

Hemp Body Care Benefits

Hemp seed oil is one of the world's richest sources of polyunsaturated fats, including both of the essential fatty acids (Omega 3 and Omega 6) and GLA (gamma Linolenic acid), which make it an excellent natural emollient and moisturizer. Body care products containing hemp seed oil can reduce skin discomfort by soothing & restoring dry or damaged skin and increasing the natural moisture retention capacity. With regular use, body care products containing hemp seed oil can help slow down the effects of skin aging and leave the skin smooth, soft and moisturized. In hair care products, hemp seed oil imparts gloss and manageability to hair, bringing relief from dry scalp or hair damage by blow-dryer heat, chemical perms, coloring or sunlight

To better understand the benefits of essential fatty acids and hemp seed oil to our skin, let's look at the skin's structure and numerous functions. The skin acts not only as a sensory organ and temperature control, it also has important barrier functions protecting the body from excessive water loss and from penetration of foreign substances and pathogens such as bacteria and viruses. A major function of body care products is to enhance, preserve and restore this barrier.

The health of our skin depends largely on the presence and retention of water. Moisture retention is mostly provided by the epidermis - the top-most and thinnest layer of the skin. The actual "vapor barrier" is the stratum corneum, the outer layer of the epidermis. It is composed of, and continually rebuilt from, dying and dead cells that gradually flake off the skin surface. These cells are held together - just like bricks cemented by mortar - by lipids (fat like substances including sterols, free fatty acids and ceramides).

The weakening or failure of this natural barrier leads to dry skin. The process is promoted by sun, dry air, excessive use of soaps, shower gels or other detergents, and organic solvents with a strong degreasing action. The slowdown of cell metabolism with age or diabetes is another contributor. All of these factors result in changes in the lipid composition of the epidermis and reduced moisture retention capability. The skin becomes thinner, facilitating increased water loss. The result is dry, brittle skin with a rough and unpleasant feel. A ceramide that is of critical importance to the moisture control of the skin is made from the Omega 6 - Linoleic acid. Clinical studies have shown that dry skin defects such as scaling or cracking can be reversed by skin care products containing Omega 6 fatty acids. The anti-inflammatory properties of essential fatty acids can further aid in the healing of minor skin abrasions and acne. A deficiency in Omega 6 fatty acids is also associated with eczema and psoriasis due to the regulation of water loss through the skin.

The metabolic slowdown associated with aging also leads to dry skin conditions. Slower metabolism and growth of cells in the basal layer of the epidermis causes a decline of ceramide content. Both contribute to the formation of wrinkles and overall skin aging. The application of Omega 6 fatty acids in body care products partially compensate for the lower ceramide levels in the skin and the resulting aging effects.

EFA-rich oils are becoming increasingly popular in massage therapy due to their ability to penetrate and be absorbed into the skin. Thus, EFA-rich hemp seed oil makes an excellent ingredient for massage oils in addition to hand & body lotions, moisturizing creams and lip balms.

A major consumer concern, with respect to skin sensitivity or allergic reaction to hemp seed oil, has not proven to be a problem to date.