



Glowing Skin: Our Precious Protector

by Shoshanna Katzman

Within our skin, we face the world with a unique external signature of strength, vibrancy, vulnerability and personal beauty. Skin is the body's ultimate protector imbued with a 'magical' self-healing ability. It holds and keeps everything in place, serving as a barrier to outside influences as it wards off bacteria and germs; repairing quickly when scratched or cut. Through opening and closing of its pores, body temperature is regulated and detoxification is enhanced. Special appreciation is warranted and special care essential to maintain its glowing health.

The beauty and health food industry is filled with skin lotions and herbal potions to maintain soft, hydrated, and youthful looking skin. Choosing the most natural products without coloring

agents or harsh chemicals is recommended to avoid toxic buildup and preserve the skin's innate vitality. Dry skin brushing is a useful method to enhance the skin's natural detoxification process. And many households have a purification system whereby even showers and baths are taken with filtered water.

The combination of physical and energetic enhancement provides the highest level of success for maintaining glowing healthy skin. For centuries, acupuncture has been used to energetically restore and maintain skin health. It accomplishes this by maximizing Qi and Blood flow to the body. When applied predominantly to the face, acupuncture has become well-known for facial rejuvenation. Depending on presenting symptoms, treatment may also be necessary to discharge stagnant Blood,

resolve dampness, balance hormones or eliminate Blood Heat. An acupuncturist may recommend modification in lifestyle habits. For example, overwork and high stress levels increase internal heat and dwelling in a cold, wet environment exacerbates internal dampness.

Qigong is a self-healing exercise practice reputed for its enhancement of skin health. Qigong breathing techniques strengthen the Lung meridian which is directly related to the skin according to the Law of the Five Elements. In fact, eczema is known as "skin asthma" in Chinese medicine circles. Qigong also strengthens "Wei Qi" which is a special vital energy that resides just under the skin. Wei Qi is a form of energetic immunity for the body. When the energetic component of Wei Qi is combined with the skin's physical ability to ward off harmful factors from the external environment – together they become an immunity powerhouse.

Chinese medicine views excessive, pent-up emotions as a possible internal cause of disease. In fact, extreme anger or jealousy is traditionally believed to be a root cause of skin problems. Acupuncture and Qigong incorporated singularly or in combination resolves the negative effects of such emotions. For example, the Qigong exercise called "Five Healing Sounds" is practiced to cleanse the vital organs of excessive, toxic emotions through vocalization of sounds combined with mental imagery.

Therapeutic massage is another highly regarded method to lift the spirits as it enhances skin health. It not only feels good, but reduces stress and eliminates pain as it increases blood circulation to the skin. The massage experience promotes self-awareness and a much needed time for inner-reflection which also helps to balance emotions. Whichever method one chooses, the ultimate goal is wholeness of body, mind and spirit to enhance skin beauty and glow as our precious protector.

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