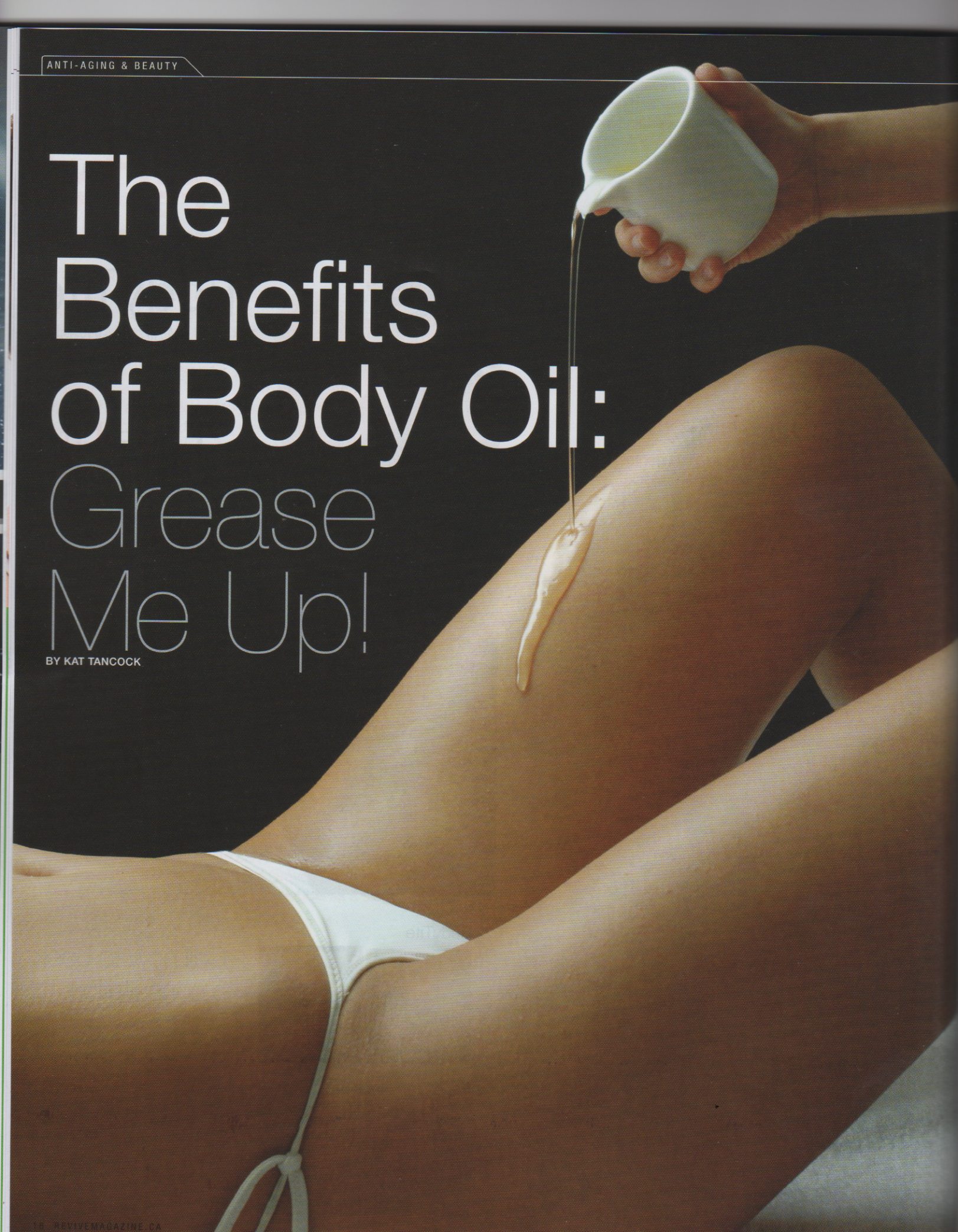


The Benefits of Body Oil: Grease Me Up!

BY KAT TANCOCK



Body oils are flooding store shelves, but how do you use them and do they even work? We asked three pros for their expert advice.

"The skin protection you get from oil is incredible," says Patricia Pol, a certified massage therapist and holistic skin-care expert for Weleda, citing improved elasticity and a better ability to deal with harsh weather or sun as some benefits of using oils on the skin. They also penetrate the skin deeper and nourish more than lotions, says Enaam Takla, co-owner of Dr. Hauschka Canada, since they're not diluted with water. And "a good body oil will enhance the flexibility and suppleness of the skin," says Natalie Cascella, founder of NuWorld Botanicals, a Canadian company that sells a range of body oils and other natural beauty products.

But will oils make your skin as greasy as a fitness model's? The experts say no – provided you don't over apply. "Start with a little bit and add more when you feel you need more," suggests Pol. Takla concurs, and recommends applying oils to damp skin for best penetration. "The mixture of water and oil ensures that absorption is quicker," she says.

As for choosing an oil, it all depends on your skin's needs – and your budget. Pure coconut oil is one easy and cost-effective option. Brands vary from no scent to a strong one – though we've heard some people revert to the glory of acne-prone teenage skin upon use, so you'll have to try to see if it works for you. Another option is sweet almond oil, available at health-food stores, either straight up or mixed with your favourite essential oils.

For off-the-shelf types, brands such as Weleda, Dr. Hauschka and NuWorld all produce body oils combining base oils such as sunflower, jojoba or almond – these are the oils that make up the bulk of the product and do the heavy lifting when it comes to moisturizing – with essential oils targeted at specific skin conditions: pomegranate for aging skin, for instance, or sea buckthorn to target free radicals. "These oils are extremely rich in powerful vitamins, minerals and other nutrients vital to good skin health," says Cascella. When shopping for oils, make sure to look for as minimal an ingredients list possible, she adds: "A truly all-natural body oil should contain very little else except natural and organic carrier oils, natural plant extracts and pure therapeutic-grade essential oils, for aroma." Ready to oil up? Here are some picks our experts recommend.

WELEDA SEA BUCKTHORN BODY OIL

100 mL, \$25.99 (http://well.ca/products/weleda-sea-buckthorn-body-oil_9520.html)

Pol recommends this blend as ideal to help skin that's been out in the sun. Weleda's carrier oils are cold-pressed and its sea buckthorn is bio dynamically grown in Tuscany.

DR. HAUSCHKA BIRCH ARNICA BODY OIL

75 mL, \$25 (http://well.ca/products/dr-hauschka-birch-arnica-body-oil_32769.html)

A good pick for anyone active, this oil is designed to prevent pain and muscle fatigue with extracts of birch leaves, arnica, burdock root and nettle.

NUWORLD STRESS RELIEF MULTI-NUTRITIVE OIL

50 mL, \$34 (www.nuworldbotanicals.com)

All NuWorld oils contain sea buckthorn, jojoba and rosehip oils as well as a blend of essential oils targeted to different needs; Stress Relief adds grapefruit and ylang ylang to "encourage joy and happiness."



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