

Ah, February. You have the holiday hoo-ha from November to December and New Year's enthusiasm in January, but come February, everything kind of feels... well... normal. It's not a bad thing, it just takes some getting used to after three months of nonstop crazy. That said, there's no better time to shift the focus onto YOU, and your skin. Self-love, people! Let's make it a thing in February. Find me-time. #healthyglow, #treatyourself. You don't have to be in a relationship to feel loved this Valentine's month. Indulge in self-care, not just because you deserve to, but because it's paramount to happiness. And what better month to do it then in February? Or should we change the name to Me Month?

For all of winters seasonal highs (fireside gatherings, winter walks, ice skating, snowshoeing & skiing to name a few), There are some less pleasant side effects to note. Enter the onslaught of dry itchy skin that's currently settling in for what seems like the long haul. The combination of icy temperatures, biting winds, low levels of sunshine, ferocious central heating and bad quality sleep surely conspire to make February the most desperate of times for our dermis. Think dull, dehydrated and badly behaved... The weather outside may be unsightly but your skin doesn't have to be. Here's a few tips on how to have beautiful skin in February.

Dry skin occurs when skin doesn't retain sufficient moisture. The winter season poses a special problem because humidity is low both indoors and outdoors, and the water content of the epidermis (the outmost layer of skin) tends to reflect the level of humidity around it. The drier the air the drier the skin. Think of skin cells as an arrangement of roof shingles held together by a lipid rich glue that keeps the skin cells flat, smooth and moist. Water loss accelerates when this glue is weekend by winters low humidity and the drying effects of indoor heat. The result is, dry, flaky, itching, cracking and sometimes even a burning sensation. When it's chilly outside, what's the first thing you do? Crank up the heat! But central heat can make the air in your home even drier. As soon as you turn the heat on indoors the skin starts to dry out. It doesn't matter if you heat your home using oil, wood or electricity. The skin gets dry. To prevent this dryness, use a humidifier. Humidifiers are a great way to add moisture back into your home, especially if you're prone to blasting the heat. It's also helpful to sleep with one on overnight, when skin is doing its deepest restorative work. Better add a humidifier to your Valentine's day wish list.

There's nothing like a long, fragrant soak to soothe our bodies and revive our minds. So why, pray tell, do we treat ourselves to one so seldomly. And nothing sounds better than a steaming hot shower or bath on a cold day. But the

the lipid barriers in the skin, which can lead to dryness. intense heat of a hot shower or bath actually breaks down You're better off with a lukewarm bath. Try adding oatmeal or baking soda. This can replenish the skins moisture barrier. Mixing oatmeal in water and spreading it on irritated skin can also be cooling and soothing. Add 2 cups of oatmeal to a lukewarm bath and soak. Soaking in a bath of baking soda for 20-30 minutes can also make all the difference. Add one cup baking soda to a tub of warm water. After the bath, it is important to gently pat your skin dry with a towel. For more localized dryness you can make a paste of 1-part water to 3 parts baking soda. If you have a small patch of dry, itchy skin, dot apple cider vinegar on the spot with a cotton ball. If you're experiencing all-over itching and dryness, add two or three cups of vinegar to your bath water and soak for 15 to 30 minutes. Turn down the lights for a soothing ambience, then burn a candle (or three). The warm, flickering light and aromatic scent will make your bathroom feel much more spa-like. Treat yourself, you deserve it!

If you want glowing skin, the old adage 'you are what you eat' has never been truer. With a direct connection between gut and skin health and as scientists learn more about diet and the body, it's increasingly clear that what you eat can significantly affect the health and aging of your skin. Eating Fatty types of fish, avocados, walnuts and an assortment of vegetables such as red bell peppers, broccoli, and tomatoes contain omega-3 fatty acids and are a good source of vitamins, minerals and carotenoids that can reduce inflammation and keep skin moisturized. They're also a good source of high-quality protein, vitamin E and zinc. Yes, consuming dark chocolate (at least 70% cocoa) also has multiple health and beauty benefits. It can boost your skin's moisture, protect from sun damage and diminish wrinkles. Dark Chocolate in moderation will increase your overall health not to mention satisfy your taste buds. While there are many reasons to relish that daily piece of chocolate, dark chocolate is the perfect way to celebrate your love for that special someone, friend, coworker or yourself! The Bottom Line. What you eat can have a big impact on your skin health. It's all about a healthy balance.

Skin needs moisture to stay flexible especially in the winter. Even mild dehydration will cause your skin to look dry, tired and slightly grey. Drink six to eight glasses of water a day most fluids count towards your daily allowance, but water is the best. If you work in an office, keep a large bottle of water on your desk to remind you to drink. Some fruit and vegetables, such as watermelon, and cucumber, also contribute fluids. The added benefit is that the minerals they contain will increase the rate you hydrate your body and skin. Studies show that eating a piece of fruit like an apple and drinking a cup of water at the same time gives you more fluid than drinking 2 cups of water? Or, that adding lime/lemon to your water helps to absorb into your cells more quickly. And, that adding a

little chia seeds to your glass of water or any beverage helps your body absorb more of it. During winter, we tend to drink less water because we are more likely to drink hot beverages instead. However, coffee and tea are not enough to keep our bodies hydrated. When we are dehydrated on the inside, it also shows on the outside, which is on our skin. Make sure to stay on your six to eight glasses of water per day. If you want a hot drink, opt for a cup of hot water with some lemon instead to keep you warm, fuzzy, but still hydrated. Cheers to you!

With a few kitchen ingredients silky, soft, supple skin can be all yours this Valentine's month. And when you hit a rough patch (literally) with your skin, a body scrub can be just what you need to revive any dullness. Body scrubs contain exfoliating ingredients that have a texture you can feel, such as sugar, salt or coffee. By clearing away the dead cells that make skin look rough and textured, body scrubs help soften and brighten your skin. Salt and sugar scrubs are one of easiest home treatments that truly deliver. Not only is slathering sugar and oil all over your body wickedly pleasant, but the exfoliating factor leaves skin refreshed, glowing, and as soft as a certain anatomical part of a baby. Check out some of the best (and easiest) DIY scrub recipes online you can whip up using kitchen and pantry staples.



The driest of the dry winter skin usually occurs on the heels, hands and elbows. Use coconut oil to spot-treat these areas overnight. Put a thick layer of coconut oil on heels, hands and elbows, covering the greased areas with socks, gloves and long-sleeved pajama top, and hit the sheets. You should have a restful itch-free night of sleep and improved skin in the morning. Be kissably ready this Valentine's day! Don't skip your lips. The skin on your lips is thinner than the rest of your face making it more susceptible to damage from the harsh winter elements. To replenish hydrate and protect them, it's especially important to wear a moisturizing lip balm at night, as indoor heat and mouth breathing can exacerbate dryness.

Some of the top hydrating and healing ingredients for dry lips are beeswax, shea butter, moringa oil, and good old-fashioned petroleum jelly. Whatever you do, don't peel or bite off the dry skin on your lips! Make yourself an easy, at-home lip scrub instead. Mix brown sugar and coconut oil, then gently massage onto your lips to remove the dead skin. You can also use a soft washcloth or a soft-bristled toothbrush to exfoliate. You'll be extra kissable in no time.



The frigid winter air has left your face dry and dull, so dedicate a night to fix it. Pick out one of your Pinterest DIY extra moisturizing facial recipes, kick back and let it work its magic. At best, you'll feel rejuvenated and have discovered a new skin regimen, at worst, you'll have some silly selfies to send your friends. With the right face mask, you can pamper yourself this Valentine's month and soothe your skin problems in one go. Take the time to find a formula that matches your skin. Hydrating masks are made for dry skin. Look out for moisturizing ingredients like aloe vera and hyaluronic acid. Sleep masks are exactly what they sound like—masks that nourish your skin while you sleep! Try a moisture rich rejuvenating sleep mask on for size.

Winter brings a lot of things we love, but it also comes with that dreaded wind chill that wraps itself around your bones, saps the moisture from the air, and makes everyone's skin itchy and dry. This February (and really every day) is a good time to remember to love ourselves and the skin we're in. I'm suggesting not only that you appreciate your loved ones this month, but also that you take time-out to appreciate you: *an amazing being!* Remember to invest in yourself this Valentine's Day! With any of these methods, you'll be radiating a pleasant aura that can spread among your loved ones too.