

body



Winter Skin Primer

4 NATURAL WAYS TO HELP YOUR SKIN SURVIVE AND THRIVE THIS SEASON

BY RHEA MAZE

YEAR AFTER YEAR WHEN TEMPERATURES DROP, the combination of cold wind blowing outside and dry air emanating from heaters inside saps our skin's health and vitality. "Winter conditions dehydrate the skin, making it more susceptible to premature aging, hyperpigmentation and the development of fine lines," says aesthetician Susan Ardabili, owner of Susie Organic Skin Care in Denver with more than 20 years of skin-care experience, including working with a number of A-list celebrities like Jennifer Lopez and Nicole Kidman. Help your skin survive the season by getting back to the basics.

SHUTTERSTOCK



Even when going more basic and natural with your skin-care routine, you can still have allergic reactions. Be sure to always do a patch test when trying something new on your skin: Apply a small amount to the inside of your wrist, and monitor your skin's reaction. Try natural products from brands like Derma E, Kiss My Face and Mountain Ocean.



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HYDRATE

"Hydration is the first crucial step," Ardabili says. And that doesn't mean simply stocking up on face creams and moisturizers when cold weather arrives—you have to hydrate from the inside out. Drink plenty of water in addition to using a hydrating moisturizer daily.

If you consistently suffer from dry skin, add a bit of honey to your regular toner or moisturizer. Honey is an ultramoisturizing, natural humectant that draws moisture to the skin. And if you want to keep crow's feet at bay, place cucumber slices over your eyes when relaxing to rehydrate the eye area's delicate and vulnerable skin tissue.

For extra-rough skin on the hands, feet and elbows, try rubbing on olive, coconut or avocado oil, which provide a natural protective barrier that locks in moisture. Because these oils are rich and can clog pores, though, Ardabili doesn't recommend using them on your face.

REJUVENATE

Uncover your skin's natural radiance with a cleanser that gently sloughs away dry, dead skin. "Exfoliation is necessary for combating dull, dry skin," Ardabili says. "Your skin cannot absorb beneficial vitamins and nutrients you apply to it if your pores are clogged with dead skin, dirt and oil."

With everything we put onto our skin and come into contact with in the environment each day, it's crucial to let your skin breathe and recover at night. Don't go to sleep without first washing your face with a natural soap or gentle cleanser free of detergent chemicals and artificial fragrances and removing all makeup. For a natural makeup remover, mash a cucumber into a paste and add a bit of lemon juice and a drop of rosemary essential oil. "Lemon is cleansing, purifying and rejuvenating, and rosemary oil has powerful antioxidant properties and can help clear up blemished skin," Ardabili says.

NOURISH

Foods that are good for overall health are also good for your skin. A diet rich in antioxidants and healthy fats will help keep your skin clear and radiant. "Applying antioxidants directly to the skin is very important as well," Ardabili says. In general and especially in winter, Ardabili recommends using skin-care products that contain vitamins A and C, hyaluronic acid and alpha-hydroxy acids.

"Antioxidants such as vitamins A and C are great for boosting collagen production, softening fine lines and reducing hyper-pigmentation," Ardabili says. "Hyaluronic acid, which holds 1,000 times its weight in water, and alpha-hydroxy acids also help keep skin soft and smooth."

PROTECT

It's also important to use sun protection daily—even on the coldest, cloudiest winter days, when doing so seems unnecessary. Ultraviolet exposure is one of the leading causes of premature skin aging. The American Academy of Dermatology recommends applying a sunscreen with an SPF of 30 every day.

And because dry winter conditions are already aggravating your skin, don't exacerbate the irritation by subjecting your skin to extra-long, hot showers or harsh, drying soaps. The hot water actually robs your skin of its natural oils, resulting in more dryness.



Cinnamon Vanilla Sugar Body Scrub

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup white or brown sugar
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup oil (Try olive oil, which is antioxidant-rich, or coconut oil, which smells yummy and is extra-moisturizing. Opt for extra-virgin varieties; refined oils don't contain as many beneficial nutrients).
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon cinnamon
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon vanilla extract

Mix ingredients together and store in an airtight jar. Scrub skin with mixture as needed in the shower.