

~ Banishing the Winter Skin/Dry Skin Blues ~



Timothy M. Jochen, M.D

Dry skin never met a season it didn't like, but it's particularly fond of winter. Temperatures drop, your natural inclination is to turn up the heat and before you know it dry skin symptoms are wreaking havoc. You're probably all too familiar with the

scaly skin, parched hands, foot calluses and rough patches of eczema that plague your epidermis when humidity levels drop during cooler months. Here are some tips and tricks to smooth out the problem.

Skimp on Showers

Of course, basic hygiene dictates daily sudsing of face, underarms, feet and groin areas to stay fresh. However, skin on arms and legs generates much less oil and sweat so spare yourself some itching by soaping limbs only a couple of times a week. Don't worry, they'll get enough soapy run-off from your other cleansing activities. A gentle, fragrance-free cleanser is best and use warm rather than hot water. Especially important – although some find it hard to do – is to limit your time in the shower or bath to five or ten minutes. Another trick? Close the bathroom door to lock in humidity.

Maximize Your Moisturizing Efforts

The moment you step out of the shower or tub, take advantage of the humidity in the air as well as surface dampness of your skin. Merely blot yourself dry with a towel and immediately slather on moisturizer. This practice applies to your face and hands as well. The latter, in particular, will benefit from diligent moisturizing especially if your job involves frequent hand washing. Even if it doesn't, you're likely washing your hands more often in the winter months to stave off cold and flu germs. Keep a moisturizer by the sink or carry

a travel size with you and use it after each hand washing. An ointment or cream works better than a lotion – look for olive or jojoba-oil rich products. Shea butter is a good choice as well. You can also look for ingredients like glycerin, lanolin and petrolatum for denser moisturizing.

Mimic a Rainforest

Okay, that might be a little extreme, but you can mount an excellent defense against dry skin by investing in a humidifier. Opt for one that works with your home's heating system or place portable units in rooms where you spend a lot of time (relatively inexpensive models are available). Humidifiers

help put moisture back into the air that will be readily absorbed by your skin and hair.



Kick Calluses to the Curb

The winter months present more occasions to wear boots, but feet encased in cold weather shoes all day increases the incidence of skin being rubbed repeatedly. That can lead to callus formation.

Calluses aren't so much a symptom of dry skin, but more a case of the skin thickening to protect itself. Elbows are also susceptible. An effective lotion that we offer that features a high percentage of glycolic acid content is Glytone Body. It can do wonders to soften rough heel and elbow skin. Apply Glytone Body daily to these trouble spots, leave it on for 10 to 15 minutes, then rinse for a great retexturing treatment.

Give Lip Service

Cracked, dry lips aren't anyone's idea of fun. Choose a lip balm that feels good on your lips. Some of the so-called healing balms contain ingredients that can make your lips sting or tingle which can actually have a drying effect! Find one that doesn't cause this reaction and apply it generously all day long and before bedtime, too. You might like to know that we've just added lip balms to our array of skin care products!

Contour Dermatology Locations

Rancho Mirage
Palm Springs

42-600 Mirage Road
1180 North Indian Canyon Drive

Building A-1
Suite E-419

760-423-4000
760-423-4000

888-977-SKIN