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Why millennials are fixated on jade rollers, ancient Chinese beauty tools

n ancient Chinese skin-care tool purchased on Amazon and priced at \$7.98? This was beauty superinfluencer Marianna Hewitt's top-selling affiliate-linked product in 2017, according to Reward Style, the influencer network that helps content creators monetize their content. The aforementioned beauty tool — known as a jade roller — accounted for thousands of units sold. Hewitt linked to the jade roller from a video she posted to her YouTube account in July, a tutorial request from curious followers who responded to an Instagram story of her using the tool on herself.

"The video did really well, better than the average video [on my account] and it's one of those evergreen videos that gets watched over and over — it gets shared a lot," said Hewitt. "Everyone is interested in it — they've either seen it and they want to know how to use it, or they've never seen it before and want to know what it is."

So what exactly is a jade roller? The actual tool is essentially a tiny rolling pin made of jade stone, designed to be swept across the face for a cooling sensation and anti-inflammatory, lymph-draining effect. Its origin story is vague, but most brands that sell the roller concur that it has been used in Chinese beauty rituals for centuries. The rollers are also said to have mystical powers, as the jade stone itself is said to represent healing and protection and promote qualities such as wisdom, balance and peace.

Hewitt discovered the jade roller in a story she read online last year, and was quick to share her find with her 784,000 Instagram followers.

"Of course, the first thing I ever do is search to buy on Amazon, and they were only like \$7, so of course I added to cart," said Hewitt of the jade roller. "Maybe if the price point was higher, I wouldn't have impulse-bought it. There are also a lot more advanced tools out there, but this is pretty simple — once I got around to playing with it and using it on my Instagram stories, my followers were like, 'Oh my God, can you make a video?"



Other brands have seen similar success with the jade roller.

Dr. Lamees Hamdan of Shiffa, the Dubai-based luxury natural skin-care brand, was an early adopter of the jade roller, adding it to her line a few years ago after clients who went in for an exclusive Shiffa facial at the Peninsula Hotel Spa in Beverly Hills inquired as to where they could buy "the thing you used on me at the end." Hamdan began rolling out Shiffa — it's a top-selling skin-care brand at Sephora in the Middle East — to wide retail distribution in the U.S. in January, and her \$63 jade roller instantly sold out at Nordstrom. The retailer restocked twice, and promptly sold out both times, despite the fact that Hamdan's tool is priced significantly higher than the \$7.98 version Hewitt linked to. Hamdan attributes the price difference to the quality of the jade she uses. "I've seen the \$7 rollers, and they're usually not real jade — there's bits of plastic in them." Of the tool and its use, she said: "It's easy. You don't necessarily need a degree in lymphatic massage to figure it out. Clients have gone back to basics, they realize there's benefits to lymphatic drainage massage."

