

Spring clean your skin



Bad weather, booze and central heating can take their toll on your skin. Here's how to protect and perfect yours.

Cold weather

"The cold weather can damage the skin's barrier," says Dr Nick Lowe, professor of dermatology at the Cranley Clinic in London. "Harsh winds, rain and cold temperatures will gradually break down the outer layers of skin, important for maintaining the skin's moisture content."

Going from cold air into warm buildings can further damage the skin's top layer, resulting in dry, grey-looking skin. Rain and wind are very aggressive on the surface of skin, but even on a bright sunny day the coldness in the air dehydrates your skin and leads to a duller and drier complexion.

So what can you do? "Add oils to your skincare regime," says A-list facial expert Nichola Joss who treats Kate Moss and Keira Knightley. "They're deeply nourishing and restore lost moisture. Do it every day, or as a once-a-week skin treat."

Massage the oil into your face firmly with your fingertips for at least a minute to bring the blood to the surface of your skin, leaving it hydrated and radiant. Nichola loves any type of rose, chamomile or lavender oil. Try Sanctuary Therapist's Secret Facial Oil (£17.50 for 30ml - a tiny drop goes a long way - from www.thesanctuary.co.uk and Boots).

Dr Lowe says you should swap your usual cleanser for a hydrating one when it's cold outside. "Oil cleansers, cream

cleansers and foaming ones with added moisture give your skin a moisture boost," he says. Try Sanctuary Ultimate Facial Oil (£12.99 for 150ml) or Dr Nick Lowe Secret is Out Cream Cleanser (£13.99 for 200ml, Boots).

Too much heating

Just as the cold weather can damage skin, so can too much heating.

"When our radiators are on full blast, there's less moisture in the air, which zaps moisture from the upper layers of your skin," Nichola says.

"This can cause skin to look dry and flaky. Bowls of water underneath radiators will help to keep moisture in the air.

"When it's cold, a hot bath seems appealing and nourishing, but it has the opposite effect - hot water dries out the skin. So turn down the temperature when you have a shower or bath."

Nichola also suggests adding oil to a bath. Try Champneys Spa Treatments Wild Rose Bath Oil (£9.50 for 75ml, available in Boots).

Hot baths and showers leech out protective skin surface oils, which leads to dryness that central heating makes worse. Dr Lowe advises ditching drying soaps and using oatmeal washes instead.

Use Aveeno Bath & Shower Oil in your bath, as it contains oatmeal and skin-softening oils (£7.59 for 250ml from Boots and supermarkets). Afterwards, apply Aveeno Skin Relief Moisturising Lotion, which contains oats and shea butter to soothe cold-chapped skin (£4.99 for 300ml).

REMEMBER THESE AREAS TOO

YOUR HAIR: Harsh cold winds and heating can leave hair tired and parched. Try Daniel Galvin Jr's Organic Head Detox Masque, which removes build-up from styling products and gives hair a moisture-boost thanks to a combination of castor oils, coconut and orange extract plus added vitamin E. It's £4 for 150ml, available from Morrisons stores nationwide.



THE BACKS OF YOUR HANDS: "Hands suffer terribly in winter and this can be very ageing," says Dr Nick Lowe, who recommends applying a rich hand cream several times a day - especially after washing up, washing your hands or after being outside. Try Jason Wheat Germ Vitamin E Hand & Body Lotion, which contains wheat germ oil, avocado oil and fatty acids (£6.99 for 250ml, available from www.feelunique.com).



LIPS: "Lips can dry out significantly at this time of year," says Dr Lowe. Don't lick them (this dries them out further) and apply Nivea Essential Care Lip Balm with jojoba oil and shea butter (£1.65 from Boots) regularly.



NECK: "Don't stop your skincare at your jawline," says Dr Lowe. "The neck is just as much at risk from winter conditions as the face, and a dry, wrinkled neck is incredibly ageing." So extend your face care (cleansers, serums, creams etc) down to your neck and across the top of your chest.

By Maria Lally

FIVE FOODS THAT FEED YOUR SKIN

1 GREEN TEA

A recent US study found that green tea

2 WALNUTS

They're a great source of omega-3

3 RASPBERRIES

A fantastic source of phytochemicals.

4 SPINACH

Bursting with vitamin A, which

5 TOMATOES

Full of lycopene, a powerful