

A close-up, slightly blurred photograph of a person's arm being dry brushed. A hand with long, light-colored fingernails holds a wooden brush with soft, light-colored bristles, applying gentle pressure to the skin. The background is a soft, warm color.

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# body

## Brush Strokes

The art of dry brushing gives you beautiful skin, inside and out.

By **Celia Shatzman**

Dry brushing is popping up on seemingly every spa menu because it's a simple way to get glowing skin with a health boost. "Dry body brushing helps shed dead skin cells and encourages new cell renewal, which results in smoother and brighter skin," says Kayla Burke, assistant spa manager at One&Only, Hayman Island, Australia. "It helps eliminate uric acid crystals as well as other acids in the body, improves blood circulation and lymphatic drainage, releases toxins and metabolic wastes, and rejuvenates the nervous system." Ready to start scrubbing? Here's what you need to know first.

### Beauty Benefits

The perks of dry brushing are more than skin deep. "It contributes to healthier muscle tone and better distribution of fat deposits, and breaks down cellulite with continued use," says Virginia León, ONDA Spa manager at Andaz Peninsula Papagayo Resort in Costa Rica. "Dry brushing helps skin absorb nutrients by eliminating clogged pores. It is one of the most low cost and effective things we can do for promoting healthy skin." →

## Best Buy

When shopping for a brush, look for one with bristles made from natural materials—don't use nylon or synthetic, since they can damage skin. "The bristles should feel stiff but not overly so," León says. "Choose a brush with a long handle so you can reach your entire back and other hard-to-reach spots." Make sure the handle is comfortable in your hands.

**TRY:** Ecotools Bamboo Bristle Bath Brush, [ecotools.com](http://ecotools.com); Bodecare Detox Body Brush, [bodecare.com](http://bodecare.com)



## Perfect Timing

"This is something you can and should be doing daily, even twice a day. Your skin should be dry, so the ideal time is in the shower before you turn on the water. Because dry brushing energizes and stimulates the body, most pros suggest doing it in the morning," Burke says, "Once you introduce it into your daily cleansing ritual it will become a habit."

## The Method

"Start with light pressure until you're used to the sensation, then move on to firmer strokes," says León, who shares these step-by-step instructions:

1. Beginning with the soles of your feet, use swift upward strokes and brush from the feet up the legs, working toward your heart. Repeat five times.
2. Brush from the ankles to the knees on all sides of the legs. Repeat five times.
3. Once you've covered your lower body, move to your hands and work up your arms. Brush from the wrist to the elbow on each surface of the arm (front, back, inside, outside) and repeat for the area between the elbow and shoulder. Repeat five times.
4. Next, using a long-handle brush—or ask your partner to help—brush your back. Beginning with your lower back, stroke from the bottom of the spine up to the bottom of the shoulders blades, or as high as you can reach. Do this for the center, left and right sides of the lower back. Repeat five times.
5. Last, work on your abdomen (moving in a clockwise direction to follow the movement of the colon), chest and neck. It's best to avoid your face as facial skin is too sensitive.

6. Brush for about three to five minutes until your skin is slightly tingly.

7. Shower after you've dry brushed your entire body to wash off dead skin. Alternate between the hottest water temperature and the coldest. This stimulates circulation, bringing more blood to the top layers of the skin.

Burke advises, "Always use a dry brush against dry skin—don't wet your skin as it stretches the skin and will not have the same effect. And never brush over inflamed skin, sores, sunburn or skin cancer."

## Finishing Touch

At spas, dry-brushing treatments are often followed by a body mask or wrap. "With the skin exfoliated and the lymphatic system stimulated, skin is more ready to absorb the beneficial nutrients and properties of the body mask," Burke says. Get the effect at home by applying a natural body lotion, body butter or body oil post-dry brushing and shower.

**TRY:** Ojoba Collective Shea Butter (100 percent pure unrefined shea butter), [ojobacollective.com](http://ojobacollective.com); Pacific Body Oil, [tnbotanicals.com](http://tnbotanicals.com); Ola Pikake Body Butter, [hawaiianbodyproducts.com](http://hawaiianbodyproducts.com)

## Maintenance Work

Be sure to keep your brush in a well-ventilated area and let it dry completely between uses. "If plant bristles are left damp, it creates a breeding ground for bacteria," Burke says. "Spritz a tea tree-oil spray on the bristles after every use; tea tree is a powerful bactericide, killing a broad spectrum of bacteria and some stubborn fungi." Wash your dry brush with warm water and gentle soap at least once a week, and be sure to keep a separate brush for each family member.