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Understanding Mud

An Expert Report on Mud as Used in the Professional Beauty Industry

By Barbara Schumann

Even with its worldwide recognition as a beneficial compound, mud remains an elusive treatment to most consumers. Those familiar with day spas and skincare clinics are more informed about the healing powers of therapeutic mud treatments, yet the average consumer still has much to learn. In order to clear the fog, we offer you ... MUD.

The History Of Mud

Throughout history, mud has been used as a healing agent for cracks, bites, burns, and other skin afflictions. It has been used not only to soothe, but also to draw toxins and oils from skin. Pure mud can be detoxifying, remineralizing, hormonally balancing and anti-inflammatory.

For many years, cosmetic and esthetic manufacturers have researched various muds from across the globe to analyze their therapeutic healing agents and have incorporated them into their skincare and bodycare product lines. Today you can find anything from mud masks and mud soaps to mud creams both in spas and available for retail.

What Is Therapeutic Mud?

When professional cosmetologists and estheticians refer to therapeutic mud, it is not the kind that you find in your backyard after a heavy rain. The mud used in skin treatments is indeed a natural product of the earth. However, the mud in traditional American backyards can contain high levels of toxins, such as lead and bacteria, which can have detrimental effects on the skin. Every region on earth produces mud with an individual mineral and biological profile, unique to its geographic and climate conditions. Depending upon where the mud is sampled, it may contain high concentrations of zinc, copper, selenium, iron or manganese, which can be used in a variety of combinations to treat different ailments.

One of the most raved-about muds in the world comes from the Dead Sea in Israel. Dead Sea Mud is black in color and enriched with such healing minerals as magnesium, calcium, potassium, bromide, and organic remains of plants and animals. In truth, it is these thousand-year-old ingredients that make mud all the rave with estheticians, beauty care experts and cosmetic research scientists. The Dead Sea has long been known for its therapeutic influences on rheumatic conditions like arthritis and other body aches and pains and skin problems such as acne, eczema and psoriasis. This water and mud is comprised of a high concentration of salts and minerals, forming a unique combination not found in any other body of water in the world. Products made of Dead Sea mud are usually found to be highly regenerative and beneficial to both skin and body. Regardless of whether you buy the product for relief of a specific skin or rheumatoid condition, its natural ingredients will have incredible effects on skin and general well-being, depending upon your use of the product.

What Is The Difference Between Mud and Clay?

Although clay and mud both come from the same earthy ground, mud is promoted more as a healing agent, whereas clay is more commonly used in cosmetic products, as it is a drying agent. It is a component found in many cosmetic foundations and powders. Clay also tends to be used as a clarifying agent in skin products because of its ability to remove matter suspended in liquid. Because clay's natural properties are oil balancing, it is especially useful and beneficial for acne prone clientele.

Mud is an ingredient that is used not so much for cosmetic purposes, but for healing purposes. Because of its water solubility, mud is a substance which allows the skin to absorb nutrients from it or other products applied along with it. This is a common function of mud in masks, body wraps, and other skin treatments. In America, mud has not been allowed to be labeled 'medicinal' by the FDA. However, in many European, African and Asian countries, mud is considered by healthcare experts to offer specific medicinal properties.

Confusing The Uses For Mud

One issue that is commonly confused is the actual use of mud in salons and spas. Products are often labeled as "Mud" for lack of a better term. Some companies develop compounds out of peat, algae, or other natural substances and call

them “Mud” for the simple purpose of simplifying the product to the consumer. These formulas may tend to have similar properties to some forms of mud and may offer similar dermatological benefits, but they may also be truly different.

Estheticians commonly use mud for its ability to facilitate product absorption. In these circumstances, it is not the mud that contains the healing properties, but rather the product that is applied to the skin first. The mud forms an occlusive layer, which helps the skin soak up the beneficial ingredients in the chosen skin care product.

Where Should Mud Treatments Be Performed?

As esthetic and spa professionals, we know the value of mud for therapeutic bodycare and skincare. Mud treatments can be performed in the salon, spa or at home, although there certainly are advantages to having a licensed professional apply mud for our clients. The mud application process is both messy and time consuming. Natural and added ingredients found in most mud products are notorious for staining clothing and fabric. Also, it is difficult for an individual to cover his or her own body entirely with mud. It is highly recommended that a client visit a spa professional to receive a mud treatment, especially so that they are able to enjoy the therapeutic and relaxing effects of the soothing application process.

Most mud treatments are considered “wet treatments,” which means that they require a special wet room or shower treatment in the spa or salon to thoroughly remove the mud product and flush the skin. Rarely are mud products made that can be applied and removed without the use of water in one way or another. This is one more reason why mud treatments should be recommended to your clients as a spa service. Not only because of the messy characteristics of the substance, but who could pass up a luxurious vichy shower to follow up their mud wrap?

One of the most beneficial effects that services like mud wraps offer is their ability to bring positive influences to one’s mind, body and spirit. Body treatments are often enjoyed by people with high stress or anxiety, to calm the nerves and soothe the soul. The detoxifying effects of mud on the body leave clients feeling refreshed and clean, often invoking a general sense of well being. For this reason alone, a visit to a spa or skin clinic may be a more therapeutic experience than that resulting from a treatment done at home.

Determining The Right Skin Type For Mud Treatments

The distinctively unique properties of mud have proven effective in removing oil and impurities from the skin. This does not mean that you cannot enjoy a mud treatment if you have dry skin. Because of its healing powers for conditions like psoriasis, mud can benefit dry skin conditions as well, although it is not recommended as an overly frequent treatment for people with normal to dry skin. When your clients with dry skin approach the issue of mud masks and body treatments, a traditional recommendation is the use of a moisturizing treatment both before and after the application of mud in a spa treatment.

Using and Marketing Mud In A Spa

Even though many mud products can be a substantial investment, mud is still a very cost effective purchase for any day or destination spa. There are a number of methods to incorporate new mud treatments into a spa service menu. One method is to begin by creating and offering a special therapeutic mud bath. This mud is less costly and the mud is not type-cast for specific healing powers, but can still prove incredibly therapeutic, for both skin and body.

Mud can also be offered as a facial service and a body service. One of the best selling points for mud in a spa is that people do not WANT to do mud at home. They want to go to a spa, unburden themselves, and enjoy total relaxation and pampering. Mud offers them just that. Another idea that comes along with mud is that it is relatively exotic. Most average Americans have not put mud on their bodies since they were digging in the playground. To think that mud can be used as such a luxurious service seems foreign to some people, but that is another reason why mud is appealing.

We suggest that you add an array of various mud treatments, masks, and bodycare to your salon menu. Consider various combination spa packages which feature mud, while combining it with other wet or dry skincare and spa treatments. For example, vichy showers are great when combined with mud treatments, as they allow for cleansing of the mud, and add on another relaxing and highly-enjoyable skin therapy. Use artistic photographs in your spa menus, print advertisements, TV commercials, posters and counter cards to effectively illustrate what a mud treatment looks like. Combined with a clever headline and a beautiful photograph, you can dramatically increase your client’s awareness, while opening the door for many new first time users. You can certainly promote all of your mud treatments at full price. You may also want to offer a ‘\$10 Gift Certificate Off Of Any First-Time Spa Mud Treatment’, to clients who have never tried a mud treatment before.

Make sure that everyone on your staff is well educated on the mud treatments that your salon or spa carries. Ask your manufacturer and distributor for helpful information, brochures and if possible, an educational seminar. This seminar should not only teach product knowledge, it should also teach you and your staff how to professionally introduce mud

treatments to your clientele by using consultative selling techniques. Finally, make sure that each person on your staff experiences a mud treatment, so they can personally speak about the specific benefits and luxuries of your mud treatments.

Keeping Mud (And Your Business) Alive!

Mud can turn your salon or spa into an exotic and luxurious get-away and can generate a high-end clientele. The more exotic your mud products the better. A sense of curiosity in the average client and consumer will bring them in just to experience your newest mud services. Once you have the treatments in your salon or spa, market them and you will see your customers coming back for more of this exciting, high quality, skin care service.

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EDITORIAL NOTE: Barbara Schumann is Vice President of Wilma Schumann Skin Care, Inc. Founded by her mother, Wilma Schumann, she has been influenced by the positive effects of professional skin care her entire life. Barbara Schumann now makes it her goal to educate other professional estheticians and spa owners about how to successfully provide quality skin care services and products to the world. The Wilma Schumann Skin Care Company and the Wilma Schumann Skin Care Research Clinic are located at 2121 Ponce de Leon Boulevard, Suite 530 in Miami Florida. For more information about therapeutic mud treatments or Wilma Schumann Skin Care Treatments, call 1-800-440-3032 or visit www.wilmaschumann.com.

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