

Winter Skincare Guide: How To Prepare Your Skin For Cold Weather

Winter is almost here — and so is dry skin.

The signs are all too familiar: dry, cracked hands, red irritated skin, chapped lips. All are some of the telltale signs that the winter season has arrived. But they don't have to be — if you know the insider tips and tricks for prepping your skin for the cold weather. We tapped two skincare experts, Dr. Frances Jang, a Vancouver-based dermatologist, and celebrity skin guru Jennifer Brodeur (who's worked with women like Michelle Obama and Oprah) to learn advice on the best ingredients, products and preventative measures you can take to get glowing skin all year round — even when it's -40.

Look for signs of dryness

“At first the signs are barely noticeable,” says Brodeur. “It may start with a feeling of tightness, then, as foundation is applied it looks rough, flaky, and scaling becomes apparent even without makeup. Fine lines look more visible, redness arises and patches of grey/ashy skin are harder to cover.” Jang also says to keep an eye on skin sensitivity and worsening of eczema as those are clues that your skin is feeling the effects of the seasonal weather change from warm to cold.

Pinpoint the causes of dry skin

The temperature drop is causing dryness in your skin, but it's not the only factor that's contributing to your winter beauty woes. Both Jang and Brodeur place a lot of the blame on indoor heating from the heat blasting in your home and office to the hot air in your car. “All of this heat dries up the air so the air is constantly looking for moisture, so it will take it where it can get it, including taking moisture from your skin,” says Brodeur. This, Jang says, causes your skin to get dry and occasionally flake, and can even cause dryness around your cuticles which can lead to cracked nails. Other culprits to watch out for include wool clothing, which may cause irritation to your skin and long hot showers and baths.

Switch up your skincare

“As winter approaches, I suggest switching some of your skincare products to help with hydration,” says Jang. “For the face, using a heavier moisturizer or a face oil may help maintain skin hydration while using a cream or oil-based exfoliant instead of a dry one will help prevent aggravating the skin.” Switch to a non-stripping cleanser, says Brodeur, which will help to ensure your skin's natural oils aren't removed during cleansing and whenever possible, try to only use your cleanser in the evening and just use water in the morning. If you love your summer moisturizer and don't want to give it up once winter rolls in, Brodeur has a hack. Just add a few drops of a nourishing face oil to to your day cream to give it a hydrating punch. If you aren't totally sure what your skin needs to make it through winter, Jang recommends visiting a skincare professional to evaluate what might need to be changed to maximize your skin's health throughout the winter months.

Even though it's cold out — don't forget your sunscreen!

It's important to continue using SPF 30+ all year round as we still experience significant level of UVA during the winter months even in a temperate climate," says Jang. If you're an avid skier or snowboarder hitting the slopes, SPF is essential as the higher altitude and the UV rays that get reflected off the snow can cause serious damage.

Invest in a humidifier

Brodeur suggests preparing your home accordingly to minimize dryness. "To maximize the amount of water in the air, place a humidifier in the bedroom since that is where you spend the most time. A cool air humidifier increases the moisture level in the air which helps your skin's barrier to stay hydrated."

Look for these key ingredients

To really amp up your skin's hydration, both Jang and Brodeur sing the praises of hyaluronic acid, a substance naturally produced by the skin to help retain moisture. Applied topically, it can help with plumpness and boosting your natural moisture levels. Thankfully, the ingredient can be found in most moisturizers and serums. Brodeur also says to scan ingredient labels for natural humectants, like glycerin, aloe and honey, which help to draw moisture into your skin. Omega fatty acids are another hydrating heavyweight to keep watch for. Often found in face oils, they serve as the essential building blocks of skin's surface layers, creating a smoother, more even, younger-looking and healthier complexion, no matter your age or skin type, says Brodeur. She likes sunflower seed oil, peoni root extract oil and sesame oil as they have antibacterial and anti-inflammatory properties.

JB Skin Guru

A skincare secret weapon, this luxe nourishing oil contains peony root extract, sunflower seed oil and licorice root to soothe and hydrate skin. Just a few drops will leave your skin glowing.

Peoni L'Extrait, \$225, jbskinguru.com

