

Quenching Dry Winter Skin

Dry, itchy skin is a common complaint throughout the year, but dryness caused by decreased humidity in the winter air along with heated air indoors can lead to a major problem with chapped, irritated skin for many in the winter months. To complicate matters, many of the lotions and creams on the market are full of chemicals that, although good for your skin, might not be so good for your internal organs and long-term health. However, a little mindfulness, some natural alternatives, and a few extra steps can help your skin to survive even the driest of winters, and you can manage it while moderating unnecessary chemical exposure.

The first step to maintaining your supple skin is to limit habits that promote dryness. Avoid stripping your skin of its natural oils. Decrease the length and heat of your shower or bath and your natural oils will be better preserved. Soaps (especially anti-bacterial soaps) further decrease natural oils and should be used sparingly when dry skin is an issue. Consider using soap—free or mild-soap cleansers. If you can get away with it, skip the daily shower or bath every day, or alternatively only rinse with water in order to preserve your natural oils. Once out of the shower, moisturize right away and before you are completely dry to both preserve natural oils left on the skin as well as promote absorption of the water left on your skin.

Having a humidifier in your house (especially while you sleep) will also greatly decrease dry skin. For an at-home moisturizing sauna, consider turning your shower water temperature higher as you are getting out and letting the bathroom steam up for a few minutes.

You can also prevent dry skin from the inside. The most obvious method is to drink plenty of water. Try to meet the goal of drinking half an ounce for every pound of your body weight (i.e., if you weigh 150 pounds, drink 75 ounces). Also keep in mind that caffeine is a diuretic, and the more that you take in, the drier your skin will tend to be. Limit coffee and soda especially.

A handful of nutrients have a direct effect on the health of your skin. The omega fatty acids (including both omega-6s and omega-3s) help to plump skin cells and hold moisture. Dietarily, add cold water fish such as salmon, ground flax seeds, and walnuts for those amazing omega-3s. Omega-6s are found in whole grains and vegetables. Both can also be consumed in supplement form as well. I usually have patients choose a fish oil supplement (1200-2500mg of the active ingredients EPA/DHA per day). For especially dry skin, the addition of supplemental omega-6s in evening primrose or borage oil can improve skin hydration (evening primrose oil at 500-2000mg daily).

Beta-carotene is also a crucial supplement for skin health, and can be added dietarily with colorful fruits and vegetables, or within an anti-oxidant supplement or multiple vitamin (usually around 10,000IU per day of beta-carotene).

Perhaps the most common way to combat increased dry skin is to moisturize. Lotions and creams ideally should be all-natural, but even some natural ingredients are hard to recognize. Keep in mind too, that just as it is the case with food, the word “natural” on a label does not necessarily mean anything. When reading the ingredient list, watch out for a few key words that signify chemicals that might not be safe for you in high amounts. The top two additives that are the most

important to focus on are paraben and phthalates (both would be seen in an ingredient list as the end of compound words).

Parabens and phthalates are preservatives linked to carcinogenicity. They also are often estrogenic in nature, and as such can promote feminization in males and diseases related to estrogen such as breast, ovarian, and prostate cancers. It is also pertinent to limit your use of petrochemicals (most commonly listed as petroleum, DBP and DEP on ingredient lists). High amounts of petroleums are also believed to be carcinogenic. Although bigger name brands are listening to concerned consumers and pulling these ingredients out, you still have to be careful what you get, even in the bottles labeled as “natural.”

Just as with food choices, the idea on limiting exposure to chemical constituents should be one of moderation. Some exposure is likely not dangerous, but where you can avoid it, it is probably beneficial to do so in the long run. Healthy grocery stores are packed with natural alternatives or you can use some of the oils that are found in your kitchen. Olive oil, coconut oil, and avocado oil are all great options for at-home, natural (and cheap) moisturizers. The biggest complaint associated with these options is a greasiness (the chemical constituents listed above are usually included to help speed absorption), so be ready to pat dry after using them.

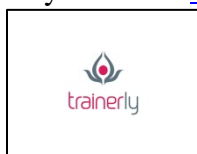
For some dry skin sufferers, an oatmeal bath can be very soothing. You can use actual oatmeal in cheesecloth or some other form of netting or there are many over-the-counter oatmeal soaks available (usually the baby aisle has the best selection).

If you’ve taken all of the precautions described to prevent dry skin, added nutrition from both inside and out, and still suffer with very dry skin, then it might be time to visit with your doctor. What might appear as simply dry skin might be a more complex issue such as eczema or psoriasis, or might even signal a systemic issue such as diabetes, hormone imbalance or low thyroid function. Your doctor or integrative provider can help sort out the diagnosis and either treat with further topical medications or treat systemically to solve the issue. Sometimes both an external and internal approach are needed, as with psoriasis, which often requires an external treatment as well as having the person tested for food allergens, which often serve as a trigger for skin disruption.

Dry winter skin can range from a nuisance for some to a painful endeavor for others, but preventing and treating it without unnecessary chemical exposure should be possible for everyone.

Please review our business at: [Yelp](#) [City Search](#) [Google +](#) [Angie’s List](#)

Trainerly allows you to workout and exercise at home, office, hotel room or pretty much anywhere in the world through live 2-way webcam. [Sign-up](#) for a free class with me today.



Your suggestions appreciated to make our business better. Please take the survey by [clicking here](#) and provide your input.

Want to know your metabolic power? [Click Here](#) to find out if your metabolism is working for you or against you.

Do you know someone who might be interested in our products or services? [Click Here](#) to fill out our referral form and, as our way of saying thank you, you will receive \$15 off and of our products or services. We appreciate your support.

[Click Here](#) to sign-up for our e-mail list so can receive all of our articles & download your free copy of our Dietary Information e-book.

[Like us on Facebook/Connect with us on LinkedIn/Follow us on Twitter](#)

[Follow us on Google+/Pinterest](#)

(Hold down the Ctrl key & click the underlined words or logos)

Make sure to forward to friends and followers.



Connect with me at [Wizpert](#)