAVE NEVER USED IT FOR SHINY HAIR, SUPPLE SKIN, SOFT LIPS OR ANY OTHER BEAUTY REGIMEN, YOU'RE IN FOR A TREAT.

OLIVE OIL CONTAINS MANY IMPORTANT VITAMINS AND MINERALS. Vitamin E is one, which promotes healthy skin and helps hydrate the skin. Olive oil also contains antioxidants that help keep skin youthful and dewy. Extra virgin olive oil has a number of uses — it can remove eye makeup while simultaneously conditioning eye lashes and can be used as a hot oil treatment to improve dry, colored or processed hair.

“Women from all around the world have used olive oil for thousands of years to protect and enhance their skin, hair, nails and overall beauty — they have touted its anti-aging properties,” said Diane Loring, owner of Spa by Diane Loring, Inc.

When purchasing olive oil for personal use, be sure to buy the highest grade of extra virgin for the best results and enhancement, Loring added. “On a personal note, because of my allergies and sensitivities, I use grape seed oil, which has primarily all of the same benefits but is more agreeable to me and lighter. Spa by Diane Loring, Inc. only uses pure grape seed oil for all of our massages and body treatments. We get great benefits from both of these oils, internally and externally.”

Anti-aging

Can consuming olive oil — considered one of the best anti-aging products — help reverse the clock? Considered the foundation of the Mediterranean diet, olive oil contains properties known to help reverse the signs of aging, including antioxidants. Specifically, olive oil is rich in polyphenols, a chemical compound with powerful antioxidant characteristics, meaning it has a strong antioxidant effect on human cells. It also stimulates bone growth and calcium absorption and aids the digestive system and arterial and circulatory health.

A few studies have objectively addressed the topical anti-aging benefits of olive oil. For instance, Japanese scientists have discovered that cold-pressed olive oil may help to protect sun worshippers from skin cancer. A Japanese study found that bald mice covered with high grade, virgin olive oil after being exposed to ultraviolet light were less likely to develop skin cancer than those that weren't (Regular olive oil didn't seem to have a protective effect, which illustrates the importance of using quality virgin olive oil.). It's also believed that the reduced skin cancers could be attributed to the ability of the virgin olive oil to clean up free radical damage induced by ultraviolet light.

Dry Skin

Natural and healthy olive oil remedies have been used for centuries for all different kinds of ailments, from dry hands to brittle nails to dry hair. Ancient civilizations used olive oil to heal wounds. Today it is considered a good remedy for skin problems and an effective moisturizer, reaping surprisingly simple, yet extremely effective benefits.

Olive oil is a mild, non-irritant, antibacterial oil rich in antioxidants; hence it is ideal for the skin. For dry skin around the hands, elbows or knees, microwave a few tablespoons of olive oil to make it lukewarm, and rub it on the affected areas. For soft hands and feet, rub in a little extra-virgin olive oil before bedtime and

wear socks and cotton gloves overnight. You can also mix olive oil with sea salt to make a skin-softening scrub for the shower or bath.

However, your skin type might determine if olive oil is right for you — especially on your face. “Depending on the ethnicity of the person, olive oil can actually cause acne by clogging pores,” said Dr. David Rahimi, owner of Westlake Laser & Aesthetics Medical Group and a diplomat with the American Board of Dermatology. “So if you are someone with very thick, oily skin — like someone with an African American or Hispanic background — you need to be cautious. If you start to use olive oil and develop acne, back off.”

Hair Care

In the world of hair care, olive oil has more than a few applications. For instance, to condition dry hair and to repair damaged hair, mix a half-cup of virgin olive oil with a few drops of lemon juice. Wash your hair using your regular shampoo and rinse; apply the mixture all over your hair and leave it on for about five minutes. Shampoo and rinse again to remove all residue.

If you are seeking soft, shiny hair, rub a few drops of extra-virgin olive oil between your palms and work it into your hair starting from the ends. To help prevent dandruff, massage extra-virgin olive oil into your scalp and leave it on overnight. This remedy is recommended for seven days, and can be washed off daily using regular shampoo.

Once in awhile, hair needs a deeper, nourishing and moisturizing treatment that also minimizes the harsh effects of pollution or sun exposure. One recipe involves mixing one to two beaten egg yolks and two spoonfuls of olive oil, and applying the mixture to the hair for 20 to 30 minutes.

Crow’s Feet

To create a concoction for crow’s feet, mix a teaspoon of olive oil with a few drops from a vitamin E capsule; gently apply to the crow’s feet area around the eyes, and leave it on for 10 minutes. To remove, wipe gently with a cotton swab soaked in warm water.

Shaving Cream

For a smoother shave than shaving cream, remove unwanted hair using olive oil. While shaving gets rid of extra fuzz and gently exfoliates the top layer of skin, olive oil nourishes and lubricates it. Many people who use this method say the skin actually starts to look younger over the long term.

Above all, olive oil is more than a food staple — it’s a solid, natural choice for anyone seeking overall health, inside and out.

