

american spa

Caffeine Wakes Up Products and Treatments

by Jennifer Nied | Nov 28, 2016 3:40pm



Most days, it seems the world runs on caffeine, and everyone subscribes to the mantra 'But first coffee.' And as enticing as it is as an energy booster, it is equally invigorating for the skin, making it an ideal brew for your spa. In many cases, it's the caffeine in coffee that makes it a valuable addition to skincare products and spa services, as it offers many benefits. "Due to its biologically active nature and high antioxidant potency, it can help neutralize damaging free radicals, which are a significant culprit in premature aging, to improve the appearance of wrinkles, sun spots, loss of elasticity, and the overall look of the skin," says Janae Muzzy, vice president of research and development for Epicuren Discovery. In fact, scientists are continuing to find new evidence of the benefits of topically applied caffeine. According to a recent study published in *Skin*

Pharmacology and Physiology, researchers noted caffeine's ability to penetrate the skin barrier, protect cells from UV radiation, prevent excessive fat accumulation in cells, fight free-radical damage, and increase the microcirculation of blood in the skin. According to Dennis Gross, M.D., founder of Dr. Dennis Gross Skincare, topical use of caffeine is on the rise as the myriad benefits come to light.

Protection Perk

Potent antioxidant properties are certainly one of the reasons coffee has become a buzz-worthy addition to skincare lines. "Caffeine repairs damage caused by exposure to UV rays and is among the best and strongest antioxidants to combat UV damage," says Josanna Gaither, director of education and aesthetics at Natura Bissé. Not only does it help repair skin damage, according to Alison Adams-Woodford, senior manager of product development and communications for PCA Skin, but caffeine is also capable of increasing the efficacy of other antioxidants in a formula. Caffeine is included in one of PCA Skin sunscreens, which provides UVA/UVB protection with zinc oxide and antioxidant milk thistle. "It also has the ability to encourage the body's natural process for eliminating damaged skin cells," she says.

Circulation Repair

Caffeine's invigorating skin-healing properties can give clients the complexion wake-up they crave. "Stimulating the flow of blood in the skin increases the transportation of oxygen and nutrients, perking up the skin," says Julie Andrews, president of Kerstin Florian. As such, caffeine is included in a variety of skincare products, such as Kerstin Florian's Caviar Age-Defense Crème. The Dr. Dennis Gross line features two popular eye products containing caffeine, but Gross recognizes the ingredient can be used effectively in a wider variety of formulas. "Caffeine works on the face to reduce puffiness and swelling, and it causes the contraction of blood vessels in the skin," he says. "In an acne product, it reduces the swelling and inflammation, which is a result of blood vessels opening up. In lip products, it has a contradictory effect, and it increases blood flow and opens up blood vessels so the area appears plumper."



Slimming Solution

Caffeine's ability to increase circulation in the skin and boost oxygen levels makes it an effective component in bodycare products as well. According to Jaklin Idris, director of education for Decléor Paris, it provides benefits like temporarily reducing swelling and contributing to the appearance of a tighter tummy, slimmer thighs, and overall smoother skin. "Caffeine is a key ingredient to trigger lipolysis, which is the breakdown of fat stored in fat cells," says Andrews. That's why Kerstin Florian included it in its Corrective Intensive Slimming Serum, which produced a 70 percent visible improvement in treated areas in clinical testing. Caffeine is also a key ingredient in Repêchage's Vita Cura Triple Action Body Contour Cream, which helps improve the appearance of body contours and skintone and texture. "On the body, caffeine is used to help achieve a slimming effect and to lessen the appearance of cellulite, as well as to help skin look and feel firmer and more toned," says Lydia Sarfati, founder and CEO of Repêchage.

The total-body energizing effect is visible almost instantly, making caffeine an ideal component of toning and slimming wraps. It is included in the seasonal Pumpkin Spice Body Latte (\$100, 50 minutes; \$130, 80 minutes) at **Sonoran Spa** at Westward Look Wyndham Grand Resort & Spa (Tucson, AZ), which also features pumpkin puree, herbs, and Dead Sea salt. According to spa director Susan Phillips, the treatment is a crowd pleaser thanks to its key ingredient, coffee. "Coffee is one of the best and most popular additives to any of the body scrubs we create, and we get fantastic feedback from our guests, who notice a dramatic difference when coffee is applied," she says.

However, not everyone agrees with caffeine's cellulite-reducing claims. According to Adams-Woodford, the typical body applications, like cellulite reduction, are lacking scientific backing. Still, coffee is an enticing ingredient in scrubs thanks to its scent. "Rich, aromatic, and awakening, a coffee infusion will wake up the skin and senses simultaneously, providing revitalizing effects regardless of whether you're scrubbing or sipping," says Meghan Campbell, North America brand and product trainer for Lush. Ground coffee is included in Lush's Cup O'Coffee Face and Body Mask, and whole beans and caffeine powder are part of the Percup Massage Bar for that reason.

Culture Crop

Beyond a bevy of benefits, coffee is often included in spa treatments on account of its strong cultural connection. For example, **Six Senses Spa Ninh Van Bay** (Vietnam) offers the Green Coffee Body Treatment (\$170, 2 hours 30 minutes), because coffee is an integral part of the diet and traditions in the region. The detoxifying treatment includes lymphatic drainage, an application of green coffee concentrate, and a massage. Similarly, coffee is a popular ingredient in coffee-growing regions. "Coffee is still one of Costa Rica's main crops and was also its first product to be exported to other countries," says Monica Sanabria, spa manager at **The Spa at Tabacón** at Tabacón Grand Spa Thermal Resort (La Fortuna, Costa Rica). "Coffee beans are very representative of our culture." At Tabacón, the Coffee Passion (\$140, 75 minutes) body treatment includes coffee extract and other natural products and minerals to exfoliate, nourish the skin, and relax the mind. Blue Mountain Coffee is a notable Jamaican export, as well. The Cliff Hotel's **KiYara Spa** (Negril) includes the famed high-grade coffee in the Blue Mountain Coffee Toner (\$175, 1 hour 45 minutes) as an exfoliant and mask. "Many people find the smell of coffee to be particularly evocative and comforting," says spa director Carolyn Jobson.

Even spa-goers who can't handle a cup of java regularly can still benefit from caffeine in treatments. "Some people are more sensitive to caffeine than others, which may prevent them from taking it internally, but they are still able to use it topically," says Idris. Some spa directors advise pregnant and lactating guests to avoid treatments with caffeine, but for everyone else, it's an energizing and effective option. Says Campbell, "Granted, the ultimate wake-up will come from a fresh brewed cup of coffee, but incorporating coffee into your beauty products is a lovely way to keep skin glowing and looking alive."

Straight From the Source

Though coffee is top of mind when people think of caffeine, it isn't the only source that blends well with spa products. Tea and guarana are examples of other potent sources of caffeine with a variety of additional skin-healing properties. And for some formulas, a lab-crafted form of caffeine works best. According to Idris, different formulas require

different sourcing. “When caffeine is incorporated in the formula in a lab environment and with biotechnology, its potency and concentration can be measured for safety and efficacy,” she says. “As such, this setting allows for an exact amount of caffeine to be added to produce a certain benefit for the skin.”

When caffeine from tea is incorporated in products, naturally occurring minerals and vitamins from the plants provide additional skin-healing benefits. “Black, white, and green tea contain caffeine and are rich in vitamins B2, C, and E; minerals such as magnesium, potassium, and zinc; and essential polyphenols that stimulate the skin and give it powerful antioxidants,” says Jeannie Frazier, sales director of the Americas for Thémaé. “Our foundation was based on the natural, wonderful benefits of tea from the birth of our brand.”

Chocolate Bar

Cacao also contains caffeine, so chocolate naturally exhibits stimulating effects like coffee and tea along with the added hydration of cocoa butter. So offering treatments with chocolate is another sweet way to provide the benefits of caffeine to clients. **Cocoa Juvenate Spa** at Boucan by Hotel Chocolat (Saint Lucia) includes cacao harvested from the on-site chocolate plantation in treatments for both the face and body. Cacao nibs are used to exfoliate the skin and a blend of cacao and banana are incorporated in a cooling mask in the Cacao Facial (\$127, 60 minutes), and cacao oil is used in Cacao Massages (starting at \$66, 30 minutes). In the States, **The Spa at The Hotel Hershey** (PA) offers a decadent selection of chocolate-infused services including the Chocolate Bean Polish (starting at \$70, 30 minutes), which uses cocoa bean husks to exfoliate skin and a cocoa-based moisturizer for hydration.

Caffeine Cure

Perk up clients’ skin with these caffeine-infused products for the face and body. —*Darby Radcliff*

- 1. Biologique Recherche Crème Anti-C:** This anti-cellulite cream containing caffeine delivers intense skin-firming results. www.biologique-recherche.com
- 2. [comfort zone] Body Strategist Cream:** Fight cellulite with this intensive cream containing aescin, microalgae, and pure caffeine. www.comfortzone.it
- 3. Clarins Booster Detox:** Infused with organic green coffee and hyaluronic acid, this detoxifying treatment gently purifies the skin for a more refreshed and radiant complexion. www.clarinsusa.com

4. Decléor Paris Aurabsolu Intense Glow for Eyes Dark Circle

Corrector: Formulated with caffeine and jasmine absolute, this highlighter helps perk up tired-looking eyes. www.decleorusa.com

5. Éminence Organic Skin Care Hibiscus Ultra Lift Eye Cream: Featuring a soothing roller applicator, this firming complex contains botanical peptides and caffeine designed to smooth wrinkles and reduce under-eye bags. www.eminenceorganics.com

6. GiGi GG Cream: Reduce redness and instantly replenish moisture following hair removal with this lightweight formula made with antioxidants, caffeine, and vitamins. www.gigispa.com

7. Guinot Paris Orange Peel Skin Body Scrub: Formulated with coffee beans, lemon extract, and papaya, this scrub clears dead skin and boosts surface stimulation for smoother skin. www.guinotusa.com

8. HydroPeptide Stimulating Relief Balm: Rejuvenate skin while relieving muscular tension with this energizing complex filled with micro-circulating antioxidant peptides, beeswax, caffeine, coconut oil, and curcumin. www.hydropeptide.com

9. Image Skincare I Peel Wrinkle Lift: Visibly reduce the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles and leave skin firm and revitalized with this resurfacing botanical blend that includes coffee. www.imageskincare.com

10. Natura Bissé The Cure Sheer Eye: Diminish under-eye puffiness and dark circles with this cream containing caffeine, ivy, and water lily. www.naturabisse.com

11. Pevonia Smooth & Tone Body-Svelt Cream: Improve skin elasticity with this anti-cellulite treatment featuring green coffee, green tea, kola nut, and licorice. www.pevoniapro.com

12. Spa De Soleil Cellulite Cream Body Treatment: Diminish the appearance of cellulite and increase blood circulation with this formula infused with caffeine anhydrous powder, coffee extract, and green tea leaf extract. www.spadesoleil.com