

How to Up Level Your Skincare for Winter

You wouldn't wear the same clothes to go outside in the winter as you do in the summer, so why would you use the same skincare products and keep to the same routines when the weather gets colder? Your skin is sensitive to changes in the temperature, weather and humidity, and deserves a little TLC if you want it to look its best in the colder months.

Going from warm, heated offices and homes out into cold winds and wet weather is harsh on your skin. Skin needs to maintain a constant supply of moisture, and when the humidity drops outside and is stripped out of centrally heated indoor environments, it can leave thirsty skin screaming for a little hydration. The winds that often accompany wet, cold winter weather can also lead to wind burn, where the skin on your lips and hands becomes red and dries out.

It doesn't help that to warm up we'll spend longer in hot baths and steamy showers on cold days. Who hasn't spent just a few minutes longer under a hot shower to avoid the cooler bathroom air? This might feel like a luxury but it's actually stripping your skin of even more of the natural oils it needs to help look and feel good. No wonder your skin often needs intensive care after a harsh winter. Many of us find

ourselves with dry and irritated skin that's cracked, chapped and flaky. In some cases you could even end up with itchy rashes or eczema.

What Skincare Product Do You Most Need to Use in Winter?

The first step in protecting the health of your skin is to look for a really good quality hydrating moisturizer. The best moisturizer you can afford should form the bedrock of any winter skincare routine. If you feel that despite using a moisturizer regularly, your skin is feeling tight, irritated or flakey, upgrade your moisturizer to one that's suitable for dry skin, even if you don't usually suffer from dryness. Locking the hydration in and the inclement weather out will help keep the skin on your face much healthier.

In the winter it can pay to switch to rich oil-based creams, even if you prefer using lighter water based lotions during summer. The water in the lighter lotions can evaporate off of your skin, so the effects aren't as long lasting as a more heavy duty oil-based cream. You'll get used to the way it feels and in the long run it should leave your skin feeling much more comfortable.

Ingredient-wise, look for a product which contains vitamin E, as it's helpful for keeping moisture in. Anything that has a built in humectant is also great for winter skin as these ingredients work to attract moisture to your skin.

Other Winter Skincare Savors

- Even if you don't normally use it, a lip balm is a great addition to your winter skincare routine. It helps to avoid cracked sore lips and will keep them pout perfect all winter long.
- Make sure that you use a gentle, creamy cleanser or milk as part of your cleansing routine daily, along with a soothing, gentle eye cream that will protect the delicate skin around your eye area from the effects of the wet, cold and wind.
- If you like using oils on your skin, treat them with pure, non-clogging essential oils like avocado oil or almond oil to nourish dry or irritated skin.

What Not to Do in Winter

Some products just make your skin worse in the winter months, so if you want to stay feeling great, you should avoid them.

- Anything which could potentially block your pores (is comedogenic) is a no-no when it's cold. Shea oil and mineral are two oils not normally recommended for colder conditions as they can have a blocking effect.
- Highly fragranced products are another irritant for sensitive skin. Even if you don't normally have sensitive skin, the winter ravages can make it more so. Avoid them wherever possible.
- Harsh products and facials are probably best left until spring – your skin deserves to be nurtured and nourished when the environment is doing its best to ruin it. Avoid products with alcohol in, strong peels and harsh toners, opting instead for gentle products.

Invest in a regular good nourishing winter facial and use gentle products that help lock in moisture and keep your skin healthy. That way, when spring arrives, you won't have to go into repair mode!