

## **Tips for relieving dry skin.**

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For many people, the cold days of winter bring more than just a rosy glow to the cheeks. Uncomfortable dryness on the face, hands, and feet. For some people, the problem is worse than just a dry feeling: Their skin gets so dry that it results in flaking, cracking, even eczema (in which the skin becomes inflamed).

Following the same skin care routine that worked so well in our youth can take a toll on aging skin - especially when the humidity drops. Mature skin is thinner and drier. Dry air can make fine lines and wrinkles more noticeable. It can make skin flake, crack, and even bleed. To help alleviate these unwanted effects, dermatologists recommend:

**1. Take daily Bath** A daily bath or shower can add much-needed moisture to the skin. To hydrate the skin with a daily bath or shower, follow these guidelines:

" Keep it short A 5- to 10-minutes bath or shower adds moisture. If you spend more time in the water, the skin begins to dry.

" Use warm, not hot, water Hot water removes natural oils from the skin more quickly than warm water. The more natural oils removed, the drier the skin becomes.

" Close the bathroom door This keeps the much-needed humidity in the room.

" Use a mild cleanser Deodorant bars, fragrance in soaps, and products containing alcohol strip natural oils from the skin, leaving the skin dry. Look for a mild, fragrance-free cleanser that moisturises.

" Gently pat the skin dry Gently blotting the skin helps retain moisture and is less irritating to dry, sensitive skin.

" Apply moisturizer within 3 minutes of getting out of the bath or shower Contrary to popular belief, moisturizer does not add moisture to the skin. Moisturizer traps existing water in the skin, preventing the water from evaporating. To trap water from a bath or shower in the skin, moisturizer must be applied within 3 minutes of bathing. Applied regularly, this helps decrease dryness and itching.

**2. Apply Moisturizer** Dry skin needs moisture. Applying moisturizer within 3 minutes of bathing seals in much-needed water. If skin is noticeably dry and uncomfortable, moisturizing more frequently throughout the day can help the skin heal. Consistent use of moisturizer will help

prevent dry skin from returning.

**3. Select moisturisers best suited to relieve dry skin** Ointments and creams tend to be more effective than lotions. Moisturizer does not need to be expensive to be effective. Look at the ingredients not the price. When selecting a moisturizer to soothe dry skin, look for products that contain lactic acid or urea. These help alleviate even severe dryness.

Hyaluronic acid, which naturally occurs in the skin and diminishes with age, can help the skin hold water. Dimethicone and glycerin help draw water to the skin and keep it there. Lanolin, mineral oil, and petrolatum (also known as petroleum jelly) effectively trap water in the skin.

**4. Check the ingredients on anti-aging products** Some anti-aging products contain retinoids or an alpha-hydroxy acid, which can irritate dry, itchy skin. Switching to a more moisturizing formula can bring relief.

**5. Read the ingredients on other skin care products** Using mild, unscented skin care products can help reduce irritation and make skin feel more comfortable. Deodorant soaps, alcohol-based toners, and products that contain fragrance can irritate dry, sensitive skin. Some people with mature skin find using mild, unscented products year round as it helps their skin feel better.

**6. Plug in a humidifier** A humidifier can add much-needed moisture to the air.

**7. Avoid wearing wool** Woolen materials and other rough fabrics can irritate dry skin, making the condition worse.

**8. Give hands the extra attention** Hands often show the effects of a dry environment more than any other part of the body.

**These tips may help hands heal and prevent future problems:**

" When outdoors in winter, wear gloves. This helps protect the skin from the cold, dry air, which can zap moisture from the skin.

" Apply hand cream after each wash, It is important not to skimp on hand washing which can remove harmful bacteria and viruses. Applying hand cream after each hand wash helps hands retain much-needed moisture. This is especially important for people who frequently immerse their hands in water throughout the day. If more relief is needed, dab petroleum jelly on the hands before bed.

" If hands are frequently immersed in water, wearing waterproof gloves can help protect the hands. Again, it is important not to skimp on hand washing.

**9. Wear sunscreen every day** This is probably one of the most important and difficult tips to remember. Even in the winter, exposure to the sun rays speeds up the aging process in the skin. This exposure increases the risk of developing dry skin, wrinkles, age spots, and spider veins. Daily use of a sunscreen can slow these sun-induced signs of aging and reduce the risk

of developing skin cancer. Dermatologists recommend wearing a broad-spectrum sunscreen with a Sun Protection Factor (SPF) of 30 or higher on skin exposed most to sunlight.

**10. Apply lip balm** Carrying a tube of lip balm and applying it frequently throughout the day helps heal dry, cracked lips. If lips are extremely dry, dab on petroleum jelly before bed. Continuing to use lip balm once the lips heal can keep lips soft and supple. Dermatologists recommend using a lip balm that has an SPF of at least 15. This can help reduce signs of premature aging and prevent skin cancer on the lips.

### **When to See a Dermatologist**

If these changes do not bring relief, arrange an appointment to see a dermatologist. Very dry skin may require a prescription ointment or cream.

Dry skin also can be a sign of an underlying medical condition such as eczema. A type of eczema called asteatotic eczema develops in older adults. A dermatologist can examine the skin and explain well what will help alleviate the dryness and irritation.

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