

During winter, the parts of the body that become really dry are the feet, the back of the hands, the knees and the elbows. These areas need special care.

A variety of creams, lotions and oils are available to provide adequate nutrition for the body. You can get yourself a hand and body lotion, or a rich cream, depending on the extent of dryness. An apricot cream is ideal for the hands. You can also make your own body lotion by mixing natural ingredients. You would need a loofah or rough towel to give your body a rub, after applying oil, cream or lotion. This helps to smoothen rough skin and also improves blood circulation to the skin's surface, leaving the skin glowing. It is particularly helpful on rough areas like the knees and elbows. Soap-free shower gels are better in winter or, you can use a mild glycerin soap. For extreme dryness, it is better to avoid soap. Oil massages and body rubs help cleanse the skin adequately.

BODY

Bath time is appropriate to pamper the body and supply it with the oils and moisture it needs. In fact, applying body lotions and creams soon after bathing, while the skin is still damp, helps seal in the moisture.

SUGGESTED TREATMENTS

- Before you shower, apply oil on the body and massage it into the skin. This helps to soften the skin. Sesame seed (*til*) oil can be used, and you can even use any vegetable oil.
- According to Ayurveda, mustard oil is good during winter, but sesame seed (*til*) oil can be used all year round. You can warm the oil before use.
- I advise the use of a lemon-turmeric cream as a pre-bath treatment, for dry skin. In fact, it has even been helpful in treating cases of dry-skin-sensitivity. It not only helps to soften the skin, but also lightens skin color over a period of time.
- A traditional home pre-bath treatment is to mix "besan" (gram flour) with a little milk or yogurt and a pinch of "haldi" (turmeric) into a paste. Apply the paste on the body. After 20 minutes, dampen with water and rub the paste gently on the skin and wash it off while bathing. You will not need to apply soap, as this cleanses the body well.

ELBOWS

The elbows also suffer during winter. The skin is very tough in this area and also lacks oil glands. It can become dry, rough and dark.

SUGGESTED TREATMENT

- Take two lemon halves and rub them on the elbows.
- Then apply sesame seed (*til*) oil, massaging it into the skin.
- While in the shower, take a rough towel and scrub the elbows well.
- After bathing, apply a moisturizing cream, again rubbing it into the skin. This kind of regular care will help keep the elbows soft and smooth.

FEET

Among winter problems, cracked heels are quite common. The cold

dry weather not only causes depletion of moisture, but also hampers proper blood circulation to the extremities. The skin of the feet suffers as a result. The skin on the heels is harder and thicker than most other parts of the body. Loss of moisture causes the living cells to change into dead rough cells leading to a build-up of dead cells. If the lack of moisture proceeds unchecked, cracks develop on the heels and may even extend beyond the dead cells, causing pain.

SUGGESTED TREATMENT

- Cracked heels can be prevented by taking care of your feet daily, by way of massaging the skin with creams and protecting them from the cold, dry air. The problem can also be tackled with proper foot care.
- Before bathing, apply a lemon-turmeric cream on the feet and heels, massaging it into the skin. This not only softens the skin but also protects it from the drying effects of soap and chlorinated water. Turmeric has antiseptic properties too and provides protection from infections.
- At night, before getting into bed, soak feet in hot water for about 20 minutes. Add some coarse salt and shampoo to the water, before soaking feet. Hot water helps soften the dead skin on the heels.



- With the help of a pumice stone or a heel scrubber, rub the heels gently, in order to remove the dead cells. Avoid metal scrubbers.
- After washing feet, massage with a good cream, rubbing it into the skin. Take a rich moisturizing cream or Vaseline and apply generously on the heels.
- Bandage the heels with cheesecloth, or cotton wool and surgical gauze, then wear cotton socks and go to sleep. This way, the cream will

remain on the heels and not get on the bedclothes. Keeping the heels smeared with cream all night will soften the skin and replenish moisture.

- Repeat this every night for at least 5 days, or till the skin on the heels improve. Special preparations for the heels are also available, which may have an antiseptic effect too and prevent any infections.

HOME REMEDIES

- **Body Massage:** For a fragrant body massage oil, mix 4 drops of sandalwood essential oil and 4 drops rose essential oil to 100 ml pure sesame seed (*til*) or olive oil. If you want to use only one of these two essential oils, add 8 drops of it. Do not use essential oils by themselves. They must be added to carrier (pressed) oils.
- **Itchy skin:** If caused by dryness, add 2 tbsp vinegar to a cup of water and rinse the area after you shower.
- **Hands:** For hands and nails, mix almond oil and honey in equal parts and massage into the nails and cuticles. Leave on for 15 minutes and wipe off with a moist towel.
- **Hands & Feet:** Mix 3 tbsp of rose water with one tsp pure glycerin. Apply on hands and feet and leave on for half an hour. Wash off with plain water.

