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## Which Skincare Products Should You Actually Be Using This Winter?

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If your skin could talk, it would probably tell you it hates winter. Yes, you may like the cozy sweaters and the hot chocolate nights and the warm fireplace vibes (or not, you do you), but all your skin feels is a drop in temperature, drier weather, and the absolute ravages of indoor

heating—which can result in breakouts, clogged pores, irritation, and shiny foreheads.

But all hope is not lost. It's possible to avoid that unfortunate beauty fate by developing a skincare routine that works for you this season—it's all about choosing the right kind of products. SELF checked in with top dermatologists to find out exactly what they recommend to their patients during the winter months, from gentle cleansers to game-changing serums. Follow these tips to actually make it through winter with your skin in good shape.

If you have ... oily skin (i.e. you're super shiny by the end of the day)

Chances are, you probably go for products that promise to reduce your shine. But that plan, while rooted in good intentions, can actually backfire. "The problem with oily skin is that patients tend to use very harsh and irritating ingredients in order to 'de-grease' it. But that can strip their skin of essential natural oils, which makes the oily skin worse—and can also result in uneven pigmentation," Melissa Kanchanapoomi Levin, M.D., a clinical instructor at the Mount Sinai Icahn School of Medicine and the director of clinical research and dermatologist at Marmur Medical in New York, tells SELF.

Her suggestion? After cleansing your skin in the morning, apply a serum like No. 7's Protect & Perfect Intense Advanced Serum, which contains a proprietary antioxidant complex. Antioxidants help neutralize free radical formation from infrared radiation and pollution, which basically means they prevent damage from UV rays and dirt in the air. Then, apply an oil-free moisturizer that contains glycerin or other humectants. And finally, load up on the sunscreen—just make sure it's non-comedogenic. "It's a key step in protecting the skin from UV radiation," says Levin.

At night, the goal is to repair and care for your face, which starts with removing your makeup. Levin recommends using either a cleansing wipe or micellar water, a French staple that's made of tiny oil molecules suspended in soft water. Miscellar water dissolves dirt, makeup and oil in one swipe—no rinsing required. When you cleanse, avoid scrubbing the skin, and using harsh toners with irritating ingredients like menthol, peppermint, and citrus oils, drying agents like very high alcohol, or potentially allergic-reaction-inducing ingredients like fragrance. All of those can spur more oil production. Instead, Levin suggests exfoliating with a treatment that contains salicylic acid—but only twice a week. And finally, for an overnight treatment, apply both an oil-free moisturizer and an antiaging serum that contains either growth factors, peptides, antioxidants, or retinoids. These ingredients work to improve skin texture, hyperpigmentation, acne, fine lines, and wrinkles.

If you have ... combination skin (i.e. you're shiny in the T-zone by the end of the day)

Like people with consistently oily skin, you probably also avoid moisturizer like the plague, because you may think it'll only add to your already-oily situation. But that logic may be

hurting you in the long run. "The reality is that everyone needs a moisturizer as part of a skincare regimen, especially in the winter—it's all about choosing the right one for each individual," says Bradley Bloom, M.D., a New York-based board-certified dermatologist and clinical assistant professor at the Ronald O. Perelman department of dermatology at NYU Langone Medical Center. His suggestions: While you may use a lighter, oil-free moisturizer in the summer, be sure to switch to a more robust one as the winter months hit. If you need a little extra hydration immediately, go for a moisturizer or serum with hyaluronic acid.

Before bed, wash your face with warm water (not scalding hot), and then apply a retinoid cream or plant-based overnight treatment to help control oil in the T-zone and stay moisturized everywhere else, Macrene Alexiades, M.D., founder and director of the Dermatology and Laser Surgery Center of New York, tells SELF. "This way, you're going for a balanced approach—a gentle but effective cleanser and a neutral not-too-emollient moisturizer," she says.

If you have ... normal skin (i.e. you have a bit of glow by the end of the day, but nothing to write home about)

The great thing about normal skin is that it's already balanced—but on the flip side, it isn't always easy to keep it that way. "Normal skin is not reactive or sensitive, which means your skincare regimen is all about maintaining your great skin without upsetting its balance," Jessie Cheung, M.D., board-certified dermatologist and director of the DuPage Dermatology & Laser Center, tells SELF.

Your plan: In the morning, go for a multi-tasking moisturizer that has an SPF 30 or higher—she recommends lightweight formulations with zinc, which is a non-irritating physical blocker. At night, apply a retinoid at least a few times a week, and alpha hydroxy acid on the other nights. Bonus points if you add a cream with peptides and growth factors. "All of these ingredients will nourish your skin, boost your collagen, and keep your skin young and glowing," says Cheung. No. 7's Protect & Perfect Intense Advanced Serum, for instance, harnesses the most powerful form of the peptide matrixyl to help protect skin from future signs of aging.

And if you want to really go all in? "Try a clay mask or chemical peel when your skin feels congested, or a brightening serum when the sun spots start to emerge," recommends Cheung.

If you have ... dry skin (i.e. you have dry flakes and your skin feels tight)

Having dry skin in the winter can be double trouble: It's already dry, and if you don't give it some TLC, it'll only get worse. "For dry skin, I recommend moisturizers with hyaluronic acid for moisture and firming effects," Debbie Palmer, M.D., a board-certified dermatologist and co-founder of Dermatology Associates of New York, tells SELF. Exfoliating is also crucial. Not only does it help you shed your dull, old cells for newer ones, it also gets rid of debris on your skin—

which can help increase the efficacy of products you apply after cleansing. "Exfoliating has also been shown to help the absorption of serums, lotions, and creams you apply to your skin," says Palmer. Her advice: Exfoliate with alpha or beta hydroxy acid.

If you have ... sensitive skin (i.e. your skin is blotchy or feels itchy by the end of the day)

One of the most annoying parts about having sensitive skin is that your skin is more prone to react to products—which means it's extra important to a) choose gentle ones, and b) test them all out before you commit. "My tip to patients with sensitive skin is to sample every skincare product you're interested in for a week before you buy. You can build a tolerance to a stronger skincare product by using it twice a week for two weeks, then every other day for a month before graduating to daily use," S. Manjula Jegasothy, M.D., associate professor of dermatology at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine and CEO and founder of the Miami Skin Institute, tells SELF.

But which products should you try? "For patients with sensitive skin, I recommend cleansing with micellar water or gentle cleansing wipes and warm water twice daily," Michelle Henry, M.D., a New York-based board-certified dermatologist and clinical instructor of dermatology at Weill Cornell Medical College, tells SELF. "After you wash, apply a non-comedogenic, fragrance-free moisturizer, plus a physical sunscreen with zinc oxide and titanium dioxide, as they're less likely to cause irritation or inflammation," continues Henry. And be sure to choose the right night cream, too. "Sensitive skin will likely be unable to use retinoid creams at night—instead, I recommend rich creams that contain antioxidants like vitamin C and green tea to fight aging." And finally, you can always count on a good vitamin C serum. "They're generally well-tolerated on all skin types," says Jegasothy.

A great serum to keep in mind? The No. 7 Protect & Perfect Intense Advance Serum, which is both fragrance-free and hypo-allergenic—which makes it a great pick for sensitive complexions.

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