

Body Sense

A public education magazine brought to you by ABMP

spring 2017



Aromatherapy

The Perfect Complement to Massage

Touch for Trauma

The ABCs of Effective Stretching

Mint-Mojito Foot Scrub



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EDITOR'S NOTE

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Body Sense Editor Darren Buford

Shout It from the Rooftops

If you're reading this, you're a massage convert. It's common for you to book a massage, receive a massage, and book another massage even before you've left your practitioner's office. Congrats! You might even have your massage therapist's phone number saved as one of your "favorites." Simply put, you love bodywork.

But did you know that last year only 18 percent of adults received a massage? That seems low, right? For a service that provides so many health benefits—from relieving stress, providing relaxation, and offering relief from pain, to improving recovery from injury and enhancing athletic performance, among others—it's astounding more people don't experience all that therapeutic touch has to offer.

Together, I bet we can increase that number. You know why? Because when people experience massage, they love it. They love it so much, in fact, that 81 percent of adults who received a massage in 2016 rated their massage experience between an 8 and 10, with 10 being "extremely satisfied."*

Now, this is where you come in. We know you're already a massage convert. Now, we want you to become a massage ambassador. We believe that when you spread the word about how massage makes you feel, others will follow suit. Here are some ways you can share the message:

- After you receive your next massage, tell a friend. In fact, tell all of them on social media.
- Share this magazine with another person you think could benefit from learning about the benefits of massage.
- Refer your therapist to others in your friends-and-family circle.
- Buy a massage gift certificate for someone you care about.

Be proud you received a massage, and let others know how much you think they'll enjoy getting bodywork, too. Together, let's spread the word about the good things massage therapy and bodywork can do.

We hope you enjoy this spring issue of *Body Sense* magazine, which is all about your health and well-being.

*Statistics courtesy Harstad Strategic Research, Inc., sponsored by Associated Bodywork & Massage Professionals.



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Body Sense

massage, bodywork & healthy living

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Volume #19, Issue #1, Spring 2017
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PUREQUOSA

Purequosa organic cleansing spray is a shower replacement suitable for sensitive skin and free from alcohol or chemicals. Spray Purequosa on your body or use it to cleanse exercise equipment. This hydrating formula helps you feel fresh before and after an event. Available in coastal, desert, or rain blends, each 8-ounce bottle sells for \$22 and the set of three is \$60 at www.purequosa.com.

THE WELLBE

Developed by a former Microsoft executive and his team, this anti-stress biofeedback bracelet and accompanying app asks permission to access the wearer's location and calendar so it can analyze and display results. It can be set to notify the individual when stress exceeds a certain level and automatically offers a selection of balancing tools, exercises, and meditations for immediate stress reduction. Available in black, brown, natural, or tri-color for \$149 at www.thewellbe.com.



PASSIONFRUIT AGAVE NOURISHING OIL

With 95 percent organic and 99.9 percent nature-derived ingredients, this limited-edition oil is designed for a self-care ritual scalp massage or a refreshing bath. The blend of certified organic sunflower and sesame oils provides antioxidants and moisture to help lower stress while reenergizing the body. The 7.7-ounce bottle is \$42 at www.sparitual.com.



BODY TALK

For Back Pain, Physicians Say Try Massage Before Pills

New guidelines from the American College of Physicians (ACP) recommend trying massage, yoga, or exercise before medication for acute low-back pain. The guidelines were published in the February 2017 *Annals of Internal Medicine*.

Researchers analyzed more than 150 studies looking at what works and what doesn't when it comes to low-back pain. ACP President Nitin Damle, MD, says "garden variety back pain"—not the kind of pain that radiates down your leg or causes numbness—usually goes away on its own. "The body will adjust, the inflammation will go down," Damle says. It may take a few days or even a week, but eventually the individual will be back to normal.

So, Damle asks, why risk the side effects of medication? Side effects can include gastritis, upset stomach, and a rise in blood pressure. Instead, the new guidelines suggest techniques to speed up the healing process, including massage, heat wraps, acupuncture, and spinal manipulation, which can "relax the muscles, joints, and tendons so people can be relieved of their low-back pain sooner, rather than later."

Primary care physician Steven Atlas, an associate professor at Harvard Medical School who practices at Massachusetts General Hospital, describes the guidelines as a needed change. "We are moving away from simple fixes like a pill to a more complex view that involves a lot of lifestyle changes," he says.

Learn more at <http://bit.ly/2nA4SwF>.

Aromatherapy

The Perfect Complement to Massage

By *Body Sense* Staff

From the Greeks and Romans to today's modern massage therapist, aromatherapy has long been a tradition in the healing arts. Have you ever had an aromatherapy massage? Has your massage therapist ever invited you to smell certain essential oils during your session or incorporated them into the massage itself? If so, then you are aware of the extra benefits that can be enjoyed with the seemingly simple, but biologically complex add-on that aromatherapy offers to your session.

WHAT IS AROMATHERAPY?

Aromatherapy is the use of essential oils (extracted from herbs, flowers, resin, woods, and roots) in body and skin care treatments. Used as a healing technique for thousands of years, essential oils aid in relaxation, improve circulation, and assist the healing of wounds. It's common for aromatherapy diffusers to fill a massage room with the scent of the oils. Specific essential oils are also blended by the aromatherapist and added to carrier oils, such as almond oil, to be used during massage. Each essential oil has its own unique characteristics and benefits.

4 ESSENTIAL OILS TO CONSIDER

Some essential oils serve different purposes, like providing energy, so be sure to check with your practitioner and health-care provider before self-applying at home or incorporating any of these into your next massage. Here are four essential oils that work great with massage.

1. Eucalyptus Oil

This oil has analgesic and anti-inflammatory properties that make it one of the best ways to help your aching muscles—and it's easily absorbed by the skin. It works well on rheumatism, sprained ligaments and tendons, and stiff muscles. The aroma of eucalyptus oil is strong, so make sure you like its powerful odor before using it more generously during your massage.



2. Peppermint Oil

Due to its warming properties, this oil is perfect to use on your sore muscles. Its warmth helps your blood circulate better, which assists in the elimination of muscular pain. It also aids in mental clarity, and, when applied to the temples and forehead, can relieve headache pain.


3. Rosemary Oil

Rosemary oil has a refreshing fragrance that can help address muscular pain. Its analgesic and anti-inflammatory properties make it a great choice to help with arthritis and rheumatism, and is helpful for athletes when administered pre-event.



4. Lavender Oil

This great postworkout oil is one of the best remedies for muscle aches, and it's great for sensitive skin as well. Lavender's analgesic properties make it extremely effective in soothing low-back pain, strains and sprains, and menstrual cramps.

While essential oils have many healing properties, remember they may also cause allergic skin reactions for some users. It's important for your therapist to know about any allergies you may have, and whether you're sensitive to strong scents, before using this health-care approach. These oils offer only a small picture of the many great benefits of aromatherapy. Try various essential oils at home and during your next massage, and see where this aromatic journey takes you next. 

Essential Oil FAQs

How are Essential Oils Made?

Essential oils are either distilled or extracted.

How are Essential Oils Distilled?

Utilizing a steam process, the plant material is heated; as the steam rises, it carries the essence of the plant with it. The steam is then captured and condensed, and the plant's oils are separated from the water.

What is Expression?

Expression is the process whereby citrus essential oils are derived by applying pressure to the fruits' rinds.

Should Essential Oils be Inhaled, Ingested, or Rubbed On?

The effects of essential oils depend on their method of application.

- For aches, apply essential oils directly to the site of the pain. You can also apply a few drops to your bath water and enjoy a long soak, or ask your massage therapist to add the essential oil to a carrier oil during your massage.
- If you are looking to lift your mood, then inhaling essential oils might work for you. Simply add the desired essential oils to hot water and inhale the steam.
- Advice about ingesting essential oils requires the expertise of a skilled aromatherapist and is not recommended without significant product knowledge, as some oils can be dangerous if consumed internally.

Should Essential Oils be Diluted Before Application?

Direct application of essential oils may be too concentrated for the skin and may cause irritation. Therefore, ideally, essential oils should be diluted before being used. They are usually diluted with carrier oils, the most common of which are almond oil, grape-seed oil, and jojoba oil.

Are There Any Cautions When Using Essential Oils?

There are several things one should keep in mind before using essential oils or getting an aromatherapy massage.

- First, the quality of the oil is important. Check for purity when purchasing oils for home use.
- During the health history intake, let your practitioner know if you have any allergies.

The ABCs of Effective Stretching

Combining Massage and Stretching Can Increase Joint Flexibility and Relax Overused Muscles

By Anita Boser

Olympic athletes, sedentary office workers, and chronic-pain patients can all enhance the effects of massage by stretching between sessions. When done as part of a health-care regimen, massage and stretching increase joint flexibility and relax overused muscles. Get the most out of stretching, and your next massage, by following these stretching ABCs.

Awareness. Stay aware of sensations when you stretch. You are more likely to pull a muscle if your awareness is somewhere other than on your body.

Breathe. Holding your breath is counterproductive. Emphasize your exhale to get a better stretch.

Connective tissue includes ligaments, tendons, and fascia. We think stretching is good for our muscles, but our connective tissues benefit just as much. The best stretches for connective tissue are fluid and elastic.

Dynamic stretching is a new way to warm up. It is based on research showing that using traditional, static stretches before exercise can actually impede athletic performance. Dynamic movements are more effective than static stretch holds in improving performance and muscle elasticity.

Ease into and out of a stretch several times before holding it. This softens





the connective tissue around the muscles and gets nerves prepared to reduce muscle tightness.

Feel your sensations as you stretch. They will guide you toward the best results. Feel for the stretch point—where the amount of pull on the tissues is just enough for the muscle to let go. If the muscle tightens or is painful, you have gone beyond the stretch point. The stretch point is always less than your maximum.

Genetics. How flexible you are has more to do with genetics than how much you stretch. Some people can stretch every day and never be able to do the splits. (Take it from me!) On the other end of the spectrum, hypermobile people have to be careful not to overstretch already loose ligaments.

Hold. You only need to hold a stretch until you feel the tissues release. If you don't feel a release within 30 seconds, back off, as you've probably caused sensors in the tendons to tighten the muscles.

Interoception is awareness of what is going on inside your body. While most of us ignore our innards unless there's something terribly wrong with them, it turns out that developing this awareness helps us self-regulate and increase pain tolerance. Stretching with awareness is one way to develop interoception.

Jaw. Tension in your jaw while you stretch is a sign that something is not right. Envision your lower jaw being heavy and your upper jaw being light.

Keep your joints in line when stretching to make sure you are getting to all parts of the muscle and connective tissue. For example, when stretching your hamstrings, if your knee turns to the side, you avoid lengthening the muscles on the side of your leg.

Lift. It's easy—and counterproductive—to sink into a stretch. Instead, lift throughout the movement and

Dynamic movements are more effective than static stretch holds in improving performance and muscle elasticity.

hold phases. This engagement is particularly important to prevent injury to ligaments, especially for people who are hypermobile.

Myofascial chains are groups of muscles and connective tissue (fascia) that are linked together. When you bend forward to touch your toes, you are stretching a myofascial chain that extends from the soles of your feet to the back of your legs, through the back of your pelvis, and up your spine. You can feel the stretch in different places on different days, depending on what part of the myofascial chain is most restricted.

Nerves. Stretches are for nerves as much as for muscles and fascia. The sciatic nerve needs to lengthen more than 4 inches when moving from standing to bending forward

to touch the ground. The ulnar nerve needs to lengthen nearly 2 inches for your hand to touch the back of your head. If you feel tingly sensations when stretching, you could be overstretching your nerves.

Opposing muscles. A muscle cannot stretch any farther than its opposing muscle can contract. To have flexible hamstrings, the quadriceps must be strong. To stretch the pectoralis major (a great idea for anyone who works at a computer), it's important to strengthen the opposing back muscles.

Postexercise. Stretching before athletic events can be counterproductive. Stretch postexercise when your tissues are warm.

Quit when you are ahead. A little stretch with a release is more productive than a big stretch that causes your nerves to tighten up.

Release. An effective stretch will create a release that feels like a softening, lengthening, or letting go in the tissues. A release will tell you that you've accomplished something with the stretch. Burning sensations don't indicate a release.

Slide and glide. The goal of stretching is to not only make muscles longer, but also to get the muscles and connective tissue to glide against each other.

Tone. Another purpose of stretching is to reduce unnecessary tightness, which requires that stretching be at least partly relaxing.

Unusual stretches can help improve flexibility. Repeating the same stretches over and over makes for uneven tone.


Variation. Static stretching has been shown to be ineffective in several studies. Add variations to stretches, like shifting your hips slightly or gently shaking your head when bending forward, to reach a multitude of fibers within the myofascial chain.

Warm. Stretching cold muscles can cause micro-tears in the surrounding connective tissues. Prepare to stretch by warming up with a minimum of 5 minutes (more is better) of walking or other whole-body exercise.

X-ray vision. Try to "look" inside your body with X-ray vision as you stretch. Imagine what is going on inside. That level of attention will help you achieve a good release.

Yielding is a concept of relaxation, meaning letting your body weight relax. It's a good way to begin. Yield, then breathe, lift, and release.

Zip up your core. Stretching isn't about letting it all hang out. Zip up your core muscles so they will protect your joints as you stretch.

Regular stretching, when done properly, will help keep your muscles and connective tissue in optimal condition, increasing the effectiveness of all other exercise. Follow the ABCs to gain the most benefit and help your massage therapist release even more of your tight tissues. 

Anita Boser, BCSI, is the author of Undulation: Relieve Stiffness and Feel Young, a book with 48 exercises for a more flexible body. For additional ways to become more flexible and feel more comfortable in your body, visit her website at www.vitalselfinc.com.

ASK THE EXPERTS

Q&A

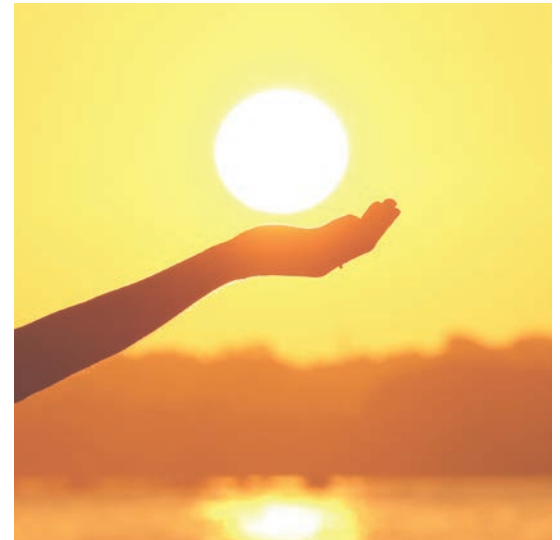
“It’s spring, and I’m starting to prepare for several biking and running races. Is it best to receive bodywork prerace or postrace?”

Both! Ideally, you would receive a bodywork session two to three days before your event and as soon after the event as you can. Pre-event massage can help decrease muscle hypertonicity (tension), increase range of motion, and help you knock out a personal record on race day. Postevent sessions aid your recovery by addressing tightness from overuse—say, if you pushed a bit too hard or the race was longer or more challenging than your body is used to. They’re both valuable for achieving and maintaining peak



Kristin Coverly, LMT, is a massage therapist and educator for Associated Bodywork & Massage Professionals.

athletic performance whether you’re an elite athlete or weekend warrior. Smartest choice? Make your massage therapist a valued member of your wellness team and receive consistent bodywork throughout your training and race season.



“I tan easily. Do I really need sunscreen?”

Most of the sun damage that occurs in our lifetime is from ambient sun exposure, not deliberate tanning. Walking to the mailbox, driving in the car, talking to your neighbor in the yard, and sitting by a window at work—all of these seemingly innocent scenarios expose the skin to damaging ultraviolet (UV) rays. It is *cumulative* sun exposure that causes *eventual* damage. Sun exposure at age 22 causes wrinkles and skin cancer at age 40 or 50. Every time you have unprotected exposure, damage is accumulating that will eventually show up as sagging, wrinkles, liver spots, and skin cancer. So, yes. Please wear your sunscreen.

Mark Lees, PhD, MS, CIDESCO, is a skin care educator, product developer, therapist, and author.





Touch for Trauma

Bodywork for Survivors


The numbers are staggering. In the United States, a person is assaulted or beaten by their intimate partner every five seconds, and approximately three women are murdered by their husbands or boyfriends every day.¹ Up to 5 million US children witness incidents of domestic violence each year.² And every 98 seconds, an American is sexually assaulted; every 8 minutes, that victim is a child.³

When I entered the field of massage and bodywork, I did so with the clear intention to share tools and information with women regarding the body's innate abilities. My goal in this intention has always been to support women, to empower them, and to play a role in their healing processes. Through my work with the Joyful Heart Foundation, which works to support survivors of abuse

and violence, as well as participating in research on whole-person healing with Georgetown University, it's become evident that more and more educators and health-care providers are understanding the value of therapeutic touch for survivors of this kind of trauma. Here's what you should know.

THE EFFECTS OF TRAUMA ON THE BODY

Our nervous system is an electrical communication system that responds to all types of stimuli. When we experience kindness, love, and empathy, for example, our nervous system perceives safety,



which in turn signals to our body that it may rest, digest, and restore when needed. On the other hand, when we experience threat of any kind, our nervous system is swiftly alerted to respond. At that moment, our sympathetic nervous system kicks off a cascade of physiological effects, including the release of cortisol (our stress hormone), shallow breath, increased heart rate, reduced digestion, and general hypervigilance. We are thrown into a state of survival, literally. All energies go to our limbs and tense muscles to help us fight, flee, or freeze. Unfortunately, this is where our bodies can get stuck.

Psychologist Peter Levine says humans are the only mammals whose “shake” mechanism does not activate automatically, or at all, following a threat or stress. A common example of the shake mechanism is a dog, who will shake from head to tail after a threat to their system has been removed. This shaking releases the inertia of stored energy from the peripheral nervous system, thereby allowing energy and impulses to be rerouted and reintegrated back into our central nervous system. When the threat is gone, we humans tend to remain in a state of high alert versus shaking it off like other mammals.

Without the ability to shake it off, trauma survivors are left with an incomplete physiological process that can result in ongoing effects, including muscle tension, disrupted sleep cycles, compromised digestion, and increased heart rate.

While we know there are many ways to approach a nervous system that is being held hostage in sympathetic activation—meditation, talk therapy, somatic awareness, movement, nature, artistic expression, and nourishing food—therapeutic touch is not always the first thing a survivor might consider.

WHY BODYWORK?

Although receiving massage and bodywork might seem counterintuitive for some trauma survivors, this human contact often works to mend the wounds that can't be seen. Here are just a few ways massage can help.

1. Physiological Benefits

Massage and bodywork support the parasympathetic nervous system—the system that allows us to rest, digest, and restore our faculties—by providing stimuli that is intentionally present, caring, and safe. By deactivating the central nervous system, massage and bodywork can bring about increased relaxation, an unraveling of muscle tension, deepened breathing, increased circulation, regulated digestion, calming of the hypothalamus and cortisol, and more.

2. Safe Touch

Touch can be a sensitive subject for someone who has experienced assault of any kind. As a massage therapist, I want my clients to understand that we are in complete partnership and that I absolutely support *their* processes. The goal of bodywork practitioners is to meet all recipients where they are and work from the needs that arise, versus imposing a one-size-fits-all protocol on clients.

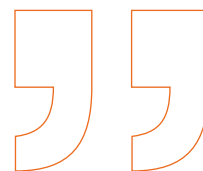
With this in mind, therapists work to educate clients about what a bodywork session should look like and emphasize that, as the recipient, clients are in complete control. On a basic level, we let clients know we will check in with them regarding pressure, temperature, etc., when appropriate. Additionally, we encourage clients to let us know when they need anything at all, be it a blanket, a bathroom break, a change in music, lighter pressure, or moving into a new position. Clients need to understand that they are in charge of their session and have full control over what happens to their body, including how, and how much, they will be touched. After surviving a traumatic experience, receiving safe, interpersonal touch can be an important part of the healing journey.

3. Trust of Others

Survivors of violence often share that it is challenging for them to trust another person's touch after experiencing assault and trauma. When survivors cross the threshold into a bodywork space, they are taking a step toward trusting another person to ensure the safe touch that each session intends.

The framework of each massage session is solely to support a client's healing process. While practitioners may bring the therapeutic techniques to the table, it is the client who has complete agency over everything that will happen during a

In healing bodywork sessions, clients are the authority of their bodies and their experiences.



session. Whether it is a client's very first official wellness session or one in a long line of self-care experiences, safe, interpersonal touch can offer a breakthrough and shift survivors toward trusting themselves and others again.

4. Empowering Voice

Very often, subordination is a large piece of the puzzle for survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and child abuse. In order to save their lives, clients might have needed to keep quiet and been unable to speak up during the trauma. What happens when clients ask for their needs to be met in a safe, loving space?

In healing bodywork sessions, clients are the authority of their bodies and their experiences. A bodywork session is a safe platform to reclaim their voice and express their needs. It is in this safe space where silence can be broken.

5. Self-Love, Self-Compassion

Finally, it is empowering for survivors to connect the dots between ways in which their bodies and nervous systems might be stuck, versus thinking their bodies are unsafe or failing them. This shift in perspective made by understanding the body's physiology and its potentially incomplete response to a past experience can be a huge piece of self-compassion for the body and gratitude for all that it might have endured.

Self-care practices such as massage, stretching, and breath work are vehicles for trauma survivors to connect internally and appreciate the messaging that their bodies might be communicating. These self-care practices offer ways in which clients can listen to, and respond to, their bodies' needs with love.

THE UTMOST HONOR

Massage and bodywork not only offer innumerable physical benefits for survivors of trauma, but they also allow survivors a way to reconnect with their bodies and begin to heal the wounds hidden deep within.

For some, experiencing a bodywork session might be their edge—their healthy risk-taking, a reawakening of body memory, and the very first time they are receiving intentional, loving touch solely for their self-care and healing process. Witnessing clients returning to, and reclaiming, their bodies is the utmost honor for me as a massage therapist. ¹³

Notes

1. National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, "National Statistics," accessed March 2017, www.ncadv.org/learn-more/statistics.
2. Childhood Domestic Violence Association, "10 Startling Statistics About Children of Domestic Violence," accessed March 2017, www.cdv.org/2014/02/10-startling-domestic-violence-statistics-for-children.
3. RAINN, "Statistics," accessed March 2017, www.rainn.org/statistics.

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Mint-Mojito Foot Scrub

By Stephanie Gerber

It's time to give your hardworking feet a little TLC with this invigorating foot scrub. Besides the refreshing, odor-masking scent, the mint helps reduce perspiration, while the salts exfoliate and improve circulation.

RECOMMENDED FOR

all skin types

FREQUENCY OF USE

weekly

MATERIALS

1 lime
1 bunch fresh mint
½ cup sea salt
½ cup Epsom salt
2 tablespoons coconut oil

TOOLS

Zester
Knife
Measuring cups and spoons
Small bowl
Spoon
Bathtub or large bowl

STORAGE ADVICE

best if used immediately; if necessary, refrigerate and use within seven days.



1 2 3 4 5 6

1 Wash and zest the lime. Then, use a knife to cut and juice it—you should have about 2 tablespoons of juice.

2 Chop the fresh mint so you have 2 tablespoons. Pause to get a good whiff of that wonderful smell!

3 Combine the lime juice, zest, and mint in a small bowl. Measure and add the sea and Epsom salts.

4 If the coconut oil is solid, heat it for a few seconds until it softens into a nice, buttery, workable texture. Add it to the bowl and stir to combine.

5 To use, sit on the edge of the bathtub (use a large bowl if you don't have a bathtub) and thoroughly scrub your feet and calves. Let the scrub collect on the bottom of the bathtub as you massage the mixture over your skin.

6 When you're done scrubbing, fill the bathtub or bowl with enough warm water to cover your feet. Soak for 10–15 minutes to pamper tired tootsies, then rinse.

Author Stephanie Gerber started the website Hello Glow (www.hello glow.com)—a destination for natural wellness, nutrition, and skin care—in 2011 to rediscover her sense of self after becoming a mother. She likes to raid the fridge for face mask ingredients after the kids go to bed. Despite giving in to the practicality of a minivan, she has promised not to abandon her love of long soaks in the tub and bright red lipstick. Recipe courtesy of Hello Glow, from Weldon Owen Publishing.



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