



skin|how to

treating chapped winter skin

The cold, lack of humidity, extreme temperature changes, forced air heating and blustery winds combine to wreak havoc on exposed skin—namely the face.

Under ideal conditions, the skin on our face produces a natural protective coating called the hydrolipidic film. Skin with a larger pore size delivers more oil and creates a thicker hydrolipidic film for its surface. The smaller the pore size, the less oil there is available for protecting the face. This hydrolipidic film not only protects against nature's arsenal of harmful elements, but also seals in the body's natural hydration, water.

In our treatment rooms in the fall/winter months, we should concentrate on services that “give back” rather than “take away.” Emphasize hydration instead of aggressive acid peels; essential oils instead of microdermabrasion, etc. If exfoliation is necessary, enzyme peels, with strength and intensity dependent on skin type and desired result, can be used. In general, it's a time of year to nurture and protect skin.

Your client's home care regimen is very important. Because of our region's distinct seasonal differences, we rarely advise clients to have the same home routine in the summer as they would in the winter. Summer is for deep pore cleansing, stronger cleansers, more aggressive exfoliation and lighter moisturizers.

Winter, of course, is the opposite including the use of creamy, pH balanced cleansers, less aggressive exfoliation and heavier, protective moisturizers and eye creams.

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Cleansers start the home care regimen. Some lines will have hydrating ingredients such as urea and allantoin in their cleansers. You can actually start hydrating skin in the cleansing stage. Toners are then used to keep or balance the skin's pH. Make sure your toner is alcohol-free. Next, in cases of extremely dry, dehydrated skin, recommend a hydrating serum to be applied and allowed to penetrate. Follow the serum with a thicker, protective cream. This cream will protect and create a barrier with ingredients like lavender, zinc oxide and/or micronized titanium oxide. As mentioned before, a substantial eye cream is the final step. And while you shouldn't eliminate alpha and beta hydroxy acid exfoliating products from all home care programs, you can either reduce the frequency of use or suggest a product with a lesser percentage by volume.

It's a good idea to have a minimum SPF of 15 built into a daytime moisturizer or serum. The last thing a client should do is get sunburned, which will encourage winter skin problems. For spot problems with chapping or chaffing such as around the nose, recommend a 1 percent hydrocortisone salve.

Last, but definitely not least, is the issue of protecting the lips. Avoid waxy lip products that may provide some protection, but rarely offer any penetrating hydration. Instead, look for a balm or cream formulation with an SPF 15 and ingredients like shea butter and jojoba oil, which protect and hydrate. You can also look for products with hydrolized wheat protein, which moisturizes while building collagen and firming the lips. Applying a lipstick over this type of product would be just fine.

Unless your clients hibernate with the bears, our wish is for these common sense ideas to help you keep your clients' skin hydrated, soft, smooth, youthful and radiant this winter season. ■

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