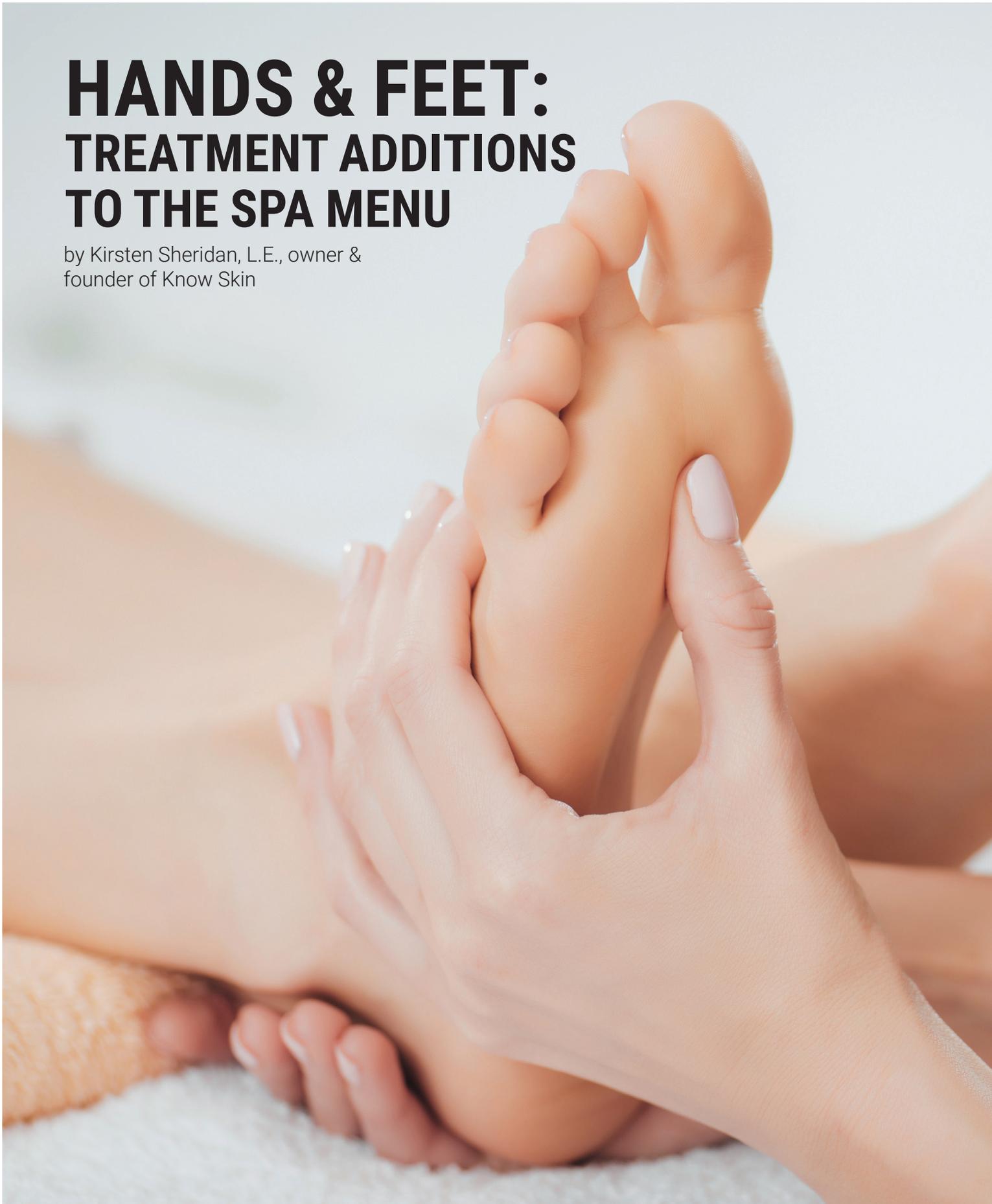


# HANDS & FEET: TREATMENT ADDITIONS TO THE SPA MENU

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**S**kin on the extremities is used and abused daily, but they are often an afterthought when it comes to taking care of them. Traditionally, skin care treatments focus on the face, neck, and décolleté with some skin care professionals offering hand massages while their clients are chilling with a face mask on.

Offering hand and feet treatments during a core service can set a professional apart from others who apply a mask and run off to the breakroom. There are many ways to incorporate hand and foot treatments into existing services; downtime during core treatments like exfoliation, peels, and masking provide an opportunity for this.

Stand-alone hand and feet treatments are great additions to the menu. They can be offered as a series of treatments using staples like nanoneedling, microcurrent, hydrofacial, and microdermabrasion. Seasonal promotions can be marketed as “flip-flop ready feet” or hyperpigmentation treatments for the back of the hands during the fall and winter months.

## HYPERPIGMENTATION

Hyperpigmentation is particularly prevalent on the backs of the hands because most clients do not consistently apply sunscreen on the area, and nothing says “welcome to aging” like liver or age spots. Superficial pigmentation may respond to lighteners and brighteners, providing some improvement combined with exfoliation and masking. If the scope of practice allows, microneedling can improve texture, sun damage, and visible signs of aging. Nanoneedling also provides some advantages.

There are some ingredients that are particularly beneficial for the hands and feet, and most of them will already exist in a spa’s backbar. These include enzymes like bromelain, papain, and pumpkin or alpha and beta hydroxy acids for exfoliation. Glycolic acid combined with salicylic acid formulations are popular choices to uncover new, radiant skin. Scrubs can be harsh and are not as effective as a peel.

Soothing, cooling ingredients like peppermint, tea tree, and myrrh essential oils combined with a nourishing carrier oil work great for the feet. Jelly masks can be an excellent addition to hands and feet as well. Nourishing, hydrating ingredients like aloe vera and allantoin can be effective too, but beware of comedogenic ingredients often found in foot preparations. Paraffin wax, which has been used for decades in hand and foot treatments, can offer nourishing and hydrating benefits, and mitts and booties can be put on to top the treatment off if desired.

## MASSAGE

Massage techniques for the hands and feet can include stretching and gentle manipulation of the fingers, toes, and their associated joints. When performed slowly and intentionally, it feels amazing. Incorporating hot basalt stones or cold marble stones into hand and foot massages can be a great addition. If the license permits, a hand-held massage tool can be integrated into a core service on the hands and feet or as a standalone treatment. Speed and technique will determine whether this is stimulating and invigorating or calming and soothing, relieving tension and improving circulation and lymphatic flow.

## REFLEXOLOGY

Reflexology is a great standalone treatment incorporating either the hands or feet. It is a precise technique that takes time to learn; providing an effective treatment requires training. However, reflexologists use opening and warm-up techniques which can be very beneficial and are not as point specific; thereby, it is easier to learn and incorporate. Zone therapy, although associated with reflexology, can be a technique by itself and is not as detailed as reflexology but provides amazing benefits.

## ADDITIONAL TREATMENTS

Gua sha has soared in popularity over the last few years and makes for a great hand or foot treatment. Gua sha for the hands relieves tension, improves circulation, and increases hydration. It improves range of movement and may reduce pain when performed regularly.

Therapy massage balls provide myofascial self-release, improving circulation and decreasing tension. Trigger point therapy massage using massage therapy balls is a great at-home addition to alleviate symptoms of tension and increase hydration, circulation, and lymphatic flow, all improving the overall appearance of aging hands and feet. Hand and feet treatments are regaining popularity, particularly during times when facial skin treatments have been restricted due to pandemic mask requirements. A relaxing combined hand and foot treatment with a soothing cooling eye mask might be just what a client needs. A la carte options are a good way to incorporate clients’ needs.

Like with any treatment, focusing on clients’ goals is key to determining what protocol to incorporate into hand and feet treatments. Every detail of clients’ experiences and treatments should complement each other. Incorporating hand or feet treatments can expand clients’ experiences and spas’ profit margins. 