

Beauty Test Drive: Mother Dirt Is Live Bacteria For Cleaning Your Body (And It Actually Works)

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I like to think of myself as a friend to Mother Nature. I have a plastic-free home, I use charcoal filters in my water instead of a Brita, I switched my energy to solar and wind, and I buy my dog biodegradable poop bags.

But I'm certainly not anywhere near as committed to nature and eco-friendliness as many other people are. I hate hiking and Tom's toothpaste. I merely dabble in the *idea* of composting, and I only switched to natural deodorant a few months ago. I believe woman can live on bread, wine, and cheese alone. You wouldn't look at me and think, "Oh yeah, that's a lady who bathes in live bacteria." But, for the past few weeks, in the name of beauty and science, I've been doing just that. And, as most things in my life do, this journey starts with my sister.

A few months ago, she emailed me with links to articles in [Bloomberg](#) and [The New York Times](#), both talking about a new company called Mother Dirt whose "biome-friendly" beauty products are made of live bacteria. The company's premise is simple: when we shower with soaps and shampoos, we are stripping our bodies of the natural bacteria that we need to regulate our skin and keep it healthy. By adding AOB's (ammonia-oxidizing bacteria) to our skincare, we are replenishing "the necessary ecosystem in our skin's microbiome."

I regularly troll all the large beauty sites and had never heard of Mother Dirt, so I didn't think much of it, figuring my sister was just going down an Internet rabbit hole. Needless to say, I promptly forgot all about it. That is, until my birthday, when I woke up to a big old package full of Mother Dirt products, care of my sister. I was equal parts terrified and thrilled to try them, not wanting to wreak havoc on my skin but always down try something new. So after a bit of research, I decided that I would dive wholeheartedly into the Mother Dirt system and see if it truly made a difference.

There are three products that you can use either together or separately, depending on your budget and whatever level of maintenance works for you. I got all three: the [Shampoo](#), the [Face+Body Cleanser](#), and the [AO+ Mist](#). The first thing I'll say about them is that they cut my shower time in half. Since I was going from using four products on average (shampoo, conditioner, facial cleanser, soap) to two products, I was in and out of the

shower in just a couple minutes, which is always pleasant! Am I the only one who finds showering to be completely tedious?

The shampoo has the consistency of a thin, watery gel, which made it a bit difficult to apply evenly throughout my hair. After a few days of troubleshooting, I ended up just pumping the shampoo straight onto my head, which probably resulted in wasting quite a bit. The first few days I didn't use a conditioner, since I wanted to see what the true results would be, but I couldn't hold out for too long since my hair is thick and prone to tangling. I don't know if it affected the results of the shampoo once I started conditioning again (I assume it did), but I didn't find that it was any different either way. My hair felt very clean and smelled really good. I was hoping I would be able to go slightly longer between washes, but it seemed to work just as well as a regular shampoo. I wasn't necessarily disappointed with it, just slightly underwhelmed.

A note: I'd like to add that I have continued using my natural, baking soda-free [deodorant](#) while also using Mother Dirt, but I don't think it

interfered with the soap and mist TOO much. It's basically just lavender oil, but I couldn't just go cold turkey on the deodorant front, you guys. I'm not that confident.

If I'm being completely honest, I was VERY nervous about using the Face+Body Cleanser. I mean, I've had some excruciating UTIs in the past, and the thought of putting live bacteria anywhere near my vagina made my stomach churn. But it specifically says on the Mother Dirt website (where I spent a very long time reading every iota of information before I began) that you should use the cleanser and the spray on your junk, so I hoped for the best and went for it! It comes out of the container as a thick foam, and when you use it you feel CLEAN. Like, instantly extremely squeaky-clean.

Initially, I worried this meant that the cleanser would be very drying, especially on my precious little face skin. But I'm happy to report that no such thing happened, and my skin stayed in its completely normal and boring state. I stopped using it on my face after a couple weeks, because I

didn't feel it was really doing anything for it that my regular facial cleansers weren't already doing, but I kept at it on the rest of my bod. It's the most satisfying clean I've ever felt, and that feeling lasts much longer than if I was usually regular body wash.

I'm as stinky as the next person. Running up and down subway steps, climbing up a five-story walkup to work every day, fighting the patriarchy, walking the dog, and social anxiety can make a person a little funky. I woke up one morning a few days into my Mother Dirt experiment, after having not showered for 24 hours, and my boyfriend leaned over, and completely unprompted said, "You smell good." THIS NEVER HAPPENS. I chalk this up 100 percent to the body cleanser combined with the spray.

Which brings me to the AO+ Mist. It is without a doubt my favorite of the three products and I think the real reason that I felt and smelled so clean and fresh. You spray it all over your body, including your scalp,

twice a day. I kept it in the fridge so it would have a longer shelf life, which meant some seriously uncomfortably cold spritzing in the early mornings, but it was so worth it. The mist has a bit of a green or earthy smell that fades after a while, but the best way to describe it is CLEAN. Good clean. We've become so accustomed to associating a clean smell with the actual scent of soap, but this cleanser and spray made me realize what my skin actually smells like when it's clean. And it smells GOOD. I SMELL SO GOOD ALL THE TIME, YOU GUYS. The mist was the first product that Mother Dirt developed and in my opinion it is the best of the bunch.

It's been a few weeks now, and I'm still going strong with the Mother Dirt trio. I am really happy with them. They feel high-end, the packaging is simple and aesthetically pleasing, and I appreciate the company's commitment to transparency. The shampoo and cleanser expire after a month, so the combined \$30 price tag is not necessarily realistic for the long-term. The spray is significantly more expensive, coming in around

\$50, but when refrigerated can last up to six months. If it actually does last that long, it is definitely worth the price since it seems to be the most effective of the three. I can actually see myself splurging on it when I run out, simply because I am obsessed with the way it makes me smell. And that's good enough a reason as any, right?

So, anyone else dabbling in live bacteria these days? It's just me, isn't it?

[[Mother Dirt](#)]