



Winter doesn't have to equal dry, flaky skin. With a little care and attention, you can keep it soft year-round.

# skin Rx

BY JESSICA RIDENOUR

**It's wintertime and the white flakes are everywhere—and we're not talking about the cold, fluffy kind suitable for skiing. As the outside temperature drops and the furnace fires up, the air's precious moisture seems to take a holiday, leaving skin parched, tight, and flaky. But you're not doomed to hibernate through the dry season. With the right care, inside and out, your skin can stay soft and smooth no matter how bitter the cold.**

What's the number one enemy of soft skin? Dry air. Unhumidified indoor heat and frigid outdoor air causes the water in our skin's cells to evaporate, leading to scratchy, sandpaper skin. Start beating winter dryness with a sensible skin care routine.

"Keep it nice and simple," says Dr. Andrea Cambio, a Manhattan dermatologist. She suggests starting with a gentle cleanser and keeping showers short. A nice hot shower may sound comforting on a cold day, but it is extremely drying to the skin. After bathing pat your skin dry (don't rub—it could irritate and overdry) and apply moisturizer all over your body, paying particular attention to elbows, knees, and hands (these spots tend to be the driest).



Slathering an emollient-rich body lotion onto damp skin seals in valuable moisture, maintaining the essential water/oil balance necessary to keep skin plumped up and healthy looking.

For your face, use a thicker moisturizer than you would use during warmer seasons (and reapply as necessary throughout the day). Dr. Cambio recommends finishing off with a broad-spectrum SPF 30 sun block on exposed skin. No matter what time of year, sun damage is a major contributor to dry skin.

Given winter skin's delicate condition, you'll want to avoid products with aggressive chemicals. Harsh soaps can suck moisture from skin, especially foamy, lathering cleansers. Also steer clear of artificial colors and fragrances.

"They serve no purpose in skin care, and in most cases they can sensitize and cause problems," says Joni Keim Loughran, skin care specialist and author of *Natural Skin Care: Alternative and Traditional Techniques*. Look for products with ingredients that you can pronounce and understand.

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Be aware that what goes inside your body is just as important as what you put on the outside. Of course, being sufficiently hydrated—that means drinking six to eight glasses of water a day—is critical for supple skin. A well-balanced diet that includes foods rich in antioxidants will combat free-radical damage spawned by environmental factors such as pollution and sun exposure. "Good" fats like those found in fish and nuts are important for fluid retention in skin cells.

"Essential fatty acids are critical—that's why they're called *essential*," says Loughran. In addition, go easy on alcohol and caffeine; they have a diuretic effect, causing skin cells to lose fluids and necessary minerals.

Other suggestions for fending off dry skin include using a humidifier (a pot of water simmering on the stove top will suffice), wearing low-friction fabrics like cotton, and exercising (it increases blood flow to the skin and boosts circulation, which is great for the skin in general).

Finally, Dr. Cambio warns, "If you have persistent dry skin and your moisturizers are not working, pay a visit to your dermatologist." Psoriasis and eczema can masquerade as simple dry skin. A doctor will be able to diagnose a more serious issue if that's the case.

All it takes is a little extra care, and your skin will weather the season beautifully! \*

#### THIS WINTER, REMEMBER:

- \* Select gentle, moisture-rich products.
- \* Avoid long, hot showers.
- \* Include "good" fats in your diet and drink plenty of water.
- \* See your dermatologist if nothing alleviates your dry skin.



## luscious, ecoconscious products that will treat your winter skin—organically

### FOR THE FACE

- \* **Alba Hawaiian Coconut Milk Facial Wash** is rich in natural antiseptic fatty acids to gently cleanse skin and rinse clean. **\$10** at natural food stores
- \* **Kiss My Face All Day Moisture Cream**, enriched with olive oil, vitamins, and aloe vera, will hydrate your skin all day long. **\$10** at natural food stores
- \* **Avalon Organics Ultimate Moisture Cream** delivers intensive dry-skin treatment with therapeutic lavender. **\$13** at natural food stores

### FOR THE BODY

- \* **The Body Shop's Body Butter** comes in decadent varieties like sesame, nut butter, and cocoa butter, among others. **\$16** at [www.bodyshop.com](http://www.bodyshop.com) or at Body Shop stores worldwide
- \* **Abra Moisture Revival Lotion** replenishes elasticity in extremely dry skin with jojoba and kukui oils. **\$9** at natural food stores
- \* **Nature's Gate Skin Therapy Lotion** soothes and protects with calendula, vitamin E, and sesame oil. **\$8** at natural food stores

### FOR THE HANDS

- \* **Jason Hemp Plus Hand & Body Lotion** is rich, creamy, and loaded with natural essential fatty acids. **\$11** at natural food stores
- \* **Aveda Hand Relief** uses hydrating plant emollients and exfoliating fruit acids to smooth rough hands. **\$7.50** at [www.aveda.com](http://www.aveda.com) or at Aveda stores worldwide
- \* **V'TAE Cuticle Crème** works to soften jagged cuticles. Handcrafted at a women-run company. **\$7** at [www.vtae.com](http://www.vtae.com)

### FOR THE FEET

- \* **EO Foot Balm** contains essential oils of lavender, peppermint, and tea tree to rejuvenate abused tootsies. **\$8** at natural food stores
- \* **Burt's Bees Coconut Foot Crème** works miracles on dry, crabby feet. **\$9** at [www.burtsbees.com](http://www.burtsbees.com) and select stores nationwide
- \* **Earth Therapeutics Moisturizing Foot Socks** work with your favorite moisturizer for maximum absorption. **\$6** at [www.mothernature.com](http://www.mothernature.com)