

PROBLEM: DRY SKIN

Ambient moisture is essential to keep skin glowing. Winter packs your face a double punch – not only is it battered by harsh weather but office heating and air conditioning are dermatological disasters leading to dryness and possible skin irritation.

Solution: Boost moisture levels with a desk-top humidifier. It is an effective way to counteract the damaging effects of air conditioning and at around R400, it's economical too.

Product: A moisture-rich face spray and a super-hydrating moisturiser are absolute essentials for your winter beauty arsenal. Try Clinique's Moisture Surge Face Spray, R195, or Coverderm Maxydrat Visage, R545 (012) 460 1220

PROBLEM: TIRED EYES

Your eyes need as much care as your skin. Hours spent reading off a computer screen reduces the rate of blinking, which can lead to dry, itchy eyes – especially if you're wearing contacts. Air conditioning will dry them out further. In addition, poor winter light can lead to eyestrain.

Solution: Combat dryness by making simple changes to how you work: adequate lighting, short breaks from your computer and a monitor positioned so that the centre is just below your eyelevel, all minimise glare from your screen.

Product: Soothe tired eyes using locally made eyeSlices, which cost R79 a pair (011) 805 5649. These disposable synthetic cucumber-style slices release moisture and active ingredients such as aloe into the eye area, which helps to relieve dryness.

PROBLEM: PIGMENTATION

If you hoped time spent indoors during the winter months meant you could skip the sunscreen, think again. Cumulative exposure to the UV rays emitted by fluorescent lighting and halogen bulbs can cause damage very similar to sun exposure.

Solution: Many sun creams are now lightweight and non-greasy, making them easy to wear under make-up. If you're a product minimalist, opt for a moisturiser with a built-in minimum SPF of 15.

Product: With cutting-edge technology to help combat pollution, and natural mineral filters suitable for sensitive skins, Clarins UV Protection Plus SPF40, R395, is a powerful weapon against sun damage. It's available in a 50ml tube so it'll fit into even the most compact clutch.

PROBLEM: ROUGH HANDS

Harsh liquid soaps can strip your hands of natural oils, leaving you with scratchy, inflamed skin.

Solution: A non-greasy hand cream is the best way to restore the moisture chemical-heavy products take out. If the skin on your hands has become cracked and dry, opt for an unperfumed hand moisturiser that won't further irritate your skin.

Product: A multipurpose product such as Dermologica Multivitamin Hand and Nail Treatment, R308, will protect your hands and nails and fight environmental damage.

DOES IT WORK?

office tactics

Toxic office environments are an occupational hazard, thwarting even the most flawless beauty regime. ELLE arms you with face-saving strategies that ensure deadlines are your only lines

PROBLEM: SORE FEET

They might be a power-dressing necessity, but hours spent on stilettos can impede circulation, causing swelling in your legs and feet.

Solution: Choose office heels carefully and slip them off whenever you can get away with it.

Product: Apply REN Revivo-Tonic Cool Comfort Leg and Foot Gel, R270, while everyone's out for lunch. By stimulating drainage and reducing swelling, it'll help ease painful feet.