Dead Sea skin care best practices: how to use the mud and minerals without damaging your skin

The mineral-rich mud has documented dermatological benefits but it also has caveats — psoriasis, sunburn, broken skin, and the salt that's effectively undiluted soap. Practical guide.

Anas Hu · May 5, 2026

The Dead Sea spa industry sells around half a billion dollars of mineral-mud and salt products globally every year. Most of the marketing claims are real: the mud's magnesium, calcium, and bromide content has documented temporary benefits for certain skin conditions, and dermatologists have studied the lake's reduced UV and high atmospheric pressure for decades. But the same chemistry that makes the mud therapeutic also makes the experience surprisingly easy to get wrong. Sunburn, broken skin, and undiluted-soap-strength salt water in your eye are all genuinely unpleasant outcomes.

Practical guide to doing it right.

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1What the science actually says

Per the Wikipedia summary of dermatological research: reduced ultraviolet radiation and higher atmospheric pressure create conditions where persons experiencing reduced respiratory function from diseases such as cystic fibrosis seem to benefit. The mineral-rich mud has been studied for temporary pain

relief in osteoarthritis patients.[1] The mud + water combination has also been studied for psoriasis with positive short-term results.

Caveats:

- **Effects are temporary.** The mud doesn't cure psoriasis or arthritis; it provides relief that lasts days to weeks after a single session.
- **Active eczema or wounds: avoid.** The salt is too strong for compromised skin barriers.
- **Sunburn risk.** The reduced UV at Dead Sea elevation is real but not zero. Apply reef-safe sunscreen before the float and reapply after rinsing.

2Using the mud

The protocol most resort spas use:

1. **Apply mud to dry skin.** Avoid eyes and any open cuts. Cover the body in a thin coat — face, arms, legs, torso.
2. **Let it sit 10–15 minutes.** The mud will dry to a chalky grey. The slight tingling is normal and fades.
3. **Rinse off in the lake.** Walk in slowly; let the mineral water dissolve the mud. Don't dive.
4. **Float for 10–15 minutes.** The water itself contributes minerals; floating after the mud is the full protocol.
5. **Rinse with fresh water.** The lake water leaves a residue if not rinsed off.
6. **Apply a moisturiser.** The salt is dehydrating; lotion afterwards.

> The salt is effectively undiluted soap. Treat the lake like one giant cup of bathwater that should not get in your eyes.

3Using the water

- **Don't dive in.** Water in the eyes is genuinely painful — sharp, slow to wash out.
- **Don't drink it.** A mouthful is genuinely toxic; rinse immediately with fresh water.
- **Lie on your back, not your front.** The buoyancy works for backs.
- **Don't shave 24 hours before.** Any cut stings.
- **Cover small wounds.** Waterproof plaster avoids 30 minutes of stinging.

4When to skip it

Specific conditions where Dead Sea mud and water are contraindicated:

- **Active eczema or open wounds.** The salt is too strong.
- **Recent sunburn.** Wait 2–3 days before mineral exposure.
- **Active ear infection.** Don't immerse the head.
- **Pregnancy (advanced).** Some studies suggest moderation; consult your doctor.
- **Cardiac conditions.** The Dead Sea elevation causes mild oxygen-related effects; consult a doctor.
- **If you've shaved recently.** Wait 24 hours.

> **For solo travellers**
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> Buy a small jar of properly-sourced Dead Sea mud at the resort gift shop or souk for home use. Cheaper than bringing it home in a Ziploc and avoids the security-screening hassle.

5Practical tips + what to bring home

- **Sealed containers.** If bringing mud home, use a sealed zipper-lock bag inside another zipper-lock bag. Mud leaks.
- **Resort-bought.** Resort jars are pre-sealed and airline-friendly (under 100 ml regulations apply for carry-on).
- **Do not bring loose salt.** Crystallises and is messy.
- **Skin care products.** Most major skin-care brands now produce Dead Sea mineral-based products. The originals are often cheaper at the local resorts than at home.
- **Check airline regulations.** Liquids over 100 ml in carry-on are restricted; pack jarred mud in checked baggage.

References

1. Wikipedia — Dead Sea (dermatological research summary)

Verified by locals: TBD — this article will be reviewed by a dermatologist or Dead Sea spa specialist before final publication. Drafted from Wikipedia and Dead Sea spa industry knowledge.