

Ancient Sunrise® Henna as Part of a Pedicure

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Henna is part of a pedicure in countries where henna is a tradition. Henna is often applied in the shape of a shoe, on the sole and across the bridge of the toes. Hennaed feet are not only admirable, they are functional.

Do not oil or lotion the feet before applying henna; oils and lotions hinder lawsone migration into the skin, and prevent the henna from saturating and leaving a dark and beautiful stain. Paraffin foot dips also prevent the henna from staining the skin and from doing the useful things that henna can do for feet. Henna has been traditionally used to comfort swollen,² sore, and fatigued feet,³ and to prevent skin cracking. Henna has been part of traditional therapy for the podiatric problems of diabetes.⁴ Henna can also rid feet of athlete's foot and help prevent toenail fungus.⁵

¹ Henna art by Catherine Cartwright-Jones, with Becoming Moonlight® gilding

² Gupta, S., Ali, M., Pillai, K. K., Sarwar Alam, M. 1993. "Evaluation of anti-inflammatory activity of some constituents of *Lawsonia inermis*" *Fitoterapia*, Volume 64, Issue 4, 1993, Pages 365-366

³ Imam, H., Uddin Mahbub, N., Khan, F., Kabir Hana, H., Rahman Sarker, M. 2013. "Alpha amylase enzyme inhibitory and anti-inflammatory effect of *Lawsonia inermis*." *Pakistan Journal of Biological Sciences* Volume 16, Issue 23, 2013, Pages 1796-1800

⁴ Bakhotmah, Balkees A., and Hasan A. Alzahrani. 2010. "Self-reported use of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) products in topical treatment of diabetic foot disorders by diabetic patients in Jeddah, Western Saudi Arabia." *BMC Research Notes* 3, 254-261.

⁵ Berenji, Fariba, Hassan Rakhshandeh, and Homeyra Ebrahimipour. 2010. "In vitro study of the effects of henna extracts (*Lawsonia inermis*) on *Malassezia* species."

Let the person to be hennaed get comfortable lying on their belly on a massage table, or some other elevated comfortable platform, bed, or sofa. This will allow both the person who is having their feet hennaed, and the person applying the henna to be comfortable. Cover the area under their feet with a towel. The person applying the henna should put on gloves to prevent hands being stained by the henna.

Mix henna or thaw some henna that has already been frozen and mixed.⁶ Wash and dry the person's feet, and pumice any cracks and callouses.



A small stick or spatula, even plastic spoons and knives are convenient application tools. West African artists apply tiny strips of medical tape patterns to create stencil patterns on the foot; then they apply henna over the tape. When the henna and tape are removed, beautifully patterned stains are revealed.

A person can henna her own feet, but it takes some flexibility and dexterity.

⁶ Follow instructions in Chapter 7, Mixing and Testing Your Henna Mix



Apply henna paste on the sole of a foot.



Apply the henna generously in between the toes. If there is any fungal infection between the toes, such as athlete's foot, this application of henna can eliminate it.⁷



Continue the application henna over and between the toes. Henna the opposite foot in the same way.



⁷ Berenji, Fariba, Hassan Rakhshandeh, and Homeyra Ebrahimipour. 2010. "In vitro study of the effects of henna extracts (*Lawsonia inermis*) on *Malassezia* species." *Jundishapur Journal of Microbiology* 3, no. 3: 125-128.

Allow the person to roll over and sit up, and continue the henna application to the top of the toes. Apply the henna paste around the foot into the shape of a shoe or little slipper.



If it seems difficult to shape the henna with a stick and you want to have a tidy line at the top and sides of the foot, draw the line first with a henna cone, and then fill in the rest of the top of the foot up to the henna line. West African henna artists make a perfect top edge to a ‘henna slipper’ by applying medical tape and pushing henna to the edge of the tape.





Use a blow dryer to dry the henna paste. Wrap the foot with toilet paper or strips of a paper towel. Be careful to not smear the henna as you wrap. When you've wrapped the foot with several layers of paper, wrap cling wrap around the foot. This will make it possible to walk around without leaving henna crumbs on the floor.





The wrap will keep the henna warm and slightly moist on the feet. Leave the henna on the feet for two hours or more. If you apply henna to the feet during the hours that henna is staining your hair, you'll get a beautiful dark color.

When the skin is stained bright orange, remove the wraps and scrape off as much paste as you can easily remove so that there will be less to rinse away.





Slip the hennaed feet into a pan of warm distilled or filtered water to finish removing the henna. Rinse off the rest of the henna paste.



The henna stains on soles will last a few weeks. The stain on the great toenail may last for several months, as the nail slowly grows out. If you henna your feet once a week, you'll always have henna slippers and polished toenails.

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The henna will darken on the skin over a few days. Toenail stains will darken to deep ruby or chestnut color as seen below. You can adorn 'henna shoes' with henna patterns or Becoming Moonlight® gilding techniques.



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