

Water Inside  
Water Outside  
Water from the Inside Out

by Tina M. Marks Shirley

Cool me down  
Warm me up  
Prisms from heaven  
Overflowing my cup

Anointing, cleansing  
Over and through  
Birthed of each drop  
Life and energy anew

Ripples and trickles  
Tracing your path  
Tears in a window  
A storm's aftermath

Rising and falling  
Within my very soul  
Somehow bonding together  
The fragments and holes

Every limb, every cell  
Skin drinking you in  
Sipping peace, divine love  
Water..  
My ember within

Yes! I am a full-out water person. I love the water; inside, outside, all around the sides. But, not everyone would spend 365 days a year seaside if they could. Some would prefer the mountains or desert - and as far as the drink of choice? In the words of my father, "I hate the taste of water! There is no taste!" So, for those who love water and those who don't necessarily, here are a few facts and tips on easy and enjoyable ways to incorporate water into your daily life... inside, outside, and from the inside out!

## Water From the Inside

Internally, water aids in absorption and transporting nutrients, and flushes waste from the body. Water is necessary for hydration and maintaining proper body temperature. We've all heard about the health benefits of drinking plenty of water. Our doctors tell us. Magazines are overflowing with articles, statistics and suggestions about how many ounces our bodies need per day, touting weight loss and benefits to the skin and organs.

In layman's terms – the human body is 2/3 water and water is an essential nutrient for every function of the body.

## Water From the Outside

Water helps to maintain body temperature and balance from the outside as well. Imagine the effect of dousing yourself in cool water on a very hot summer day. We routinely use ice for swelling and moist heat for achy muscles. The mere feeling of water on the skin...the increased buoyancy and weightlessness of our limbs when underwater, is freeing in and of itself. In fact, you may already be aware of the increasing popularity of aquatic therapy for a wide variety of physical and mental imbalances or disorders including depression and anxiety.

Water is cleansing. We use it to cleanse our bodies - washing away dirt, pollutants, and dead skin cells, in the same way rain cleanses and nourishes the Earth. Imagine your body drinking water from the outside in, like flowers and trees do, absorbing vital nutrients. Even the sound of water in motion can be music to our ears and soul. Visually, it can be an aid in calming or lifting the spirit, as in reflecting upon a perfectly still lake or watching waves in the ocean as they rise and fall, returning to their origin time and time again.

## Water From the Inside Out

A few words about tears – it's a love/hate relationship at times, isn't it?

Tears...elusive tears...

Untimely  
Timely  
Friend  
Foe  
Draining  
Replenishing  
Exhausting  
Reviving

Which brings me to some of those suggestions I spoke of earlier...let's begin with tears...

Tears – keyword: Allow. Yours and others. Tears are our bodies' natural method of release and expression.

Consider striking “don’t cry” from your vocabulary for a period of time and see how it works out for you. Give yourself (and others) permission of expression. Here is a unique and simple way a friend taught me to honor tears... Collect them in your hands... allow them to flow freely... and then offer them back to the Earth or another being somehow, some way... try dribbling them on a flower or plant, gift them to your pet, or simply place them on your own heart.

## Externally

While washing your face or hands, hold the water in your cupped hands briefly. Simply observe as it flows through your fingers. Count your blessings. Affirmation: My cup (life) runneth over.

Shower – no “extra” time required – massage your scalp... awaken the nerve endings (there are hundreds)... notice the feel of the water touching your scalp. Adjust the water to slightly cooler (slightly!) for the final rinse, invoking a pure and refreshing feeling to kickstart your day. Allow your skin to air dry if possible, giving the water a chance to absorb naturally into your skin.

Bath – there is no substitute for a long, hot bath. It is a wonderful investment in you. Make time and take your time. For achy muscles, add some sea or Epsom salt. Give yourself a luxurious treat by adding a few drops of very light oil (sesame oil is my favorite and #1 recommendation) to bathwater.

Need a release? For a detoxifying effect, try a citrus-based essential oil such as lemon, orange or pear; you can even dribble a few drops of fresh squeezed juice into your bath. The scent will exhilarate and detoxify your mind, body and spirit. If you are looking for calming or grounding, lavender and eucalyptus are among my favorites. There are many articles and books available on aromatherapy and most quality essential oils have their effects clearly listed on the bottle.

Honor your support system – your feet! Have you ever thought about what it must be like to be your feet? Bathe your feet in their own separate and special warm bath. Anoint them with your favorite oil or lotion and massage it in, paying attention to all the different parts of each foot.

Listen to water sounds... dripping, dribbling, rippling, rising, crashing... Crack your windows during a rainstorm. Buy an inexpensive tape or CD of watersounds. They even offer alarm clocks now that help you to fall asleep or wake up to the sounds of a trickling stream or wildlife in the rainforest.

If you practice the art of meditation, try substituting "water on the windowpane" for a change of pace, instead of a candle or other focal point. Allow yourself to get wet! Forget your umbrella - on purpose. OK, not if you're headed to an important business meeting and dressed in your nicest clothes, but perhaps another time. Stop for a moment and just stand in the rain. It's not so bad, getting wet! Rainwater smells and feels great on the skin. Who knows, you may just find yourself falling in love...

## Internally

If you don't particularly care for the taste (or non-) of water - if you feel as if you are always forcing yourself - or somehow punishing yourself (as in, raisins as a substitute for a cookie and you end up eating raisins AND a cookie), below are a few suggestions for gradual introduction of more drinking water:

Add sliced lemon or any type of fruit to your ice water. Try iced sun tea, with organic raw sugar if you flat-out cannot bear to go "unsweetened." Add a few green tea or other tea bags for variety. For example, ginger or honey for a sweeter taste; mint for a jazzier flavor. Allow your tea to absorb energy from the sun for a few hours.

Freeze bottled water; grab at least one bottle each time you leave the house and carry it with you (especially during the summer months). You may be surprised at how much you drink, somewhat subconsciously, just because it's "there" and cold.

If you simply cannot see yourself going cold turkey with this water thing, try alternating a bottle of water for each bottle of your beverage of choice. It's a start!

When all else fails, there's always the art of pure IMAGINATION!