

Try these desi-style face ubtans at home during the Lockdown

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We Indians swear by a good scrub aka ubtan. From the time a baby is born to the sacred ritual of haldi in Indian weddings, the homemade goodness of an ubtan is universally acknowledged. In fact, experts call it the first known cosmetic treatment in the world. In the universe of pre-mixed potions and treatments, ubtan is the bespoke beauty basic that is making a strong comeback. And thanks to the social-distancing life, you have all the time to start on this self-care ritual.

The careful mixing of kitchen ingredients is an age-old method of exfoliating and softening the skin. Herbal beauty doyenne Shahnaz Husain says that an ubtan has various benefits from removing dead skin cells to softening the skin, evening it out, removing tan, skin brightening and reducing dark patches and spots – to name a few. “It is a powerful cleansing procedure and keeps the pores free of hardened oil. One can easily mix an ubtan at home with common home ingredients like gram flour (besan), wheat bran (choker), turmeric (haldi), yogurt, cream (malai), etc (check box),” she adds.

RUB IT IN

In Ayurveda, the skin is also considered a source of ingestion. So, anything that is

applied on the skin is supposed to be absorbed by the body – a reason why it advises against chemicals. Dr Partap Chauhan, Ayurveda expert and director of an Ayurveda company, says that mixing ubtans in the right proportion is important to get maximum benefit from it. “If you are sure of what works best for you, and you have a good knowledge of the ingredients, there is nothing better than homemade ubtans. However, what most people do is that they watch a video online, which may not be showing the proper Ayurvedic way of preparing the ubtan,” he says. An effective ubtan needs high quality ingredients and if you don’t invest in those, it’s better to use a good OTC product.

Dermatologist Dr B L Jangid says that while home-based ubtans are better than the store-bought ones, he would recommend first taking an expert’s help to analyse your skin type you inherit before applying anything on your face and using organic ingredients. He adds, “Many common ingredients used in ubtan are anti-inflammatory and anti-bacterial. To use any ubtan, take a handful, apply on your face and start massaging in circular motions. Do it for at least 5 to 10 minutes, and washing off with lukewarm water. Do not apply soap to your face after using ubtan.”

PACK UP

The reason you need to be well aware of your skin type is to be able to pick effective ingredients. For instance, dry skin ubtans will use milk or curd while for oily skin rose water is used. Chauhan advises on planning a beauty routine that suits your lifestyle, skin type, and consider the weather conditions – even so, using ubtan once a week is all right. In fact, he says that men must use ubtans as they are the ones who stay longer under the sun and likely to face sun damage. He says, “Traditionally, Indian men have been reluctant to care for their skin, but that is changing. I see younger men using skincare products. They should start adopting an Ayurvedic self-care routine in their lives.”

Do a patch test (by applying it behind your ear) for a store-bought product. Ubtans have an exfoliating effect, so it is very important to moisturise your skin after washing off the ubtan. Husain also advises against using ubtans on burns, rashes or eruptions. Her advice is to use ubtan before your bath, apply til oil or olive oil and then massage it on the skin.

MIX IT UP

All skin types

In equal parts, take ground dry orange and lemon peels, oats and almonds. Add honey and yoghurt in equal quantities to make a paste. Rub gently with circular movements and wash with water. You can add egg white too

With aloe vera

Take 1 tbsp oats or multani mitti and aloe vera gel. Add 1 tsp each orange peel powder and curd to it and mix. Apply and wash after 30 minutes

For dry skin

Mix choker (wheat bran) with honey, milk and 1 tbsp almond oil into a paste. Apply and after 15 minutes, dampen with milk and scrub off. Rinse with water. For very dry skin, mix coconut oil, juice of a lemon and 2 tbsp aloe gel. Apply and wash after 30 mins

Normal to oily skin

Mix 3 cups sesame seeds (coarsely crushed), 6 tbsp each of dried mint leaves (powdered), olive oil, honey and curd. Sesame seeds soothe sun-damaged skin. Rub gently on neck, arms and legs. Wash with water after a few minutes

For stretchmarks

Massage olive oil on to the affected areas. Then, apply a paste of besan, yoghurt and turmeric on the area. Wash after half an hour

With flowers

Soak lotus flowers in 3-4 tbsp warm milk for an hour. Crush with fingers. Add 3 tsp besan with enough milk to make the paste. Apply on the face and arms, avoiding lips and under-eye area. Wash off after 20 minutes. Lotus relieves dryness and removes tan. Suits all skin types

End of the article
