



We can learn a lot about natural washing techniques from our prehistoric ancestors and the animal kingdom.

Sally Mittuch, founder of Natural Spa Supplies Ltd, shares her understanding of archaeology and anthropology ...

When it comes to washing themselves, people have never been so removed from nature as they are now. Most bathroom cabinets are burgeoning with a multitude of highly specialized plastic packed products with unpronounceable ingredients. Advertising dazzles consumers with jargon and the glory of the latest formula. As a result consumers are losing their natural reasoning on how to care for their body. We need to be brought down to earth. Back in 2007, while on honeymoon, Sally came across the use of clay for washing just as in prehistoric times and she decided to set up Natural Spa Supplies Ltd to bring the clay to a wider audience. People need to wash and keep themselves clean. This is not just for health but because we are social beings – we want to look, feel and smell good. It is far removed from vanity - animals in the wild also care for their skin, hair and fur. Indeed, as with other mammals and primates, caring for the skin and hair is programmed into our behaviour and taught to the young of the species. Whether we are fully aware of it or not, we want to look, feel and smell healthy to attract and keep a good quality breeding partner. The ultimate aim is to create good quality offspring – that is, healthy, happy and able children and grandchildren. Hygiene and the appearance of health are perceived as indicators of health, fertility and the fitness to cope with the demands of birthing, parenting and being a grandparent. A healthy appearance and hygienic aspect are fundamental to the laws of personal attraction, for bringing and keeping people together for the rearing of children. So how did all of our ancestors manage without modern products?

Some traditional societies use what the wild mammals use – the raw unprocessed resources of nature. **Exfoliation** is the first principle of skin care. Many mammals simply roll in the earth. The rolling action exfoliates by removing dead skin, loose hairs and it stimulates the skin. Humans across all cultures use washing techniques where the skin is rubbed with something coarse, for example **Pumice** for the feet and certain species of sea sponges for the body. **Sea Sponges** are harvested in such a way that they regrow from the



root. The Honeycomb, and Silk Fina species will gently exfoliate,

where as our **Copper and Nettle Exfoliating Glove** gives a more intense experience. The most effective way to remove dead skin without causing irritation, is by using traditional 'soft soap' to deep clean the pores of the skin and lift off the dead skin layers. This then is removed with the exfoliating glove or a sponge – the hand alone is insufficient. The skin is the largest organ of the body and it eliminates substances that other organs cannot process such as pesticides, oils, salts, metals and uric acid. Some of the toxins are retained in the dead outer layers of the skin and this layer does need periodic removal. Thick and flaky dead skin is difficult to moisturize and its presence can impair the health giving function of the underlying skin.

At Natural Spa Supplies, we have recreated the original **British Hemp Oil Soft Soap**, based on a 12th century recipe. With over 1200 uses and only three ingredients, British hemp oil, water and lye has very powerful natural antibacterial and anti-fungal properties. The versatility of this soap can not be overstressed, from hygienic nail scrubbing, exfoliating and wet shaving. It will even clean burnt pans and roasting tins, all without rubber gloves. They work especially well with the **Scrubbies**, an eco surface cleaning pad made of cotton and finished so the fibres are as hard as gypsum. Together they make cleaning a breeze and a joy.

Again let us return to the animals who roll. By choice a wet clayey patch of land is chosen,



though be assured that furry mammals such as cats and birds prefer sun warmed clay powder! When humans wash with clay not only do they fulfil their mammalian instincts but they are using a raw and ethical product of nature. Clay is found on every continent except Antarctica and it also settles on the sea bed. There is plenty around, though some clays are more suitable than others for washing the hair and skin. Clays are made continuously through volcanic and geothermal activity. Human societies have chosen to settle in fertile river terraces and around clay rich springs to be close to such a useful resource.

These locations gained sacred associations due to the cleansing and curative powers of clay and fresh water. Although clay has many uses, its cleaning, detoxifying and healing powers are second to none in nature. No wonder every species of primate and all herbivores also drink clay rich water in the wild and rely on clay for natural medicine. The second principle of natural hygiene is to keep the **hair clean and the skin and scalp detoxified.**

One of the best known clays for external use is [Moroccan Rhassoul](#), taken directly from volcanic deposits in the High Atlas Mountains. The clay is hand dug, washed with river water and sun dried. Clays are the smallest of crystals and they retain the energy of the earth, water and sun which is brought to the body during washing.

Having a particularly strong negative charge, rhassoul clay draws up the lymph fluid from under the skin surface and then pulls toxins through the skin, assisting in the skin's natural elimination process.

Even though clay use is very environmentally friendly, Natural Spa Supplies initiated a challenge to journalists to establish low usage guidelines.

Subsequently some clay washers have got into the habit of using just 7g of clay powder for washing the hair, face and body. It is a tiny amount of clay and it makes a very economic and versatile wash medium. Clay brings the hair to the natural condition and does not have a 'build up effect' like chemical shampoos. Both the hemp oil soap and the rhassoul clay are a revelation for people who are sensitive to soap and fragrances, or for people who have skin troubles. Clay hair washing is suitable for all hair types, from fine, to curly to Afro hair. Clay brings the hair to its natural condition and does not have a 'build up effect' like chemical shampoos. We use dried [Scottish Seaweed Fronds](#) as our hair conditioner - just add water! Clay brings the skin as well to peak condition and by using clay for washing, bathing and showering many people can abandon the use of moisturisers all together.

Moisturization The third principle of skin care is to moisturize only where needed. The face, neck, hands and any exposed skin will need protection from the elements and the skin is adapted to absorb fine plant oils. [Argan Oil](#) is the most vaunted facial oil, known for its rapid absorption and its anti-aging effects. This oil is cold pressed from the seeds of the argan tree. It is a very hardy tree and can survive long droughts. Consequently the seed oil is very high in antioxidants, protecting the tree from attacks from microbes and fungi and solar damage.

We exploit these protective plant compounds to protect the delicate facial skin. The average daily use is about 5 drops and again, argan oil is excellent value for money.

Deodorising Many people use underarm antiperspirants or deodorants to avoid underarm odour. Antiperspirants release aluminium ions which enter the sweat glands and block their secretions; whereas deodorants kill the bacteria which create the odour on the skin surface. The most common deodorant ingredient for manufactured deodorants is ammonium alum.

Ingredient labels suggest that ammonium alum is a pure mineral salt, however when Sally began to research this ingredient (in French) she realised that ammonium alum does not exist in nature and it is derived as waste from the nylon and aluminium factories. Sally has sourced the original volcanically formed [Alum Crystal](#) (potassium alum bisulphate) from Morocco which is the same source that Britain depended on during the Elizabethan Era. According to triathlon athlete testers, the volcanic alum much more effective. Again the use of this earth resource is economic - our female triathlon testers spend from £9.00 per year deodorizing. This alum is also the traditional shavers styptic for reducing shaving rash, sealing shaving nicks and for insect bite relief. Natural alum has been used by every civilization who could obtain it for cloth dying, paper making, water purification and hygienic use.

Oral Hygiene Through the ages teeth have been washed with a cloth, brushed or rubbed, scraped with toothpicks and flossed with thread or tree bast. The most popular toothbrush in the world, is actually a tree root from the *salvadora persica* tree, known as [Miswak](#) or the chewing stick. The root is in fact a 3-in-1, toothbrush, toothpaste and mouthwash and can be transformed into a tongue cleaner too. Even with the first use of the root, the teeth feel sparkly clean, but the great advantage, is that the brush which forms on the end of the stick will reach every millimetre

of gum line, including behind the molars and front incisors. During use, sap is released which kills gingivitis and caries causing bacteria. The clever stick can be used anywhere and helps to take it about with you to keep the teeth,

gums and tongue clean and healthy at all times. Miswak does have a pungent taste, so we also supply the milder [Olive Tree Sticks](#). To clean the spaces between the teeth, interdental brushes recommended by dentists perform an important role and a strong hand spun [Silk Floss](#) will reach everywhere else. One product which not everyone needs is [Lip Balm](#). Most lip preparations on the market contain paraffin oil also known as Vaseline. It is known to cause dryness and allergies! Sally has have formulated a lip balm from argan oil (to help against wrinkling on and around the lips), gum acacia and beeswax. The softening and soothing effect on the lips is instant. The results are even better if the lips are periodically washed and rubbed with [Rose Water](#). With sustainable resources from volcanoes, the sea and plants we can avoid chemicals and plastics and bring the very best from nature into our lives.



FREEPHONE 0800 023 5008

www.naturalspasupplies.co.uk

mail@naturalspasupplies.co.uk

@NaturalSpaSupplies



@naturalspasupplies



Natural Spa Supplies



@Naturalspastore



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