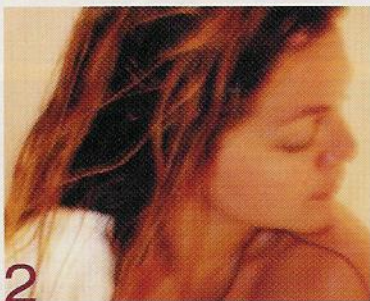
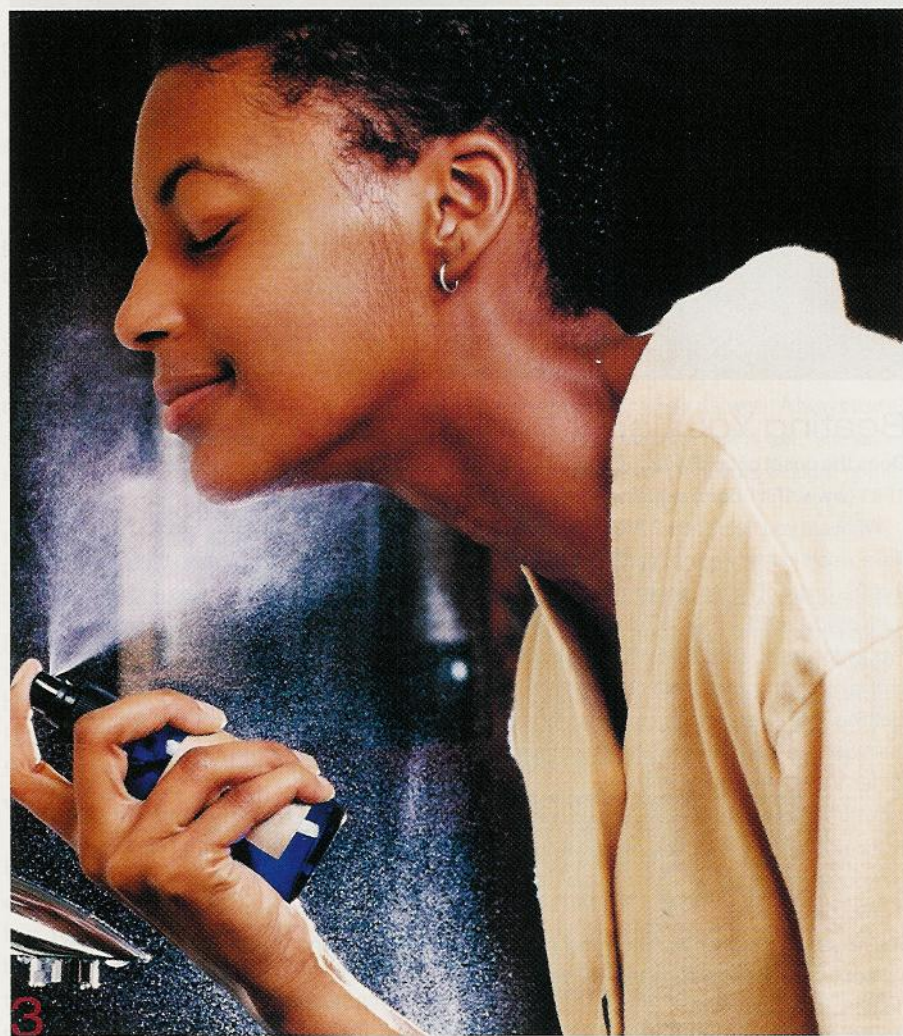


Area experts offer advice on staying in peak form during a season of excess
BY ALISON DUNN



Winter Wellness



1 A balanced diet rich in Vitamin C is key to weathering the winter months in good health. **2** Wet hair is its own worst enemy. Add a winter chill and hair will suffer split ends or dryness (once it thaws out). **3** Stay hydrated. Winter treats moisture the same whether it finds it in nature or your body, and hot homes and arid offices can be equally unkind.

AH, SUMMER. That glorious time of year when the days stretch on endlessly and it feels like we could live outdoors.

Long walks on the beach, swimming, sunshine, parties and good times abound. Now go look outside. It's grey, cold and dark and... is that snow? Yes, it looks like winter is here again. Are you ready for it?

In the summer, it's easy to stay healthy, keep fit and look your best. Slapping on some sunscreen keeps your skin protected and moisturized, and all that outdoor activity gives you a healthy glow. The abundance of fresh fruits and veggies at the local market make it easy to eat healthy, and, since it's hot, you're never without a glass of water.

Winter, on the other hand, makes it a little tougher to be your best. "Winter is not friendly to most of us," says Lynda Moore, owner of Hamilton's Beauty Objective by Lynda. "You have to make sure you don't slack off on your routine. In the summer, you can get away with it a little bit more."

Our harsh winters can certainly wreak havoc on our skin, our hair, our diet, our exercise regimes, and even our minds. That's why the change of season demands that we overhaul our health and beauty regimes to stay healthy, happy and beautiful – inside and out.

Great, you say, but how on earth do I do that? We went straight to the experts – the health and beauty professionals who live and work in our own neighbourhoods – to get their best advice on how to weather the winter season in peak form.

Winter Wellness

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Liz Randazzo
PureNV Salon & Spa

Skin deep

Whether you’re young or old, man or woman, winter is a time when many people find their skin tends to dry out more than usual. Going from the cold outdoors into our dry, hot homes isn’t the ideal situation to keep anyone’s skin hydrated. “Moisturizing is definitely more of an issue in the winter,” says Dr. Peter Vignjevic, a Hamilton dermatologist.

Before deciding that you need extra moisture, however, it’s important to first determine if you are indeed suffering from dry skin. According to Beauty Objective’s Moore, there are a few ways to test your skin for dehydration. “In the winter, if you’re drying out, you will feel tight after you cleanse,” she says. Look for dryness around the nose area, or a crinkling around your eyes when you laugh. Or, take your finger and push the skin on your forehead up. “If you see lines that look like a roadmap, you’re dehydrated,” she says.

Liz Randazzo, Spa Manager at Hamilton’s PureNV Salon & Spa, says she often recommends her clients change cleansers to a milkier or creamier cleanser to prevent dry skin. She also recommends using a gentle exfoliant to remove dead skin to help moisturizer penetrate the skin. “When you have a buildup of cellular debris, the skin looks dull. It lacks luster, and that’s why most people try to use more moisturizer. But it doesn’t penetrate the skin if they have this cellular buildup. It’s really important to exfoliate.”

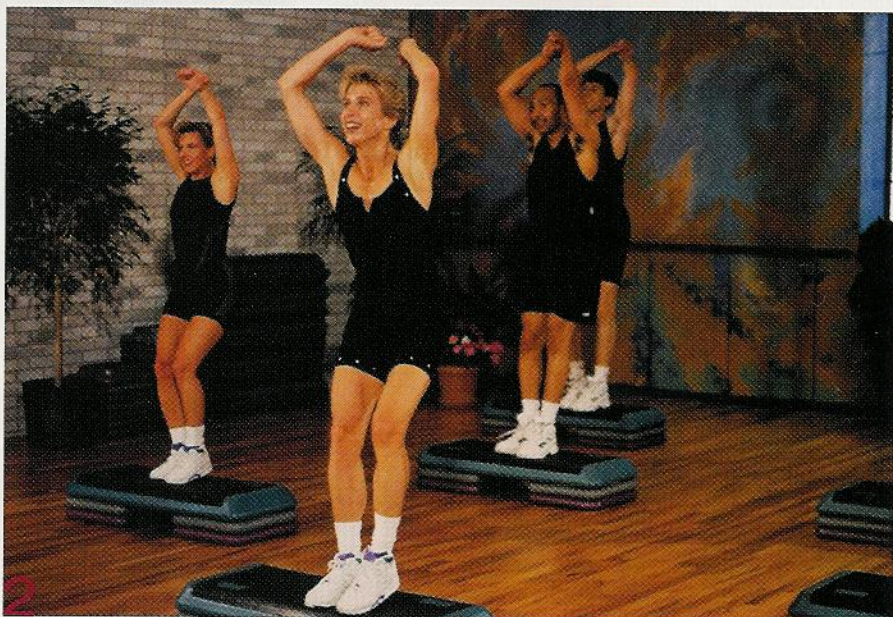
However, don’t take a harsh exfoliator like a loofah to your dry winter skin. “If you’re talking about people who have dry, sensitive winter skin, you don’t want to be scrubbing away at it with a loofah or anything like that,” says Vignjevic. “You’re just going to irritate your skin and not really accomplish much.” Instead, choose a gentle exfoliating cream to remove the dead cells.

Don’t just take care of the skin on your face, either, says Randazzo. “When people look at skin care, it’s not just the face,” she says. “It’s also the whole-body care.” Use a good body moisturizer after showering, and



- 1 Combat non-summer bummers with a helpful light supplement.
- 2 Muscles and mind unwind with yoga and flexibility training.
- 3 Holistic products can help keep your skin in shape.
- 4 When in doubt, spoil yourself — mental health is central to winter happiness.

1



Beating Your Inner Bear

Does the onset of cold weather trigger your hibernation reflex? Personal trainer Jan Gaydon of 1Fit1 (www.1Fit1.com) explains how you can fight that instinct.

What are you doing now? Are you outside walking, running, hiking? Why would you stop? We’re like animals in that we acclimatize to the season. It’s something we overlook even though we know that the onset of cold weather may mean changes in our clothing or our cars’ tires and fluids. Just think of yourself like your vehicle; you must prepare for winter. Your body needs the same service. Proper footwear is imperative for tread, cushioning, warmth and dryness. It’s important to prevent chilblains and frostbite, both common amongst winter runners. Another consideration is your clothing. The layer system is a classic for a reason: as your body warms up, you can strip down, maintaining a level temperature without breaking the stride of your exercise regimen.

The Warm-Up

Mobility exercises literally warm you up before exercise and are not to be confused with stretches.

Try some breathing exercises, oxygenating your blood to flow to the muscles — it’s an opportunity to get your abs pumped, which in turn warms you up.

The Exercise

You’re ready to go when you know your energy has kicked in. Walking or jogging through snow is incredibly difficult and challenging. Be prepared.

The Cool Down

Whether outside or in, it’s imperative to cool down. Blood is circulating at your requested rate, and if you suddenly stop, it may ‘pool’ at the surface. The side effects are obvious. If you’re running outside, take it down to a walk closer to home but don’t allow yourself to cool off until you’re inside. Remember to keep warm.

The Fuel

The body, like your vehicle, has to have the right fuel for the right type of exercise. If you’re not increasing your intensity by elevating your heart rate to burn calories, you have to decrease your calorie intake accordingly. Don’t forget that in winter your body needs and asks for warm food. Taking time for a good healthy breakfast is essential.



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Dr. Peter Vignjevic
Dermatologist

don't forget to moisturize the skin on your feet either. You might think once sandal weather is over you don't need to care for your feet, but that couldn't be more wrong. Both Moore and Randazzo recommend using a good moisturizer, as well as keeping up with regular pedicures every month to six weeks.

And if your idea of taking care of your skin means lathering up with soap, think again, says Vignjevic. Most deodorant and antibacterial soaps are far too drying. "A lot of people assume that antibacterial means it's good, but it's actually quite harsh on your skin," he says. "In a perfect world, we wouldn't use soap. What people have to use are high quality products that won't harm your skin."

Finally, don't forget the sunscreen on both your lips and any exposed skin if you're outside in the winter. You might think it's too cold to get burned, but there's a lot of sun reflecting off snow. "You need it every single day," Moore says of sunscreen. "Every day."

Like your skin, your hair needs special attention in the winter. Cold air outside, hot air inside, blowing winds, and not wearing a hat can all do damage to your tresses. "A lot of people find that their ends split more so in the winter than in the summer because of the wind blowing and the bitter cold," says Jennifer Pacheco, a hair stylist at PureNV Salon & Spa. Pacheco says she recommends keeping up with regular trims during the winter months.

If you find your hair is drier in the winter, Pacheco recommends using a nourishing conditioning treatment once a month to treat dry hair. You can also use a leave-in conditioner on the ends to prevent breakage, and don't forget to wear a hat to keep your hair covered and protected from the dry, brittle air.

And listen to your grandma, she says, and never, ever go out with wet hair in the cold weather. No, she's not worried you'll catch your death of cold. "When you go outside with wet hair, your hair freezes," she says, "and that makes it likely for you to get split ends and drier hair."

Above all else, Pacheco advises against



brushing your hair while it's wet. "Always use a big, thick comb when the hair is wet," she says. "When the hair is wet, it is at its weakest point. It will break off."

Eat well, live well

Stroll through the produce aisles of your grocery store during the winter, and you're bound to be disappointed by the selection. Mealy tomatoes jostle with ridiculously expensive lettuce, and the fruit? Well, let's just say that if you spent that long on a truck coming here from Mexico, you wouldn't be too fresh either.

"People tend to eat much heavier in the winter," says Dr. Michelle Honda, a holistic doctor at Ancaster's Renew You Physiotherapy Clinic and Holistic Health Centre. "More meat, more starch, more comfort foods."

In addition to the craving for comfort, winter also means many people have more hectic schedules, and might also neglect their diets. "The logistics of preparing a family meal now are very hard for people with multiple kids in multiple activities," says Barbara Cantwell, a registered dietician who works in research at McMaster University. Cantwell says people often turn to high-fat fast food and processed food instead of eating their fruits and vegeta-

Blues and Blahs

It's the feeling you get when winter is upon us and the nights seem endless: the winter blues. For some of us, we feel a little down when winter rolls around, especially once the holidays are over. For others, it's something a little more.

Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) is a very real medical condition that affects many people in the winter. "SAD is very cyclical," says Jolae Fuller, a Burlington-based counsellor with Dr. Dan Dalton Psychological & Counselling Services. "It comes back every year around the same time, when the days get shorter and the light is less."

How can you tell if it's SAD or if it's just the blues? Fuller says that people suffering from the winter "blahs" can usually find things that make them happy, but coming out of SAD is a lot worse. People with SAD are not able to come out of a depression, no matter what good things happen in their lives.

If you think you might be suffering from SAD, Fuller recommends seeking professional help. Don't be embarrassed by asking for help, she says. "If you think you have cancer, are you not going to check it out? Are you going to wait until you have this huge lump? No, you're going to go and make sure you don't have cancer when you know that it's early enough to prevent it getting worse."

The same thing is true for your mental health, she says. "If you think that you're suffering from something, there is absolutely no sense in not going to see a professional counsellor or mental health professional, or even your family doctor. Not everybody is trained to know if they've got depression or SAD." By talking to a professional, she says, you can find out all of your options and get the help you need to beat those blues.