

Before Makeup

By Roberta Angela Dee

Girl friend, if you're planning to go out and want to look your prettiest, you need to remember one thing: You'd better listen to Roberta Angela Dee. Because when it comes to makeup, I don't play. Being a woman is serious business. So, if you're not ready to be serious, all you're doing is playing dress up. Thank you.

OK, now this article is intended primarily for African American women or women of color, but fair-complexioned sisters can learn a lot too. So, loose your preconceived notions about skin care, and read Roberta's solutions to many of your skin care problems.

We begin with determining your skin type. Many people believe that more darkly complexioned women can only have oily skin. Not true, sweetie. Skin type may be changed by genetic, hormonal or environmental conditions. So, it's important to examine your skin closely at least once every month -- not just seasonally as most of the books suggest.

Perspiration on black skin tends to give the appearance that it is oily. In reality, the skin could be quite dry. So, don't be deceived. And, another thing, ladies: when you look at your skin, make certain that you have sufficient light -- preferably sunlight.

A Few Simple Tips:

First, examine the area known as the T-zone. This is the area between your forehead and your nose, and from your nose to your chin. It's possible for oiliness to be restricted to this area.

Use a white paper towel to be certain. If you blot the area and it's only perspiration, the area will dry and you'll see nothing. If it's oil, an oily film will remain on the paper towel.

If the oil is restricted to the T-zone, then you have combination skin. You'll need to treat the oily area a little differently than the remaining areas of your face.

Patchiness and roughness are indications of dry skin. Normal skin is free from all of the indications I've mentioned. But there is a fourth skin type known as sensitive skin. Please understand, however, that frequent breakouts does not necessarily mean that the skin is sensitive. The breakouts may be the result of oily skin that is not being treated properly. The very worse thing you can do (not to mention the expense) is to buy the wrong product for your skin type. So, be very precise about determining your skin type. If you're still uncertain, then visit a cosmetologists at the cosmetic's counter. The same skin conditions apply to a man. So, you don't need to pretend you're at the counter for your wife or girl friend.

Step one – Cleansing

If you don't keep your skin clean and as free from impurities as possible, your makeup will always appear to do less than the job it's supposed to do. You must not only cleanse the skin when you first get out of bed, but before you return to bed. Furthermore, you must not only cleanse from the outside, you must also cleanse from the inside.

"Oh, Roberta, but how can I cleanse from the inside?" you ask. Simple. Drink plenty of water -- particularly if you have oily skin. And when I say water, I mean water. I don't mean soft

drinks, soda pop, coffee, or alcohol. I mean water in its purest, unadulterated, uncarbonated, unsweetened, unflavored, unsalted and uncolored form.

Coffee is not water. Orange juice is not water. Beer is not water. Only water is water. So, start getting in the habit of drinking eight glasses of the stuff everyday. Because that's what it takes to remove the toxins and impurities from your stressed out little bodies.

On the outside, be sure to use the right cleanser for your skin type. Avoid cleansers that have any kind of fragrance or harsh chemicals. Don't use any soap on your face that has a deodorant or antibacterial ingredient.

Be just as careful about shaving products. It makes no sense to use a cleanser that contains no harsh chemical, and then slap a handful of heavily scented shaving cream on your face. Use you head, girl.

OK, you've washed your face and you've shaved. Let's move on.

Step Two – Toning

The purpose of toning is to remove any traces of soap or makeup that might still be present on the skin, even after it has been washed. Its second purpose is to restore the skin to its normal acid (pH) balance.

Many women tend to ignore this very important step. Why? Because the soap isn't visible. Nor can you see the pH balance of your skin. But what you don't see can be very harmful to your skin. Soap changes the acid balance of the skin. The proper toner or astringent (depending on your skin type) is needed to bring it back again.

Step Three -- Moisturize

There is a vast difference between oil and water. The skin needs water. It doesn't necessarily need oil.

Using an oil-based moisturizer on oily skin will not only make it appear to be sensitive and to break out, it would be like covering your face with motor oil. Yuck. No girl, you don't want to use an oil-based moisturizer.

Oil helps to seal in moisture, but it is not moisture. Moisture is water. Yes, water, again. Water is beauty's best friend -- inside and out. Drier skins can use an oil- based moisturizer. Why, because this skin type doesn't produce enough oil.

As with everything else, stay away from products that contain a fragrance. Fragrance requires more alcohol, and alcohol is not a friend to beauty.

I'll talk about foundation a little later on. But spend a few weeks learning to make a routine from what I've already suggested. And feel free to write to me, if you have any questions or problems with finding the right products for your skin type.

Iman has come out with a new makeup and skin care line that deserves your attention. Check her out.

And, again, write to me if you have any questions, or even just to say, "Hi, Roberta."

Stay Sweet, Girls

Roberta's Beauty Tips

Caution: On-Line Medical Advice & Laser Surgery

By Roberta Angela Dee

I feel compelled to address those among us who use the internet for medical advice. I've been removed from several listservers for stating what any intelligent person should know: that the best medical advice is likely to come from a personal physician -- not an on-line medical guru.

I've also been removed for stating that African American women have beauty needs that differ from Caucasian women. It is not, however, only women of African descent that might be adversely affected by recommendations received through the internet. Any dark complexioned woman might be adversely affected.

Nothing irritates me more than to read a column on electrolysis that excludes the dangers that this practice might bring to women who have deep skin tones. I questioned one doctor on the internet and was told that any scars that resulted from such electrolysis could be treated with injections of cortisone.

The question here is how the good doctor defines "treatment" as opposed to removal. Virtually anything can be treated.

It is one thing if the information being excluded is the result of being unaware or ill informed. The physician in this case, however, simply felt that it wasn't an important enough issue to merit changing her web page.

The truth of the matter is that women with deep skin tones are more likely to form keloids. Keloids are raised scars that can be terribly ugly and disfiguring. Not all dark complexioned women succumb to keloids, but all deserve to be presented with the possibility.

When I write my beauty tips, I do my best to acknowledge that different women have different needs. Not everyone wants to look like a Barbie doll, nor can every woman look well as a Barbie Doll.

America is comprised of many different ethnic groups. Those of us who feel competent to give medical advice or even beauty advice should accept the reality of the world in which we live.

Laser surgery is now in vogue. It's costly but it's also popular. A half-hour treatment to remove bags under the eyes is likely to cost about \$2,000 dollars. However, women of color, should be cautious about undergoing this procedure

W. Earle Matory, Jr., M.D., F.A.C.S., a leading African American surgeon in Irvine, California states: "Patients of color who undergo CO2 laser [surgery] will have temporary or permanent discoloration. For that reason, I don't recommend the CO2 laser but prefer a number of other therapeutic options."

The procedure for tattoo removal, for example, requires the light beam to go beneath the surface of the skin. The pigment in darker skin tones might absorb too much of the laser and as a result suffer damages."

Not all lasers have an adverse affect on darker skin tones. So, again, the patient must seek informed medical advice from a competent physician.

For free surgeon referrals and information, contact the American Society of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeons, Inc. (800) 635-0635; the American Society for Dermatologic Surgery, (800) 441-2737; the American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery, (800) 332-3223; and the American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery, Inc. (888) 272-7711.

I am a writer and like most writers I live for responses from Readers like you. Please take a few minutes to comment on "Robert Angela Dee's Beauty Tips." Contact me at

RADANGLE@aol.com

Thank you.

Roberta Angela Dee

Caution: Alpha Hydroxy Acids in Cosmetics

By Roberta Angela Dee

Recently, cosmetics containing alpha hydroxy acids (AHAs) are being widely used despite unanswered questions regarding their safety. A recent study, sponsored by the cosmetics industry, indicates that these products may make users more sensitive to sunlight and especially to the ultraviolet (UV) radiation component of sunlight. UV exposure can damage the skin. At high doses, especially over a long period, UV radiation can cause skin cancer. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is currently evaluating this study and is pursuing additional studies to make sure these products are safe for consumers. Unfortunately, these products continue to be widely marketed and distributed while the FDA makes a more thorough evaluation.

Everyone, whether fair or dark complexioned, should use sun protection before going into the sun (daylight). Adequate protection can be achieved by wearing a hat with a brim of at least four inches. It also helps to wear lightweight sun protective clothing with long sleeves, and to apply sunscreen with an SPF (or Sun Protection Factor) of at least 15. Sunscreens should be reapplied after excessive sweating or swimming. It is especially important to use effective sun protection if you are going to the beach and will be exposed to high levels of UV radiation.

The recent study makes these sun protection precautions even more important if you use AHA-containing products. Even though your AHA product may contain sunscreen, it is primarily a skin treatment product--not a means of sun protection. If you use the AHA at bedtime, be sure to apply an additional sunscreen product in the morning before going into the sun.

The agency has received about 100 reports of adverse effects with AHA products, ranging from mild irritation and stinging to blistering and burns. If you have sensitive skin, test any product that containing an AHA on a small area of skin before applying it to a larger area. If you experience skin irritation or prolonged stinging, stop using the product and consult your physician.

Do not exceed the recommended applications of AHA, and please note that AHA-containing products are not to be used on infants or children.

To find out if a cosmetic contains an AHA, look on the list of ingredients all cosmetics must, by law, have on their outer packaging. AHA ingredients may be listed as:

- glycolic acid
- lactic acid
- malic acid
- citric acid • glycolic acid + ammonium glycolate
- alpha-hydroxyethanoic acid + ammonium alpha-hydroxyethanoate
- alpha-hydroxyoctanoic acid
- alpha-hydroxycaprylic acid
- hydroxycaprylic acid
- mixed fruit acid
- tri-alpha hydroxy fruit acids
- triple fruit acid
- sugar cane extract
- alpha hydroxy and botanical complex
- L-alpha hydroxy acid
- glycomer in crosslinked fatty acids alpha nutrium (three AHAs).

Of these, the most frequently used in cosmetics are glycolic acid and lactic acid.

AHA products promote exfoliation -- shedding of surface skin. The extent of exfoliation depends on the type and concentration of the AHA, its pH (acidity), and other ingredients in the product. Most cosmetics sold to consumers contain AHAs at levels up to 10 percent. It is FDA's understanding that products with AHA concentrations of 20 percent or higher are used solely by trained cosmetologists for salon "mini-peels."

In studies conducted by FDA on the absorption of AHAs through the skin, the AHAs tested were readily absorbed into the skin at varying rates. The most rapid absorption occurred with AHAs having higher acidity (lower pH). FDA issued a report in February 1996. "Effects of Alpha Hydroxy Acid on the Skin" concluded that additional scientific investigation was needed to establish the safety of these products. The recent report linking AHAs to increased UV sensitivity was sponsored by the Cosmetic, Toiletry, and Fragrance Association. The results were reported at a December 1996 meeting of the trade group's Cosmetic Ingredient Review Panel (CIR), which began reviewing the safety of AHAs in 1994. The panel concluded at its December meeting that AHAs are "safe for use in cosmetic products at concentrations less than or equal to 10 percent, at final formulation pHs greater than or equal to 3.5, when formulated to avoid increasing the skin's sensitivity to the sun, or when directions for use include the daily use of sun protection."

FDA is reviewing these CIR conclusions, as well as the other available data about these products. Consumers should be aware that AHA concentration and pH are generally not noted on all products. The FDA simply does not require it. However, the information should be available from the manufacturer. Cosmetics manufacturers are not required to submit safety data to FDA before marketing products, although they bear the responsibility for manufacturing safe products. Consumers should report any adverse reactions, such as irritation or sun sensitivity, associated with the use of AHAs to their local FDA office, listed in the Blue Pages of the phone book, or to FDA's Office of Consumer Affairs at (1-800) 532-4440.

Roberta's Beauty Tips

Caution: Online Medical Advice

By Roberta Angela Dee

History of Robert's Beauty Column

For the past year, I have submitted a monthly beauty column to the Transgender Forum. Each month I attempt to cover a different topic.

Those of you who have read or collected my beauty tips are aware that I have covered a variety of topics. My topics have included discussions on how to speak like a woman, guidelines for weight management, application of eye makeup, and effective skin care techniques. In each instance, I have made a focused effort to be sensitive to the variety of individuals who subscribe to this forum.

For some, the beauty advice is an integral part of their lifestyle. For others, it is information required only for special occasions. Whatever the particular need, I have tried hard to address that need. I write -- not simply for the sake of writing. I write because I care about the transgendered community -- whether the individual is a female-to-male or a male-to-female transsexual, or a casual cross dresser.

An Ongoing Mission

I try not to repeat myself. However, this month's column repeats last month's cautionary message: Beware of on-line medical advice.

It's my mission to provide individuals with the best information possible. I research each topic before I write about it. I do so because I care.

I am continually amazed by the number of people who subscribe to listservers on the internet and seek medical advice from individuals who might never have graduated high school.

There are people on-line who give medical advice solely based on personal experience. They have never had a day of formal medical training, nor do they have any idea of the medical history of the individual to whom they offer advice.

Don't be a fool. Never accept medical advice from anyone who has not been suitably educated or who could not care less if you lived or died as a result of his or her advice.

What if the person is a doctor? That's a good question. First, no doctor in his or her right mind gives advice on-line without including a disclaimer. Read the small print. The disclaimer usually states that the doctor assumes no responsibility for the information he or she provides. Second, would you put your money in the hands of a banker who assumed no responsibility for your money? If not, why -- even for a second -- would you put your health in the hands of a medical professional who assumed no responsibility for your well being?

Don't be a fool?

The Internet vs. the Public Library

Anyone can put up a web page or a web site. They can provide information on any topic from ants to zebras without spending so much as a second validating the information they've

provided. So, while there is a great deal of information available much of it is inaccurate or only partially accurate.

Don't be a fool. Do ascribe to an idea or any information simply because some search engine took you to that particular web page. Unlike most of the books in the public library, most of the information provided on the internet is without any list of resources. In some instances, you don't even know who is providing the information. Don't be a fool.

Doctors On-line

It might surprise the majority of Americans to learn that most of the world's population is non-white. Media and the entertainment industry might lead many of us to believe that the everyone on the planet has blonde hair and blue eyes. This is simply not the case.

Thirty percent of the US population consists of non-whites. Given that the present US population is about 270 million people, this means that 81 million people are comprised of African, Asian, Latino, Pacific Island and other ethnicities. We are all equal but we are not all the same.

For the past several months, I have been trying to get on- line physicians -- who cater to the transgendered community -- to understand that physicians need to be sensitive to the ethnic distribution in the community. I have specifically asked that those who suggest electrolysis include information about the possibility of scarring if the individual has a dark complexion.

Some of these doctors have ignored my concerns, and some have dismissed them.

Using the probability statistics provided by the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM) of Mental Disorders of the American Psychiatric Association, there are no more than 10,000 transsexuals in the entire United States. Frankly, I believe their estimates are ridiculously low. However, I'm certain it will take the medical profession another decade or two to come to this realization.

Yet, even if their figures are correct, it means that there is a possibility that 2,000 - 3,000 transsexuals are people of color. That's a sizable population and I would hope that at least one of the doctors who cater to our community would be concerned about the quality of information they dispense to two or three thousand people. Yet, as I repeatedly review the information the most popular physicians provide, I've yet to find one who seems appreciatively concerned.

I'm not trying to imply that all of the information is erroneous. However, don't be a fool. Investigate after you assimilate the information these physicians provide.

Beverly Johnson

Beverly Johnson was one of the first African American models to break the color barrier for models in the United States of America. Her book, "True Beauty" provides a wealth of information for women of color and for any woman with a deep olive complexion. Visit a her web site Asian and Pacific Island women might want to visit the Zhen web site.

For free surgeon referrals and information, contact:

- The American Society of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeons, Inc. (800) 635-0635
- The American Society for Dermatologic Surgery, (800) 441-2737
- The American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery (800) 332-3223

- The American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery, Inc. (888) 272-7711

I would hope that the on-line physicians who read this article will consider what I've presented here. I would hope that some would incorporate this information into their existing web sites and acknowledge the source. Time will tell.

In any event, if you've learned anything from reading this article, you should understand my message: Don't be a fool.

Getting Hip

© 1999 by Roberta Angela Dee

What distinguishes the professional female impersonator from the casual cross dresser? Experience has taught me that the answer is: the attention to detail. There is nothing casual about mimicking a woman, or with being a woman.

Do you drive? How often have you noticed a man using the rear view mirror to check his eyelashes or hairdo? It probably isn't very often. Women, however, do it all the time. In fact, many women will almost instinctively stop as soon as they approach any reflective surface. Why? To evaluate their appearance. After all, a lady can never be too perfect.

A few weeks ago, while walking through the mall, I took notice of the physiques carried by men and women. Men were most often broadest at the shoulder. Women were most often broadest at the hips. Even without seeing her face, I could distinguish a woman from a man at a distance greater than 100 feet. And, on occasion, I've also been able to identify a cross dresser from as great, or even a greater distance.

A man wearing a dress will look like a man if he prances out without the necessary amount of padding for his hips. Suitable padding is available at some of the following web sites:

- The Corset Tree: Brassieres, Nursing Bras, Push Up Bras, Girdles, Corsets, Waist Cinchers, Garter Belts, Body Briefers, Merry Widows, Boussieres, Panties, Bust Pads, Hip Pads, Backside Pads, Slips, Pants Liners, Mastectomy Prothesis. Email: <http://www.angelfire.com/biz/villagecorset/>
- Carla's Boutique: Carla's Salon, Boutique and Club for the Transgender Community.
- Frederick's of Hollywood: The official web site for Frederick's of Hollywood, famous for it's bras, panties, lingerie, and sexy/sensual women's apparel and pleasant shopping experience.
- Classic Curves: Bust, hip and rear enhancement garments ... These are the first foundation garments designed by computer to make your hips and rear perfectly feminine! Womens' hips are usually about as wide as their shoulders.

We've all seen the cross dresser who's built like a construction worker but insists on wearing the tightest Lycra mini-dress. The result is always disastrous. No cross dresser can look sexy wearing a garment that focuses attention on a masculine physique. It makes no difference how short or how pretty the garment appeared while on the rack. Even genetically female women understand that the garment must match the physique. Consequently, without the proper foundation and preparation, the most determined cross dresser can only make a mockery of women - and such mockery is likely to be deeply resented.

Dressing to Suit Your Figure

by Roberta Angela Dee

Don't worry about what size you take or how much you weigh. The shape of your body is more important to how you look in your clothes than the number on the label.

Are you petite but heavy, pear-shaped, or big and tall? Defining your body's silhouette is the first step in helping to develop your own sense of style. No matter what your shape, or what shape it's in, you can enhance your figure and balance your proportions with the right wardrobe.

Generally, large-framed women look better in loose-fitting styles. Smaller-boned women look better in neat-fitting clothes.

Unlike most smaller women, tall women can hold their own in strong patterns and textures. Wearing clothes that fit and flatter will help you to look and feel terrific, even if you're not a perfect 10.

To determine your basic shape, take an honest look at your physique in a full length mirror while you're wearing a leotard or bathing suit. Then adapt the following advice to make the most of the assets you have.

Spot Checks for All Shapes:

- Large bust: Show off your décolletage with V-necks and open collars but keep to semi fitted, fluid styles that don't bind. Wear a properly fitted bra.
- Short neck: Keep hair off the neck. Doing so will add length. Choose small earrings and necklaces that hang below the collarbone; and oblong scarves rather than ascots. Try V or scoop necklines.
- Protruding tummy: Try a softly draped skirt, not one cut on the bias. Narrow pants with a front or side closure are a smooth base over which to layer a tunic.
- Thick calves, ankles: Choose low-vamp shoes with medium heels. Ankle boots are a great problem solver, especially when teamed with a long, flowing skirt.

Big and Tall Gals:

Valerie Mackie, merchandise manager for clothing retailer Tall Girl (she's almost six feet tall herself) cautions against buying clothes that are too big in order to get extra length. More than those with petite frames, big and tall women must buy the best quality they can afford in order to get the generous cut they need."

Simplicity is key in dressing this body type: frills and furbelows should give way to elegant, uncluttered designs, which are the most flattering to this silhouette.

Tall Girl recommends that accessories for big and bold body types be on a larger scale. An eye-catching belt is one great option. But if your bust is ample, a narrow belt may be your best bet. Mackie also points out that tall women can take more liberties mixing prints and colors since they don't need to be concerned about emphasizing vertical lines.

Flowing midcalf-length skirts compliment a large, angular frame, as does layering, but avoid heavy or bulky pieces. A tall woman's best revenge is that she has what it takes to show off a pair of cuffed trousers with the style and panache of Katharine Hepburn.

Five Very Hot Feminine Vocal Tricks

By Roberta Angela Dee

This is the second of two articles Roberta has done on Voice Training. Subscribers can catch up on Part One

Now, I already realize that some of you ladies are going to write to inform me that the vocal trick you learned from your 20 sessions with a vocal coach (at \$50 dollars a session) were far more sophisticated than the ones I offer here. And, you're probably right. But guess what? Mine are free. They work and you don't even have to leave the house to make use of them. So, if nothing else you can't beat my prices.

TRICK ONE:

Sit back with the remote and find a movie or television show where there are a number of women. Now, hit the mute button.

You're insane, Roberta. How am I supposed to hear them if I hit the mute button, silly girl. Well, I'm silly like a fox, hon'. We're not listening -- not just yet. What we're doing is studying feminine mannerisms -- natural feminine mannerisms. And while we're watching were going to mimic just a few of the most obvious ones until we're feeling very comfortable using them.

Women are very very observant. Even if you have a perfectly feminine voice, the absence of at least a few feminine gestures will make most women suspicious. You don't need to talk with your hands like Joan Rivers, but you do need a feminine gesture or two to accentuate your femininity. Don't overdo it! In this case, less is more.

Practice this technique at least 15 minutes a day for a month. You'll be surprised at how much you learn about feminine behavior and mannerisms.

TRICK TWO:

Ladies, are you all still comfortable and relaxed? Very good. Now you can turn on the sound, but close your eyes. Yes, close your eyes and listen to how the women respond to other women. But also pay very close attention to how a woman responds to a man. It's different.

You'll also note that women use a different set of inflections when speaking to very young children.

If you're using a tape recorder, you'll learn to speak at a comfortable pitch within a week or two with continued practice. And you might learn to sustain that pitch in about a month or two. However, getting the inflections right might take a little longer, but it's every bit as important.

TRICK THREE:

This is going to be a bit tough for you former construction workers, but you'll have to practice speaking in a manner that is more grammatically correct.

If I were a guy, I might have opened this section saying, This is gonna be a toughie for you former jocks and construction guys, but you gotta practice speaking good. A bit more machismo, isn't it. We're not looking for machismo here, ladies. I believe I've made my point, please allow me to move on.

TRICK FOUR:

Smile, ladies. That's right smile. Give me a big, loving, come-to-mama smile. Very good. Now talk to me. Ah, not so easy, is it?

You know why? Because little girls are taught to smile all the time. They play and smile. Run and smile. Talk and smile. And boys don't.

When most men walk up to a stranger, they put on a poker face. It says, Me a man. Me strong. Me masculine. When most women walk up to a stranger, they put on a happy pleasant face. It says, I'm loving. I'm gentle. I'm feminine.

Yea, yea, yea, You're going to feel silly at first or at least a little awkward. But again, practice makes perfect. So get out your tape recorder and have a fifteen minute conversation with your imaginary girl friend and spend at least 10 of those 15 minutes smiling.

TRICK FIVE:

You girl friend tells you a joke, she's expecting you to laugh. Or, a guy tells you a joke, and as a woman you know you must laugh at a guys joke or you'll damage his ego and be labeled a bitch for at least 10 years. But your laugh sounds so pretentious. Work on it, hon'. I don't care if the best you can do is to master a giggle. Work on developing some realistic vocal response as close to laughter as possible. Because girl friends are always laughing at each others comments. You're going to look and feel pretty awkward, if you can't laugh and laugh a lot. Again, use the tape recorder.

And PRACTICE.

Well that's all for now, girls. As always, I hope I've been helpful, and if you have any problems or questions feel free to e-mail me. I'll answer, if and when, I can. As you can imagine, I get a lot of e-mail and can't afford to spend so much time on-line. My e-mail address is RADANGLE@aol.com.

Affectionately,
Roberta Angela Dee

Roberta On Diet

Ten Foods That Enhance A Girlish Figure

By Roberta Angela Dee

I don't need to tell you that "you are what you eat." Or, as my mother used to say, "You can't eat like a man, if you want to have a figure like a woman."

Mother was absolutely correct. But what is a girl to do when she's hungry and loves to eat as much as I do?

No -- I'm not going to put anyone on a God-awful diet of bananas and boiled eggs. That would be cruel. What I have for TG Forum are 10 foods that most people enjoy and which can actually do two things: 1) help satisfy your craving for more calorie-rich foods, and 2) help you to lose weight.

I'm not only going to provide a list of these ten essential foods. I'm also going to tell you why we CD and TS girls need them.

1. POTATOES

Did you know that eating potatoes could elevate your mood? Well, they can. Potatoes are a good source of vitamin B6 and have been proven to help prevent depression. This is especially important if you're taking female hormones and are already subject to those mood swings so many of us have experienced.

2. STRAWBERRIES

When you're in the mood to be with someone special, strawberries can enhance that mood. They can also help you live longer, relieve pain, and look more beautiful. "Impossible," you say. Well, you'd better listen to Roberta, girl friend. I don't make these things up. Everything I write has been thoroughly researched.

Strawberries are a good source of vitamin C and folic acid. Vitamin C inhibits the formation of cancer-causing (nitrosamines) in the body, so you'll live longer. Vitamin C also helps your body to manufacture collagen.

Collagen improves both the skin and helps to prevent gum disease. See, you're looking better already. Collagen also helps to reduce pain that is the result of an arthritic condition.

Folic acid helps prevent spinal bifida -- a type of deformity. And, best news of all, strawberries only contains 50 calories per cup.

3. YOGURT

Ah, some find yogurt to be a bitter tasting food, but no health food could be sweeter. One cup of yogurt provides nearly half the daily requirement for calcium. It also helps to lower blood pressure. And yogurt containing active cultures can help improve your immune system.

4. CANTALOUPE

Cantaloupe provides both vitamin C and beta-carotene. Additionally, it provides much needed potassium. The combination can lower blood pressure, prevent strokes, and improve kidney functions.

5. KALE or COLLARD GREENS

Kale is similar to spinach. Collard greens can be said to be a type of cabbage. Both fill our need for vitamin C and beta-carotene with only a half-cup serving, and both -- if properly prepared -- are low in calories.

Beta-carotene lowers the risk of oral and lung cancers. There is also the possibility that -- for those of us who are taking female hormones -- it inhibits breast cancer growth.

6. BEANS

You'll remember what Roberta has to say about beans, because it so significantly affects all our lives. Beans are not only a low fat nutrient, but also serve as a source of protein, carbohydrates, and fiber. It provides folic acid and may also lower cholesterol levels. Now, how can you tell me we couldn't all benefit from adding more beans to our diet?

7. SUNFLOWER SEEDS

Think of a girdle when you think of sunflower seeds. The seeds are a good source of niacin and vitamin E. Both work to prevent cell damage. But one ounce contains 14 grams of fat. So, it's not a low fat food and must be eaten in moderation.

8. BREAKFAST CEREALS

A bowl of breakfast cereal is a wonderful way to start the day. It's typically vitamin fortified and rich in fiber. Many nutritionists believe that those who eat a healthy breakfast are less likely to eat fatty snacks during the day.

9. SALMON

Although the smoked varieties of salmon may be high in sodium, this niacin-rich food significantly lowers the risk of a heart attack. And for those who may have already had a heart attack, eating salmon could reduce the risk of future attacks.

10. LEAN BEEF

Some say that all red meats are bad. However, lean beef can provide much needed iron. This mineral helps to carry oxygen through the blood. Iron is also essential for the formation of amino acids and hormones, and aids to ward off infections.

Well, that's all of I have to say about eating this month. I think I'll run off now and treat myself to a cup of strawberry yogurt. See ya later, ladies.

Tips For A Closer Shave

by Roberta Angela Dee

- Electric Razor Users : Use a good facial scrub, then let face dry prior to using an electric razor.
- Facial Scrub: A good quality facial scrub will help free ingrown hairs, and help prevent new ones from forming.
- Clean Skin: Wash with a quality cleanser to remove surface oil so water can penetrate facial hair.
- Skin Type: Depending on your skin type and formula preference, apply Cream Shave (drier skins) or oil-free M Shave Aloe Gel (oilier skins).
- Shave Twice: Shave with light, short strokes in the direction of hair growth. Shaving with the grain helps prevent ingrown hairs, razor burn, and cuts. Instead of shaving against the grain to get a close shave, shave twice.
- Shaving Order: Shave smooth areas (cheeks) first, saving the chin and upper lip (which have the highest concentration of tough hairs) for last, so these whiskers have longer to soften. Shave from the base of the neck up to the jaw, then back down again, since neck hair grows in both directions.
- Sideburns: Pay special attention to sideburns: right-handed men tend to shave their left sideburn shorter — vice versa for lefties.
- Direction: Never shave against the grain. Shaving against the grain can trigger ingrown hairs and razor burn. If ingrown hairs are a problem, help them with good quality facial scrub. A floating-blade razor won't disturb shaving bumps. For extra glide, lather with Clinique's M Lotion and let set before applying Cream Shave.
- Tough Beards: Shave in or after shower to allow steam and moderately hot water to soften beard. Always use a sharp, clean razor. Change blades after every third use. Rinse often with hot water to prevent razor clogging.
- Razor Burn: The easiest thing I have found for shaving is to apply a light oil, (try Aveda's Calming Nutrients), and put a few drops on damp skin before shaving. The oil helps protect the skin from razor burn, and the blade sticks to the skin better, thus preventing nicks and cuts. And, it is a great moisturizing treat at the same time.

Highly Recommended Shaving Products:

- Decleor shaving foam — Karite butter and glycerine moisturize all day.
- Kiehl's aftershave moisturizer — Delivers its promise to keep your skin soft.
- Aveda aftershave balm — With mint, chamomile, and bergamot.
- Georgette Klinger two-step restorative — From the doyenne of skin care.
- Philosophy shaving gel — With silicone, for heavy beards.
- Kiss My Face anti-bacterial shave creams — Olive oil, and a twist-top that's ideal for travel.
- The Body Shop for Men shaving cream — The fragrance is sandalwood.
- Penhaligon's Blenheim Bouquet aftershave — A scent favored by Churchill.
- Nickel Contre Feu — Relieves razor burn, true to its name.
- Geo F. Trumper shaving cream — Sublimely soothing, and violet-scented.

Feminine Proportions

I remember, as a youngster, spending many hours at the local library. I sought information about the reasons for transsexualism -- why it exists and why individuals who experience the phenomenon seem unable to remove it from their lives. Ironically, I was as eager to learn how one might alter their anatomical sex as I was eager to learn why an individual would want to do so.

In the beginning, like most male-to-female transsexuals and like most cross dressers, I held an especially strong fascination for the female breast.

I wanted breasts. I wanted a feminine physique, a feminine figure. No passion I can recall was ever as strong as my passion to emulate the spirit of womanhood.

Once I started to live and work as a woman, I quickly came to realize that the hips and derriere did more to exemplify the female form than even the most pronounced and perfect breasts. The hips and derriere were the physical attributes that made it difficult, if not impossible, for most women to fit into a pair of man-tailored trousers that matched their waists.

Antropometry

The science is called antropometry. It does much to explain and measure the important difference between male and female anatomy.

It is very important to understand that a woman with a 36-inch chest size is likely to measure 36 - 24 - 36 inches or 91 - 61 - 91 centimeters.

However, a man with a 36-inch chest is likely to measure 36 - 29 - 33 inches or 91 - 74 - 84 centimeters. It amounts to a visually distinguishable difference between the proportions of an average male and those of an average female.

A male's waist is thicker, and his hips are usually considerably less than his chest size. Whereas a woman's hips might extend as far outward as her shoulder width. This is the reason so many cross dressers, male-to-female transsexuals, and transgendered women can look more comical than feminine, if they are not attentive to their overall proportions

In fact, it is when a young girl attains the proportions of 1 - .666 - 1, that she "signals" she is sexually mature. It is also the reason so many tenaciously diet and exercise. It is to attain or maintain these ideal feminine proportions.

Real Life Transitioning

It is very sad, but I am aware of a rather well known post-operative transsexual whose chest had measured 42 inches before beginning the transition. Following years of hormone replacement therapy (HRT) and eventually breast implants, the post operative measurements are now 42C. The breasts are impressive, but the waist and hip measurements are 32 and 36 inches, respectively. A genetic female with a 42C would likely measure 42 - 28 - 42 inches.

Most often, a woman's hip measurement is between 10 and 14 inches greater than her waist size. Expressed differently, a woman's waist measurement is most often between 10 and 14 inches less than her chest size. A man's hips are rarely more than 3 -6 inches greater than his waist size.

As a result, the post-operative transsexual, to whom I refer, is not perceived as a woman, in spite of having rather impressive breasts. She is, of course, "legally" female. Yet, in spite of all her surgeries, she continues to be perceived as a male.

Can anyone honestly make the assertion that social acceptance is unimportant? Is such an assertion honest, or is it only suggested by those in denial of the real role they hope to assume in society?

For those who recognize the importance of being proportionally correct, there are a variety of sources through which one might obtain an undergarment that features padded hips and a padded derriere.

This type of undergarment is every bit as important as a well-fitted bra. I provide a listing at the end of this article.

The Misinformation Highway

There is a lot of information available to the transgendered community. Unfortunately, many retailers, physicians, list-servers and newsgroups find no wrong in making exaggerated claims to increase the sale of their product, services, or their popularity.

The information provided through most list-servers and newsgroups, for example, is unfounded, undocumented, and unsubstantiated at best. Through these on-line channels, we discover individuals -- with absolutely no medical training -- offering medical and psychological advice to people they have never even met. Even a medical doctor is reluctant to suggest medical options to people they have never examined. Yet, these on-line "experts" offer advice as if they can do so with some authority. The idea of it is both unethical and immoral.

To make matters worse, such individuals often cite "personal experience" as the basis of their authority, and even claim to be more knowledgeable than the medical professionals.

I don't dismiss the significance of personal experience. It is true that it can lead to more accurate conclusions than is available through scholars and professionals. However, one must be very careful when using personal experience as the only basis for dispensing information applicable to a general population.

No ethical physician will develop a website without including a disclaimer that effectively says, "Let the reader beware of possible errors, omissions, or exceptions." Yet, those who manage newsgroups and list-servers offer no disclaimers at all.

Use Common Sense

When I hear or read of a transsexual who has taken an unspecified female hormone, at an unspecified dosage, for an unspecified amount of time, and claims to have acquired the proportions of a genetic female, I possess enough common sense to seriously question such unsubstantiated information.

There is a sure, safe way to get the kind of proportions that are truly feminine without using hormones or surgery: quality hip padding.

There are many excellent products on the market that can give you the figure you are looking for and those who understand the importance of projecting truly feminine proportions might want to visit the following websites for products and information about padded undergarments.

Links

- Catherine Robertson's Unique Padded Panty Girdle
<http://www.catherinerobertson.co.uk/index5.htm> Email: c.r.clothing@cableinet.co.uk
- Classic Curves <http://www.clcrv.com/>
- Frederick's of Hollywood: Home Page Shop online or locate a store.
<http://www.fredericks.com/>
- Lee's Mardi Gras Boutique <http://www.lmgny.com>
- Underworks Padded Panty Girdle <http://www.underworks.com/512.html>

The Mechanics of Beauty

by Roberta Angela Dee

Well, how nice to meet up with you again, darling. It seems you only come to see me when you want to look fabulously feminine! Naturally, I forgive you. After all, I've been the Queen of Entertainment on more than one occasion, and I know how hectic it can be to attend or to even plan these types of affairs.

What's that, Princess? You say, you're meeting with some of the girls, and want to be absolutely certain that you're Prize Femme? Well, come to Mother Beauty, and I'll see what I can do to help your feminine fantasies fruitful.

Here are a few commonly asked questions (CAQ):

Dear Miss Dee: What are the hot new winter shades?

You will want to try the luxurious, shimmery, sophisticated and exotic colors, such as those inspired by a peacock's feather. Although these colors are too rich for Summer and Spring, they're absolutely perfect for Winter.

Dear Miss Dee: How do I select the best shade of foundation for me?

Obviously, you'll want your face to match the skin tone of your body. So, test the color on your jawline. However, if you're timid about applying makeup to your face, publicly, then use the back of your hand.

Dear Miss Dee: How can I make my manicure last longer?

Use a top coat, darling, over your favorite nail color. A top coat also provides a more professional look, such as you'd receive at a salon.

Dear Miss Dee: How can I bring out the natural color in my eyes?

To enhance your eyes, use shades that match the peaks and highlights. Or, if you wear contacts, try wearing a color that brightens your eyes. They are distinctively feminine and attractive.

Dear Miss Dee: Help! My lashes are very sensitive and fall out easily when I use an eyelash curler. How can I protect them while keeping the curl?

Eyelash curlers can not only be painful, darling, but they can also be damaging if you don't use them correctly. For dramatically curled lashes, without using an eyelash curler, try L'Oréal's new Le Grand Curl mascara. And never ever retire before removing your mascara.

Dear Miss Dee: I am very active, but I also like my nails to look good. What do you suggest?

For you girls on the go, try quick dry nail enamels.

Dear Miss Dee: I like to wear eye shadow, but I don't like it to look too obvious.

For a sophisticated look try shimmery, translucent shades that accent and highlight the eye area, yet are not overbearing. Try lighter colors.

Dear Miss Dee: How can I prevent my skin from looking oily?

To minimize greasiness, use a foundation or powder that's less moisturizing, or one that's formulated specifically for oily skin.

Dear Miss Dee: I hate when my lipstick feathers and bleeds outside my lip line. How can I prevent this?

To prevent lipstick from running, line the edge of your lips with a liner, either clear or a color that coordinates with your lipstick.

Dear Miss Dee: I use different foundations for Summer and Winter, but I don't want to throw away a half-full bottle the next season. Does foundation expire?

Most liquid foundations are good for up to two years. However, some will separate after a while leaving shade pigments un-mixed with the foundation formula. Unlike nail polish, shaking the bottle will not re-mix them To ensure even coverage, I'd recommend renewing after a year.

Well, girls, I have my own parties and social events to attend. And, naturally, I want to look my best. So, stop by again in a few weeks. However, if you have a pressing problem that needs immediate attention, feel free to write to me at Dianic007@aol.com.

Your Hair Piece

A Woman's Crown

A woman's hair is her crowning glory. In a very real sense, her hair is the crown that adorns her as she presents herself to the world. If you are a crossdresser, you cannot devote too much importance to your selection of a hair piece.

The better salons will not even call it a wig. A wig is a cover up. The better salons sell hair pieces -- the implication being that they sell hair that enhances your existing crown. If the salon calls it a wig, there is every possibility that it is little more than a cover up, and that it will look like a cover up.

A woman can be legally blind and still be able to detect if a girl friend is wearing a wig. This provides an indication of how important the look of hair is to a woman. A crossdresser needs to be equally as concerned.

A better quality hair piece -- one for total coverage, will cost between \$100 and \$180 dollars. They are synthetic, usually modacrylic, and are the easiest to style. They are also available in a wide assortment of colors. Some styles even include a modest amount of gray hairs for a more mature presentation.

Hair pieces composed of real-hair can range from \$200 dollars to well over a thousand dollars -- depending on how it is constructed and the quality of the hair being used. At these prices, the salon should be able to cut and style the hair piece to suit the facial structure of the patron. The cut and style of a hair piece can be as important as the hair piece itself. An inappropriate cut or style can make even the most expensive hair piece no more chic than a \$30 wig purchased at K-Mart or Sally's Beauty Supply store.

When I first began going out crossdressed, it was not unusual to find crossdressers who had done their best to look like prostitutes. Skirts were worn with hems that were much too high, boobs were outrageous, and the shoes never matched the outfit. Today's crossdresser, as a result of TG Forum and other information services, is much better informed. Today nearly every crossdresser understands that it is not chic to look cheap.

Shopping At Home

Not every crossdresser is in a position to go out shopping for a hair piece. Few crossdressers want their crossdressing to become the main topic of office gossip. Unfortunately, there is still the perception that crossdressing is a socially unacceptable activity. Consequently, many crossdressers feel guilty about their desire to crossdress. I assure you that the guilt is unfounded.

More serious crimes are committed in the Congress of the United States than has ever been committed in a lady's closet.

In any event, the TG Forum Shopping Mall supplies links to several excellent vendors who are able to provide a hair piece that can match the price, color, and style choices of even the most discriminating lady.

Crossdressers who choose to shop on-line will want to consider hair color, style, facial structure, and quality.

Color

Choose a hair color that is reasonably close to your own. Such genetic traits as skin tone, eye color and hair color, are closely related. Dramatic deviations from your natural color scheme are likely to create a contrast that will draw unwanted attention from the general public.

A waist-length blond wig worn by a crossdresser with dark brown eyes and brows, along with a ruddy complexion will look unnatural and out of place. It is acceptable, however, to get a curlier style even if your own hair is straight, or a straighter style if your hair is curly. However, pay close attention to your facial structure. Straight styles tend to exaggerate an angular face and make it appear even more masculine.

Style

The models employed to present hair pieces are professionals. They have made a career out of looking attractive. No hair piece can substitute for the variety of skills such women have mastered.

Typically, males have much larger and more pronounced jaw and chin lines. Again, care should be taken not to choose a style that exaggerates masculine features.

Facial Structure

When looking at the models in the catalogue, look for women who have basic face shapes similar to your own, even if you don't like the hair piece. This will give you an idea of what best suits your facial type -- round, oval, rectangular or square.

Avoid styles that part down the middle or those that leave the forehead exposed. Heavy bangs can make a high forehead more pronounced. This, too, is undesirable. Light bangs are acceptable. They minimize the size of the forehead.

Long hair, extending down the sides of a face help to disguise the size and shape of more masculine facial features. Hair that reaches the shoulders also masks the broadness of the shoulders.

Quality

Cheap looks cheap. The quality of the hair piece is very important. The hair should move convincingly with movement of your head or from the wind. Revlon and Naomi Simms both makes excellent hair pieces that are popularly priced.

If you need answers to more specific questions concerning your hair, or if you would like to comment about the article, I can be reached via e-mail

Love & Peace
Roberta Angela Dee

Roberta's Beauty Tips

Beautiful Eyes

By Roberta Angela Dee

Have you ever studied a woman's bare face -- a face with no makeup. No foundation, lipstick, mascara, shadow, eyeliner. Even without makeup, a woman has five sex-specific characteristics that help define her femininity:

- forehead
- small and more sharply define nose
- smaller ears
- more tapered chin
- her eyes

Each of these features, if not properly addressed, will minimize the naturally feminine image that a cross dresser hopes to achieve.

Recently, I discussed hair pieces. A well-fitted hair piece can be used to mask prominent ears and a masculine forehead. It's why I stressed the importance of a quality hair piece.

Any masculinity attributable to the nose or chin can be minimized through a creative use of makeup. For the nose, one needs to add a highlight (lighter color) down the middle of the nose. The lighter color creates the illusion of height and serves to make the nose appear sharper and smaller -- more feminine.

A square mannish skin needs to be softened. This can be accomplished with just a hint of blush. However, before you add blush make sure you used a good foundation -- one that provides superior coverage. I always suggest Flori Roberts (Dermablend). It provides excellent coverage and it's waterproof.

Always use a pressed powder to seal your makeup, and to prevent it from rubbing off onto your clothing or someone else's clothing. Again, remember that just a hint of blush will suffice. Use too much, and it will make you look clownish.

The eyes require patience. If your eye liner is unevenly drawn or too heavy, it will not look feminine at all. Take your time.

Now, your eyes and face are beautiful, but if you skip the details, you'll have a "not-quite finished look." For a complete and finished look, you'll need to enhance your brows and lashes.

Your lashes should be arched and tapered. Some women can carry a thick brow, but not if they have any other more masculine feature. For a cross-dresser, the brow must be distinctively feminine.

The Steps

- Brush-on Brows
- Brow Set
- Lash Enhancer
- Mascara

Step 1. Brush Brows - (If Necessary). Brush brows, and darken light or thin brows. If you color your hair, are very fair or are graying, you may need to accent your brows. Select a color that matches your natural hair or original brow color. The Blond has reddish tints, Ash is slightly darker without any red tones, Charcoal works for very dark brown or black hair and Soft Smoke works for dark blondes and brunettes.

Tools: Brow Brush. Brush along the natural brow line. Very carefully use an eyeliner pencil to fill in any sparse areas. Make your brows noticeable, but not too dark. Use the Brow brush to brush through to remove any loose or excess powder

Step 2. Lash Enhancer Your mascara contains specially formulated fibers that lengthen and thicken thin lashes.

Tools: Mascara. Apply one coat of mascara, then top with a second coat of mascara to seal the fibers. If you wear contact lenses or have sensitive eyes, be careful to choose a brand of mascara suited to these conditions.

Mascara darkens and defines lashes to finish your eyes. Use Black if you have very dark eyes or for evening, otherwise, Brown (which is very dark, but not as harsh) is the color of choice. If you prefer, Dark Navy is also a good selection for blue, blue gray or gray eyes and Charcoal Green is an alternative for hazel, brown or green eyes. Both colors are very dark with just a tint of color, but much softer than black.

A Sensitive Eyes Mascara is suitable for everyone and is safe for contact lens wearers. A SuperLash Mascara is also fine for sensitive eyes and lengthens and thickens lashes. It is also water resistant and has tremendous staying power (you will need Eye Make-up Remover to get it off). A Waterproof Mascara will stay on even under water but is almost impossible to remove without eye make-up remover.

Longer wearing Mascaras often take a few seconds to dry (so you have an opportunity to remove clumps, which are almost impossible to remove once it is dry).

Progress Check

Your face should look almost finished and should appear very polished and balanced. Your lips should be the only "un-finished" part.

To Dress The Details Up for Evening

Be sure to do your brows for evening, if necessary. Look at a recent picture and see if you have eyebrows (even people with very dark brows may have noticeable "bare spots"). Apply an extra layer of mascara focusing on the tips. If you have very straight lashes, you should use an eyelash curler (before your mascara) to turn your lashes up.

Roberta On Makeup

Alpha Hydroxy Acids (AHAs)

By Roberta Angela Dee

Everyone is taking about alpha hydroxy acids (AHAs). Many claim they are as close to the proverbial Fountain of Youth as the cosmetic industry has ever promoted.

The AHAs can be found in a wide variety of cosmetics -- some costing as little as \$4.00 dollars for a one ounce tube of cleanser, to as much as \$125.00 dollars an ounce for a one ounce jar of moisturizer from any one of several leading cosmetic houses.

What are they supposed to do? Essentially, they claim accelerated skin repair; reduced signs of aging; diminution of wrinkles; thinning out of liver spots; evening the complexion; and creating a healthy glow. Such promises, as most women are aware, are nothing new from the cosmetic industry -- an industry that has always offered better promises than performance. To understand what alpha hydroxy acids can and cannot do, it is important to understand the acids themselves.

The first myth plaguing consumers is the idea that there is only one type of alpha hydroxy acid. Actually, there are four types, and some have been around for several years. However, they are all generally known as "fruit" acids: citric, lactic, glycolic, and tartaric.

1. Citric: Citric acid is derived from mold fermentation of carbohydrates and from such fruits as lemon, lime, and pineapple juice.
2. Glycolic: Glycolic acid (hydroxyacetic acid) occurs naturally in sugar cane syrup.
3. Lactic: Lactic acid is derived from starch, milk whey, and molasses.
4. Tartaric: Tartaric acid is a by-product of grape fermentation in the production of wine.

The chemical formula for synthetically produced citric acid is the same as that which occurs in Nature. So, technically, it's not precise to say it is synthetic. However, the other three AHAs -- glycolic, lactic, and tartaric -- may be synthetically produced.

Merely because a product contains an AHA or an hydroxy acid (AH) is not indicative of successful skin treatment. Dermatologists have used these acids for years as treatments for severely dry skin and eczema at concentrations of 12% or more. Over-the-counter treatments offer considerably less concentrations. So, it's not merely significant that a product contain an AHA, but also that it contain enough to work effectively.

For all the benefits, use an AHA or HA product with a pH between 3 and 4.5. Water has a pH of 7. Anything less than 7 is acidic, greater than 7 is alkaline.

The problem is that most cosmetic houses do not provide the consumer with the information required to make an informed decision. As a general rule of thumb, you get what you pay for. The least expensive products will not have a high enough concentration to be effective and may not be offered at the proper pH.

Estee Lauder's Fruition lotion is an excellent AHA in a buffered solution. Unfortunately, it is also heavily scented. Therefore, if you have sensitive skin, the product may cause undue irritation.

In fact, the combination of products that I use do not contain AHAs at all. The reason being is that I shave, and the act of shaving effectively removes several layers of dead skin.

My regime consists of using Basis Soap along with a very fine facial scrub such as is available through Fashion Fair, Flori Roberts, or Estee Lauder. I follow the cleansing with an unscented shaving cream or hair conditioner. Next, I use a toner that contains no alcohol or fragrance. And as a mantle for my makeup, I use Estee Lauders' Night Repair -- but there are several oil-free and unscented moisturizers that will work as well.

The combination of techniques I've described not only eliminates the five o'clock shadow but achieves many of the effects typically attributed to the use of AHAs.

And, again, write to me if you have any questions, or even just to say, "Hi, Roberta."

Stay Sweet, Girls
Roberta Angela Dee

The Corset

By Roberta Angela Dee

Those of you who know me, or those who recall my previous writings, already know that I take enormous pleasure in acquiring and examining old feminine garments. I am especially drawn to the lady's garments worn during the 19th century Victorian period. The delicate work of so many seamstresses serves as a sublime example of feminine herstory and talents.

A friend of mine, Helen, owns a quaint little shop in North Augusta, South Carolina where she sells only the finest corsets, bras and panties. Since Augusta, Georgia borders South Carolina, she is only 20 miles from my home, and I must confess to having visited her shop far more often than I have any need.

Helen is a good woman and a very good friend. She is 55 years old, but as bright eyed and articulate as any 20 year old girl you'd likely converse with today. And, she knows that I am transgendered and have never had, nor ever sought to have, an operation. Still, she has never treated me any differently than any of her other girl friends -- proving herself to be an extremely open-minded and kind human being.

Two weeks ago, Helen presented me with a hand-made reproduction of a corset and matching panty first produced over 100 years ago. The garment was fabricated from the very best silk and cotton. The lace was extraordinarily detailed and both garments matched perfectly.

To my astonishment, it was a gift to celebrate my 15th year living full-time as a woman. She even remembered my anniversary date of August 1. My normal measurements are 40B - 30 - 40. The corset, however removed 4 inches from my waist and pushed up my breasts. Wearing the corset, I looked to be 40C - 26 - 40. And, yes, that hour-glass shape did make even the ladies in the shop turn and take notice.

Helen added some Lycra material to the panty to keep me secured in front and to lift my buttocks. The corset and panty, along with white hose, was truly a sight to behold.

Do any of you share my fascination with Victorian corsets and lingerie? Please write, if you do. Or, send your e-mail to RADANGLE@aol.com.

The Corset and the Waist: Rectangles and Pears

by Roberta Angela Dee

Most people have seen a professional female impersonator and find ourselves amazed at how well a male can mimic female behavior and appearance. Then, there are cross dressers who are just as successful as the professional entertainer, and there are those who are assessed as a "faux female" from 100 yards.

The difference between the amateur and the professional is, of course, the amount of detail that goes into the impersonation. The average cross dresser simply hasn't the time, resources or opportunity to impersonate a woman so well that he would not be detected or "read" in public.

One reason so many cross dressers fail to "pass" in public is that they don't appreciate the importance of presenting a physical proportion that is feminine.

Even a child, by the time he or she is three years old, has learned to recognize that men basically appear to be rectangular while women tend to be more pear shaped. Equally important is the physical proportion and location of a woman's waist as compared to a man's waist. A woman's waist tends to be smaller than a man who is equally as tall. A woman also measures her waist an inch above the navel, where as a man measures his waist an inch below. These two differences make for a remarkable difference as one examines male and female form.

Look at the average woman, even from a considerable distance, and you'll see that her hips are wider than the span of her shoulders. Again, men differ.

Most men are broader at the shoulder than they are at the hip.

The Waist Nipper

A week ago, I tried a little experiment with a waist nipper. They used to be called waist cinchers. They're different names for the same feminine undergarment. The particular waist nipper was purchased at J C Penney, for about \$21 dollars, and was made out of Lycra – a type of synthetic material used to make form fitting garments.

My waist size is 32-inches. So, I purchased a waist nipper 4-inches smaller than my actual waist. I wore the waist nipper for about 8 hours, removed it, then measured my waist again. This time my waist measures 30-inches. This reduction was only temporary, and within an hour my waist returned to its normal size. However, my experiment did prove that the waist would respond to being kept in a restrictive garment for a period of time.

What I found so wonderful about the waist nipper is that while wearing it, the garment accentuated my buttocks and made my hips appear to be wider - even without any padding. The overall feminine appearance provided by this one garment, costing only \$21 dollars, was absolutely incredible. And whether I wore a dress or trousers, my feminine physique was enhanced by wearing the waist nipper.

The Corset

At this point, every serious transgendered woman or cross dresser should be asking, "Is there a way I can permanently reduce the size of my waist to project a more feminine physique?" The

answer is "yes", but it will not be inexpensive and will require a certain amount of diligent effort and commitment.

You will need to be fitted (or at least sized) by a professional corseter. These corsets range in price from \$150 dollars, to an average of \$300 dollars. Corsets made of leather, PVC or rubber can cost several thousand dollars. So, there's a financial investment as well.

However, a good corset, if properly maintenance, tends to go up in value.

The reason it's necessary to be properly fitted is that a transgendered woman or cross dresser will need to reduce the waist at the "feminine waist line"-- the circumference measured an inch above the navel.

Another point to take into consideration is your "ideal weight" or the weight which you tend to maintain. Corseting to reduce the waistline, then dieting to lose 10 or more pounds, defeats the purpose of waist training.

The final commitment is time. You will need to wear your corset most of the day, taking it off only for the purpose of hygiene. And you will need to wear it for a minimum of 6 months to see permanent results. The corset should be sized to be 4-inches less than your actual waist. And when you reach the desired reduction, you'll need to purchase another corset, if your desire is a more pronounced hour-glass figure.

Links

You'll find a good deal more information and get a better idea of what's involved by visiting the following web sites. If you contact any of these businesses - either personally or through electronic mail (e-mail), please be kind enough to let the salesperson know you were referred by Roberta Angela Dee through TG Forum. You may print this article so as to have a handy reference of the resources provided.

- ROMANTASY <http://www.romantasy.com>
- YAHOO! Arts: Design Arts: Fashion: Undergarments: Corsets
http://www.yahoo.com.Arts/Design_Arts/Fashion/Undergarments/Corsets/
- Corsets <http://www.tiac.net/users/chrisd/corsets.htm>
- Corsetry 101 Description <http://www.woranj.com/c101.html>
- Dark Garden Corsetry <http://www.divaweb.com/darkgdn4.html>
- Victorian Style Corsets <http://www.infrared-corsets.on.ca/desc.html>
- Long Island Lacing (This site is one of my favorites) <http://staylace.com/lectures.htm> or <http://www.staylace.com>

For custom work, I personally recommend B.R. Creations. Ruth runs B.R. Creations, and she's one of the finest women you'd ever want to communicate with. Her address is: B.R. Creations Post Office Box 4201 Mountain View, CA 94040

Ruth is dedicated to the art of corsetry. Her corsets are intended for daily wear (waist training) and are very durable. She also produces a newsletter six times each year. Her color catalog is \$7.00. The newsletter is \$18.00.

Have fun, girls!

With a Loving Heart, Roberta Angela Dee

Twenty Ways To Look More Beautiful

By Roberta Angela Dee

MEN AND WOMEN

Have you ever heard women comment that men just don't listen? Have you ever wondered why?

The answer is simple. Men tend to be physical. Women tend to be more sensual and emotional. This is not, as some feminists might suggest, merely a stereotype. Nor is it the result of women being nurtured a particular way.

Science has recently discovered that women have a gene on their X-chromosome that makes them more social and more adaptable, socially, than men. Transgendered women may not have this gene, but we can learn to benefit from the role it plays in the lives of biological women.

WHAT MAKES A WOMAN BEAUTIFUL?

We can naturally ascribe a certain amount of beauty to hair, fashion, and makeup. However, most of us understand that our physical health is equally as important. It's difficult to look or feel pretty, if one's good health has failed. There is, however, another -- equally important -- component to a woman's beauty: a woman's emotional well being.

Women take time to nurture their emotional well being because they understand that it affects how they will look. The weekend cross dresser might know the best beauty tips and makeup secrets, but she's not going to be able to project that beauty, if she's harboring negative feelings and emotions. If the inner beauty is absent, then the outer beauty will not have its special glow.

I've compiled 20 simple rituals we can add to our daily lives to nurture our inner beauty. Men might not feel these things are important, but every beautiful woman relies on them as much as her favorite tube of lipstick or favorite eye makeup.

You need not incorporate all 20 routines into your daily life. You should, however, incorporate as many as possible. You should also feel encouraged to improvise and be creative.

As transgendered women we learn to compensate for many of the things we did not receive at birth. Now, let's see how we can compensate for that missing gene as well.

TWENTY WAYS TO LOOK MORE BEAUTIFUL

1. Find the time to spend an hour on the deck or patio, listening to soothing music while sipping herbal tea. Look at your environment and feel how wonderful it is merely to be alive.
2. Do something nice for someone. Even if it's just to say hello to an elderly neighbor who might not receive very many visitors. You'll feel better too.
3. Talk to your children about the things that interest them. Their innocence and naiveté can refresh your own outlook on life. It also tells them that you care about them as human beings, and not just the subjects of your will and guidance.
4. If you can't dress en femme, at least find something that's unisex in nature that allows you feel pretty inside where it matters most. If you haven't anything that's unisex, then browse

- through a catalog for something to buy. Some lady's fashions are asexual enough to be worn by a man and still provide just a hint of femininity.
5. Take a walk, If it's a beautiful day, you'll benefit as much from the exercise as you will from taking in the sights at less than 35 miles per hour. You'll be surprised at how much you miss just driving by each day.
 6. Do something special for a co-worker. Offer to help on an important project. He or she might not accept your offer, but the gesture will be appreciated.
 7. Take time to reflect on some of what you've experience -- as a woman, as a lover, as a teacher or as a worker.
 8. Start a diary. And select a half hour each day to sit in your favorite chair and record the day's events.
 9. Put something colorful together, whether it's a floral arrangement, or the clothes in your wardrobe.
 10. Look in the mirror and smile. Now, there's a nice lady!
 11. Take a nice long bubble bath in warm sudsy water. Light candles and play relaxing music. Drift away.
 12. Wear something silky. Anything silky makes me feel pretty.
 13. Pamper your face. A moisturizing mask or a clay mask -- depending on your skin type. Don't just do it before putting on makeup. Do it because you love your face and want it to reflect the love you feel inside.
 14. Go cycling. Riding a bike is wonderful exercise.
 15. Now, where's that novel you purchased but never had time to read. Devote so much time each day to read it.
 16. Browse through a book of inspirational verses. The verses themselves are not always profound, but they can ignite your imagination and help you learn to be a more creative woman.
 17. Arrange your panties on a white bed sheet and take photos. See how creative you can be with your panty portraits. Other women will love it.
 18. Deep condition your hair. When was the last time you used anything other than an instant conditioner?
 19. Practice smiling while you speak. It will change your vocal inflections and make them more feminine. Women sometimes will even try to smile while providing an account of an unpleasant experience. You need to smile more too.
 20. Be yourself. Be true to yourself. And be happy being who you are.

Love & Peace
Roberta Angela Dee

Voice Training

She Looks Like A Woman, But He Sounds Like A Man

By Roberta Angela Dee

I was only 4 years old when I realized that in spite of my male anatomy, I was emotionally and psychologically female. By the age of 13 years, I knew as much about choosing a wardrobe and wearing makeup as most girls my age. However, a very serious problem arose as I began to grow a mustache and my voice became more masculine.

Hair removal was resolved simply enough. But what could I do about my voice?

Today, many transgendered women along with male-to-female transsexuals have surgery to alter the length of their vocal cords. They then attend sessions on voice training to achieve a more feminine voice.

At 13 years, I was neither in a position, nor could I afford surgery or a vocal coach. I learned through listening and quickly noted that the two most prominent differences between a masculine voice and a feminine voice were pitch and use of inflections.

Women speak in a higher tone of voice and their use of inflections is distinctive to their gender. Today, many women speak with what I refer to as a questioning tone. It's a particular style of speech that borders on the stereotype of Valley girl speech where a woman saying, My name is Roberta Angela Dee, sounds as if she's asking a question: My name is Roberta Angela Dee?

This very distinctively feminine style takes a good deal of practice and it is best learned through conversations with other women. For the beginner, it is best to focus on pitch and use of inflections.

My own technique involved purchasing an inexpensive portable tape recorder -- not the kind that uses a micro cassette, but the one that uses a full-size cassette.

I practiced speaking into the recorder until I found a pitch that seemed realistic. At least once a day, I would read any type of text available. I tried to remember that most women tend towards cheerful, non-threatening voices.

My true life test consisted of calling a department store and asking for a particular cosmetic line. I would then ask for lipstick or nail polish in a shade that I knew was popular with that particular product line. Sometimes, I'd call the lingerie department and ask if they had a demi bra by Bali in a 36A.

If the sales clerk responded by saying, Yes, sir or No, sir then I knew my pitch was too low or that my inflections were too male-like. Or, if the sales clerk seemed especially distant and cool to my questions, then she was probably suspicious.

Using these techniques, I was able to convincingly speak with a feminine voice within two months. I could also maintain an elevated tone and converse comfortably with another woman.

The keywords, ladies, for speaking with a feminine voice, are PRACTICE and PERSEVERANCE.

Affectionately,
Roberta Angela Dee