

BEAUTY

Cold comfort

Nicole Kidman's complexion may have

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Colds and flu might garner all the attention, but every year winter sparks a silent epidemic – dry skin. As the mercury plummets, so does the moisture in the air and, consequently, in our skin. But you needn't suffer in silence – a few minor adjustments to your beauty routine will prevent winter dryness faster than you can stifle a sneeze.

Skin deep

Although your skin type won't change much from one season to the next, in winter dry skin is as common as goose bumps. "It's all about keeping the skin in balance, because even combination and oily skin can suffer from dehydration in winter," says Sandi Connell, technical and education manager for Sothys skin-care products.

You can normally stick to your usual cleansing routine in the cooler months, but the combination of cold winds and heating means you'll need extra moisture. To prevent water escaping through the epidermis (the outer layer of the skin), look for a cream that's rich in moisturising lipids and ceramides, as these ingredients boost the skin's ability to retain fluid.

fatty acids, such as omega-3 and 6, which are found in oily fish, linseeds, leafy vegetables and soybeans. "A diet rich in these nutrients will help keep the skin moist and plump," says Sydney-based naturopath Alison Johnson.

Above all, water is the skin's most essential nutrient. Drinking two litres a day

been perfect on *Cold Mountain*, but winter wreaks havoc with most people's skin.

"Dehydration increases the chance of the skin becoming sensitised, as the natural barrier that helps protect the skin from outside elements actually breaks down," says Sarah Hales, beauty therapist at Milk Day Spa in Sydney.

If skin feels overly sensitive, Emma Hobson, education manager for the International Dermal Institute, advises using a moisturiser that contains natural anti-inflammatories (such as Canadian willow herb, licorice, raspberry extract, chamomile and cucumber) to help reduce redness and irritation.

Dry skin will also benefit from an increase in the consumption of essential

keeps internal organs hydrated, so they won't take moisture from other organs, such as the skin. Water also flushes out the kidneys and liver, eliminating toxins and improving the complexion.

Bright eyes

The delicate skin around the eyes is up to 30 per cent thinner than elsewhere on the body and has no sebaceous (oil) glands. When the big chill hits, this area can dry out in the blink of an eye, which is why an external moisture boost is essential. Always pat on eye cream sparingly and, while it's soaking in, rest your palms over your eyes, lightly applying pressure at the

top of the cheekbones to stimulate lymph flow and help reduce puffiness.

The eyes are the windows to your soul, but also to your stomach. You may crave comfort food when it's cold, but give processed products a miss. "A diet rich in these types of foods will show in the form of dry, irritated patches between the eye and eyebrow area. We call it the 'wine and dine' area," explains Emma Hobson.

To hide flaws such as dark circles, pat (don't rub) a creamy yellow-based concealer, one shade lighter than your foundation, around the eye-contour area. "If the eyes themselves are red, steer clear of dark eyeshadows and opt for pale



Winter repair kit

1. MD Formulations Face & Body Scrub 250ml, \$72.
2. Dr. Hauschka Rosemary Foot Balm 30ml, \$29.10.
3. Revlon ColorStay Stay Natural Concealer 5.9ml, \$23.95.
4. Sothys Nutritifs Dry Skin Cream 50ml, \$62.50.
5. Clinique Repairwear Intensive Eye Cream 15ml, \$60.
6. Ego QV Lip Balm 15g, \$4.95.
7. Manicare Pumice Brush, \$9.95.
8. Dermalogica Barrier Repair 37ml, \$57.
9. Mukti Botanicals Body Butter 100g, \$21.
10. Nivea Hand Age Control Creme Q10 Plus 75ml, \$4.20.

Flu fighters



shimmery shades in cream or taupe," suggests Rebecca Morrice Williams, founder of Becca Cosmetics.

Lip service

Chapped lips are a common winter woe. "The best thing to do is to boost moisture levels with emollient-rich balms," advises Sandi Connell. Regular exfoliation will also help smooth things over. Use a soft child's toothbrush and gently rub the lips in a circular motion before you slick on a hydrating balm.

In the buff

Scaly skin may be out of sight when you're wearing winter woollies, but it screams neglect. "We don't wax our legs as often in winter, so we benefit less from this exfoliating process," Sandi Connell says. "Body exfoliation increases circulation and helps prevent cellulite."

Chill out

Back to base: Your summer tan has faded so it's time to reassess your foundation. Also, "as the light is different in winter, most people need a foundation that's one shade lighter than their summer colour," says Napoleon of Napoleon Cosmetics.

Prime time: If you spend the day in an air-conditioned environment, help seal in the hydrating effects of your moisturiser by smoothing on a skin primer before applying your foundation. "Apply a little more to the under-eye area during the day to freshen and minimise the look of fine lines," Rebecca Morrice Williams advises.

Slap happy: Just because you've packed your bikini away doesn't mean you can become complacent about sun safety. The Cancer Council of Australia says that even in winter most Aussies get enough vitamin D through incidental sun exposure and recommends a daily application of SPF 30 sunscreen.

Beauty will be the last thing on your mind if you're suffering from the sniffles. Here are a few things you can do to help you look and feel better.

Dinner winners: To strengthen the immune system, boost your intake of vitamin C (citrus fruit and green vegetables), vitamin E (brown rice and nuts) and zinc (oysters and ginger). Vitamin A (carrots, parsley and broccoli) is good for sinus problems.

Burn out: Burning essential oils, such as lavender and lemon, can help relieve congestion. "Lemon is also good if you have to work, as it increases mental stimulation," says Alison Johnson. (If you're pregnant or have health concerns, consult an aromatherapist before using essential oils.)

Tub time: Relax aching muscles by slipping into a soothing bath for 20 minutes (don't make it too hot or you'll strip your skin of moisture). If you're feeling stressed, Sydney naturopath Elizabeth Backler suggests adding a handful of Epsom salts to draw out impurities through the skin. "Our muscles tighten up when we're stressed, which affects our body's ability to eliminate toxins," she says.

Red alert: To tone down redness around your nose, Rebecca Morrice Williams suggests using a highly pigmented yellow-based concealer with a slightly creamy texture. "Apply moisturiser first as this area may be dry and flaky as well," she says. "Set the concealer with loose powder so that it locks onto the skin."

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Sloughing off dead skin also improves the effectiveness of moisturisers and is essential if you suffer from keratosis pilaris (small spots that can appear on the upper arms, buttocks and thighs). "These spots are caused by an overproduction and then a thickening of keratin in the hair follicles," explains Sandi. "Regular and gentle exfoliation works wonders to alleviate this condition."

The best place to exfoliate is in the shower. Using a loofah or body scrub, start at your ankles and work your way up to your neckline, rubbing in circles and paying particular attention to your knees and elbows. Before you step out, switch

from warm to cold water for 20 seconds to boost circulation and stimulate lymph flow. While the skin is damp, slather on a rich body lotion to lock in the moisture.

Soft option

Winter is the ideal time to pamper heels and hands. "A lot of people boost their intake of vitamins during winter and it's wise to do the same for your skin," says Sarah Hales. "Look for hand creams that contain vitamin E for general comforting, and vitamin C to repair sun damage, which has occurred during the summer."

Keep your feet in top form by regularly scrubbing off dead skin with a coarse exfoliant or pumice stone, then apply a hydrating foot cream before you hit the sack. Choose a balm that contains warming herbs, such as rosemary, which stimulates circulation and has anti-bacterial properties, then slip on some cotton socks to help the cream sink in.

Another way to ensure that your hands and feet stay soft and smooth is to dry them thoroughly after you take a shower, then apply a body lotion within three minutes to prevent the water residue evaporating and drawing moisture out of your skin.