



# winter time

## SKIN SOOTHING SOLUTIONS

words | SUSIE GALVEZ

**If you've got the dry, red, itchy skin that often comes with winter, you're in good company.** Roughly seven in 10 American women say they have sensitive skin—a rate that seems to be on the rise thanks to increased use of potent, sometimes irritating, anti-agers and new sensitizing medications for certain health conditions.

During the winter months even normal skin takes the brunt of chilly, cold temperatures and overly-brisk wind blasts. In addition, our skin is assaulted daily with drier, overly-heated air from heating systems in our homes, offices, and cars. With little to no humidity in the air, it's no wonder that our skin feels dry, flaky, and itchy.

To keep Jack Frost from nipping at your nose, cheeks—and any other parts this season—here are some skin tips to keep winter deep freeze skin at bay and your skin looking and feeling beautiful.

**Stay out of hot water...**whether you're cleansing your face or your body, stick with tepid to warm water, says Richmond dermatologist Victoria Gross, M.D. Hot water tends to dry out skin. "Follow bathing with a moisturizer to seal in moisture from the bath or the shower. Skin that holds in moisture is a stronger barrier against irritants than dry skin."



**Cleanse gently.** Opt for a gentle facial cleanser, and choose a creamier body cleanser instead of gels or soap. Look for products with lots of skin loving ingredients in them such as sunflower oil, mondo grass, lavender, coconut oil, and other plant-based botanicals. The ingredients are gentle and work to hydrate and protect the skin.

**Remove excess dead skin.** “Using a gentle face exfoliating product on the face will help remove skin debris, allowing for better absorption of day and night hydrating skincare,” reports Margaret LaPierre, esthetician and owner of Skin Therapy of Virginia. “For the body, opt for a softer type of skin exfoliator during this harsh time of the year. Instead of using products with abrasive ingredients such as ground nuts or fruit pits to remove dead, dry skin cells, choose finely milled grape seeds or sugar type exfoliants to whisk away the debris. Your skin will feel smooth and moisturized.”

If you need a little extra exfoliation, use a wash cloth with your exfoliator to aid in dead skin removal. But forget about “Bufpufs” and other abrasive skin tools as they are much too harsh. Instead save them to scrub your tub—never your face!

**Lip tip...**Apply a small amount of your facial exfoliator on a warm wet washcloth and gently rub across the lips to help remove dead skin and keep them from chapping.

**Slather on the moisturizer** – for this time of the year, thick is in and thin is out. I tell my clients to make the switch to a creamy moisturizer to protect the skin from the elements. If your skin is exposed to the outdoors a lot, consider using an emollient moisturizer (oil-based) for optimal protection.

If you notice that your face looks and feels chapped, it could be that your water-

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Is it normal to leak when I laugh or sneeze?



It hurts to have intercourse with my husband. I wish there was something I could do.



I have chronic pain in my pelvis. I need to fix this.



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based moisturizer has frozen on your face! Oil-based moisturizers will not freeze and will protect the skin much better, especially if outdoors for extended periods of time.

**Save your neck...** Your face doesn't end at the chin; it goes all the way down to the décolleté. In fact, the neck needs all the extra attention it can get because neck skin is thinner, drier, and one of the first places to show wear and tear.

**Sunscreen is not just for summer.** Be sure to add sunscreen to your daily routine – between the sun's direct rays and the reflection off of everything from car windows to snow banks, protection is a must. Don't forget your sunglasses when outside too!

**Forgo fragranced body lotions and cream.** Fragranced products contain alcohol, which is drying to the skin. Instead, use an unscented body moisturizer and then add your favorite fragrance on top of the cream.

**Start fresh...**with your razor blades, that is. Shaving your legs, underarms, or any place else can cause bumps and redness. To prevent this, use a razor that is no more than five shaves old and has at least two or three blades. Single-blade disposables are more apt to drag against the skin. Your best bet is to apply a sensitivity-safe shave gel before shaving, rather than soap that is more drying to the skin.

**You only have three minutes...** After you wash, you only have three minutes to add moisture back to the skin – your skin pores are most receptive during this time.

**Wear natural fabric next to the skin,** as opposed to synthetic micro-fibers, allows the skin to breathe and lessens the chance of irritation.

**Keep it dry...**your clothes that is. Especially your gloves and socks. Wet or damp clothes, reports LaPeirre, can irritate the skin and cause it to itch, crack, and cause eczema to flare up.

**Keep it clean.** For clothing, towels, washcloths, sheets, blankets, and throws, switch to a fragrance-free detergent. Also, it's best to only add fabric softener to clothes, blankets, and throws. Keep your towels, washcloths, and sheets free of fabric softener or dryer sheets. The softening anti-static agent in softeners contains lots of known skin irritants that can transfer to the skin all too easily.

**Beauty is easy...once you know the tricks!** 'Tis the season to keep your skin looking its most beautiful best! Remember...it is not cotton that is the fabric of our lives... it's skin!

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