

## Why we should all shower less

### Level 3 • Advanced

#### 1 Warmer

Answer the questions.

1. Which do you prefer?
  - a. a shower
  - b. a bath
2. Which do you use?
  - a. shower gel
  - b. soap
3. How long do you spend in the shower?
  - a. less than two minutes
  - b. two to five minutes
  - c. more than five minutes

#### 2 Key words

Fill the gaps in the sentences using these key words from the text.

moisture	scrub	devotee	eczema	gross
bewildering	flourish	eliminate	drought	dermatologist

1. If you \_\_\_\_\_ something, you get rid of it completely.
2. If something is described as \_\_\_\_\_, it is confusing and difficult to understand.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ is a small amount of water or another liquid in the air, on the surface of something or in a substance.
4. If you \_\_\_\_\_ your skin, you wash or clean it by rubbing it hard, especially with a brush.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ is an informal word for *disgusting*.
6. If living organisms \_\_\_\_\_, they grow well and are healthy.
7. A \_\_\_\_\_ is someone who is very enthusiastic about something.
8. A \_\_\_\_\_ is a doctor who treats people who have skin diseases.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ is a medical condition that makes your skin dry, sore and itchy.
10. A \_\_\_\_\_ is a long period of time when there is little or no rain

#### 3 What do you know?

Decide whether these statements are true (T) or false (F). Then, check your answers by reading the text.

1. The average shower lasts seventeen minutes.
2. The average shower uses 65 litres of water.
3. There are millions of beneficial bacteria on our skin.
4. If you shower a lot, you will smell better.
5. Washing your hands with soap will not reduce the spread of infectious diseases.
6. Skin conditions such as acne and eczema will get worse if you use less soap.

## Why we should all shower less

### Level 3 • Advanced

#### The no-showering challenge: why we should all take part

*Cleansing ourselves too often means wasting increasingly valuable drinking water – and it can actually backfire when it comes to good hygiene*

**Madeleine Somerville**

**14 June, 2016**

- 1 James Hamblin, senior editor of American magazine *The Atlantic*, recently joined the unwashed masses. As part of his series, 'If Our Bodies Could Talk', Hamblin, a relatively sane-looking man, took on a no-showering challenge to examine the effect of over-cleansing the body. He reduced the number of showers he had and eliminated shampoo and soap when he did.
- 2 In doing so, he discovered what thousands of others have: the more we fervently try to clean ourselves with soaps, body washes and those silly little body polishers, the harder our skin works to restore equilibrium, encouraging us to begin the whole bewildering process again. Showering strips the skin of its own oil and bacteria – which, many would argue, is the whole *point* of showering – but, apparently, this sometimes works a little too well, especially when you add hot water and cleansing products to the mix.
- 3 You know that feeling after a shower when you feel like you're stuck in a skin suit two sizes too small? That's because much of your skin's natural moisture has been washed down the drain. Additionally, our skin, much like our gut, plays host to millions of beneficial bacteria. Showering destroys these happy bacterial colonies; they're completely wiped out by all of our frequent rubbing and scrubbing. And, when the bacteria washed off by soap repopulate, they tend to favour microbes which produce an odour – yes, too-frequent showering may actually make you smell *more*. When you stop showering and using soap, however, your skin goes through an initial (likely gross) adjustment period, after which the skin typically restores balance, oil production slows and healthy bacteria flourish.
- 4 After everything was said and done, Hamblin realized what other no-soap/no-shower devotees have known for years: that the human body, functioning on its own, is actually quite lovely. It's not just scent or aesthetics, either – although dermatologists suggest that slowing down on soap use can improve acne and eczema.
- 5 Reducing the frequency of showers (and the number of cleansing products used) has very real implications for our environment. The average shower lasts seven minutes and uses 65 litres of water. That's 65 litres of clean, drinkable water that we're infusing with soap and washing down the drain each and every day – sometimes more than once.
- 6 The vital importance of clean water is becoming harder and harder to ignore, as California enters another summer of drought. It's becoming clear that clean water is one of the world's most valuable commodities and one that will soon be in short supply. Add in the environmental effect of all those body wash bottles and you've got yourself a handful of very compelling reasons to let your body go au naturel.
- 7 If this whole thing is giving you the heebie-jeebies as you recall the last time you were cheek by jowl with those who evidently *already* skimp on the showers – and have clearly not reached the scent-free stage yet – relax. Many cleansing-reduction enthusiasts still use deodorant if they find it necessary (everyone's natural scent varies in intensity and can be affected by a host of factors including diet, hydration and exercise) and hand-washing with soap is still recommended as a vital way to reduce the spread of infectious diseases.
- 8 You don't need to go cold turkey, as Hamblin did, but in between thrice-daily disinfecting sessions and giving up showers altogether there lies room for our familiar, simple advice. *Reduce*. Skip a few showers, put down the soap and let those lovely little bacteria flourish a little, would you?

© Guardian News and Media 2016

First published in *The Guardian*, 14/06/16

## Why we should all shower less

### Level 3 • Advanced

#### 4 Comprehension check

Choose the best answer according to the text.

1. What happens if you stop having showers for a while?
  - a. You smell awful.
  - b. Unhealthy bacteria flourish on your skin.
  - c. Your skin restores its natural balance.
2. What happens when bacteria washed off by soap repopulate your skin?
  - a. They arrive in greater numbers.
  - b. They make you smell more.
  - c. They make you smell less.
3. What will reducing the frequency of showers help?
  - a. the environment
  - b. your general health
  - c. acne and eczema
4. What do many cleansing-reduction enthusiasts use?
  - a. more soap when they shower
  - b. deodorant
  - c. anti-bacterial shower gel

#### 5 Find the word

Find the following words and phrases in the text.

1. a adverb meaning *enthusiastically* (para 2)
2. a two-word phrasal verb meaning *destroy or get rid of something completely* (para 3)
3. an adjective meaning *able to persuade someone to do something or persuade them that something is true* (para 5)
4. a two-word phrase meaning *in a natural state* (para 5)
5. a two-word noun phrase meaning *a very nervous feeling* (para 6)
6. a three-word phrase meaning *very close together* (para 6)
7. a two-word phrasal verb meaning *not use enough of something* (para 6)
8. a three-word phrase meaning *suddenly and completely give up something that you are addicted to* (para 7)

## Why we should all shower less

### Level 3 • Advanced

#### 6 Verb + noun collocations

Match the verbs in the left-hand column with the nouns or noun phrases in the right-hand column.

- |               |                            |
|---------------|----------------------------|
| 1. take on    | a. host to                 |
| 2. restore    | b. the spread of disease   |
| 3. play       | c. an adjustment period    |
| 4. examine    | d. equilibrium             |
| 5. go through | e. a challenge             |
| 6. reduce     | f. the effect of something |

#### 7 Word-building

Complete the sentences with the correct form of the word in brackets at the end of each sentence.

1. Too much \_\_\_\_\_ may actually make you smell more. [SHOWER]
2. Reducing the \_\_\_\_\_ of showers has implications for the environment. [FREQUENT]
3. Everyone's natural scent varies in \_\_\_\_\_. [INTENSE]
4. Hand-washing with soap is a vital way to reduce the spread of \_\_\_\_\_ diseases. [INFECT]
5. James Hamblin wanted to examine the effect of \_\_\_\_\_ the body. [CLEAN]
6. Each shower washes 65 litres of \_\_\_\_\_ water down the drain. [DRINK]

#### 8 Discussion

Discuss the statements.

- A few germs are good for you. People wash and clean too much.
- Expensive shampoos and shower gels are a waste of money. A bar of soap is just as effective.
- The advertising industry is to blame for all the money we waste on cleaning products that we don't need.

## Why we should all shower less

### Level 3 • Advanced

#### KEY

#### 2 Key words

1. eliminate
2. bewildering
3. moisture
4. scrub
5. gross
6. flourish
7. devotee
8. dermatologist
9. eczema
10. drought

#### 3 What do you know?

1. F
2. T
3. T
4. F
5. F
6. F

#### 4 Comprehension check

1. c
2. b
3. a
4. b

#### 5 Find the word

1. fervently
2. wipe out
3. compelling
4. au naturel
5. heebie-jeebies
6. cheek by jowl
7. skimp on
8. go cold turkey

#### 6 Verb + noun collocations

1. e
2. d
3. a
4. f
5. c
6. b

#### 7 Word-building

1. showering
2. frequency
3. intensity
4. infectious
5. over-cleansing
6. drinkable