

# Why are we showering so much?

Today's concept of showering is relatively new. Only within the last 100 years have we become a society that showers on a near-daily basis. Around the world, some countries shower more than others, with Brazil reporting an average of 12 showers a week. On the lower end, in Europe, the average is between 3-5 showers a week. America is pretty average with around 6-7 showers a week. As it turns out, the average of seven showers a week is way more than is actually necessary, according to experts.

Prior to our daily showers, civilizations in ancient Rome used to set up bathhouses. Romans were notoriously clean. Rather than use soap, they would use essential oils to get rid of dirt, which then had to be scraped off with a tool known as a strigil. Romans had fairly advanced indoor plumbing systems for the time, not unlike the indoor plumbing systems we use today. This article goes into the history of showering before and after the rise of Christianity if you want to read more about that.

Showering has become a habit, and to many, a ritual. So, what are the effects of our showering rituals? When we shower, we essentially strip our body of the natural oils and bacteria that make up our body's microbiome and then cover up the damage done with synthetic oils and fragrances. The natural oils and bacteria on our body can be beneficial to us, and when given the time to properly replenish, they create a beneficial ecosystem that functions without the use of soap and other products designed to cover up body odor.

The human microbiome takes around three weeks to replenish itself after its stripped. There is definitely an adjustment period within these three weeks. Your hair may get oily, you may become more acne-prone, and of course, you'll probably smell funny for a little while! All of this can be made better by a

healthy diet. The old saying “you are what you eat” reigns true more often than not, and showering (or rather, not showering) is no exception. If you live off of Big Macs and diet coke, you’ll look, smell, and feel disgusting if you don’t shower often (and even if you do, because Big Macs are gross). If you live off of salads and other whole foods and fresh produce, you’ll be able to tell a difference in your body. Good food creates a good gut microbiome and our gut microbiome carries bacteria all through our body.

After your body has time to adjust to your new no-shower regime, you’ll notice a few things. Your skin will likely look better than it ever has, and if you’re doing things right, your skin should be fine without any other products. It shouldn’t be too oily or too dry. Your hair won’t look greasy. If you stop using product and heat on it, along with no longer washing it, you should find yourself with the healthiest hair you’ve ever had. The texture of it may take a little getting used to. It’s not Pantene-like silky smooth and shiny in its natural state. It’s generally a little more coarse. Lastly, there’s the smell. People are often worried about smelling bad more than anything else, but when your body has the chance to balance out with healthy bacteria, this isn’t a concern. People all have an individual natural body odor based on their body’s bacteria and based on what they eat. If you eat very well, work out, and sweat a lot, you’ll likely smell strong, but very good.

If you’re very in tune with your body, you’ll notice changes in how you smell based on what you eat, and even the situations you’re in. You’ll find that in situations of stress or anxiety you might smell worse, and in situations where you’re comfortable with who you’re with, you’ll smell better, based on the pheromones you release. If you eat junk food, even what one might consider “healthy” junk food, you’ll smell worse the next morning. In that situation though, I find a hard workout and a good salad is enough to correct my

microbiome. Depending on your job, you may notice a layer of dirt build-up pretty quickly. For that, I recommend wiping down with a warm rag. I often get dirt built up on my forearms, ankles, and sometimes around my neck. I do shower if I'm doing a particularly dirty job. Just a couple of weeks ago, I was working on my car and planted my head directly into a puddle of power steering fluid. Some situations just warrant shampoo. That being said, when I do shower, I use all-natural soaps that don't strip my body of its natural oils the same way regular shampoos and soaps do.

Showering and bathing on such a regular basis can be quite a strain on the environment. A typical showerhead has a water flow rate of 2.5 gallons per minute. Data shows that showering is nearly 20% of total water usage in American homes, and the average American family uses 40 gallons of water on showers per day in the U.S. Using hot water to shower also uses an incredible amount of energy along with the water used.

I don't recommend that everyone give up showering. The reality is, most people aren't healthy enough to give up showering without becoming gross. Most people aren't willing to change their lifestyle in order to be able to give up showering. I do, however, encourage everyone to spread their showers out a little more and see what happens! At the very least, you'll be doing the environment some good!

*The Soap and Shampoo Conspiracy*