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Spring Clean Your Beauty Routine

No matter what your problem, our easy head-to-toe plan for treating postholiday stress disorder will solve it.

By Courtney Dunlop



Christopher Griffith

In the past six weeks, you ate (sweets and super-salty foods), drank (sugary cocktails and eggnog), and were merry (at the sacrifice of a good night's sleep). Toss in travel, work, and family stress — maybe even a few cigarettes — plus cold winter weather, and you might be looking and feeling a little worse for wear. Here's how to correct the beauty consequences.

THE DAMAGE:***DEHYDRATED SKIN WITH FINE LINES*****Culprit:** Cigarette smoke**Remedy:** Mega-moisture

"When a client is a smoker, I'll see a web of little fine lines [on her skin], like crepe paper," explains Jill Turek, lead aesthetician at Exhale Mind Body Spa in Santa Monica, California. But it's not too hard to get your dewy look back. Turek recommends an alpha hydroxy peel (we love Murad Intensive Resurfacing Peel) to clear away the dead skin cells on the surface, which then allows for hydrating creams to penetrate deeper. Rather than coating your face in thick, oily creams, "use products with ingredients that attract water to the skin — hyaluronic acid, glycerin, seaweed, and algae extract are good examples." Oh, and ditch the Marlboros already.

THE DAMAGE:***HYPERPIGMENTATION*** (brown spots or uneven patches)**Culprit:** UV rays**Remedy:** Lasers and diligent daily sunscreen use

Maybe you spent the holidays lounging on a beach in Mexico, and now you've got the sunspots to prove it. Hyperpigmentation is stubborn, and the quickest way to get visible results is via new laser technology. Dr. Marta Rendon, a dermatologist in Boca Raton, Florida, recommends the new fractional CO2 lasers like Fraxel for mild to moderate sun damage. Postlaser downtime (i.e., redness and sensitivity) ranges from five to seven days, depending on how strong you get zapped. Since the best offense is a good defense, remember to wear SPF every day.

THE DAMAGE:***ACNE*****Culprit:** Sketchy eating habits**Remedy:** A skin-balancing diet

Weeks of heavy holiday food may be to blame if you're plagued with unexplainable pimples or clogged pores. A high-glycemic diet (think starchy, sugary foods) triggers the release of insulin in the body, causing oil production to spike. Dairy is also a common enemy — one theory links high hormone levels in cows to acne. Cut back on these foods and incorporate probiotic ("good" bacteria) supplements into your diet. "When your intestinal system becomes imbalanced, toxins can be pushed out of your skin in the form of acne. Probiotics help with ongoing cleansing," says nutritionist Kimberly Snyder, author of *The Beauty Detox Solution*. She also recommends probiotic-rich foods, such as raw sauerkraut, kimchi, or coconut yogurt. And in a pinch, Sonya Dakar's new NutraSphere Blemish Buster pits topical probiotics (lactobacillus and bifidobacterium) against zits, stat.

THE DAMAGE:***PERMA-CHAPPED LIPS AND NOSE***

Culprit: Icy weather and nasal drip
Remedy: Multipurpose healing balm

Stick with formulas that create a moisturizing barrier between you and the world — look for natural ingredients like beeswax, shea butter, and olive butter. "Avoid lip balms that contain phenol," says New York dermatologist Dr. Amy Wechsler. "It breaks down the skin and creates 'lip balm addiction.'"

THE DAMAGE:

ROSACEA FLARE-UPS

Culprit: Stress, cold wind, spicy foods, and red wine

Remedy: Lasers

Rosacea sufferers, this is just not your season. While topical anti-inflammatory products can help, "adding a laser can get you over redness faster," says Rendon. Vascular lasers like Vbeam can safely remove some of the visible blood vessels in just one or two treatments. "Some people will have fewer recurrences once you remove the vessels," she says. And because extreme temperatures can exacerbate the condition, make sure to bundle up accordingly and shield your face with a scarf.

THE DAMAGE:

PUFFY EYES

Culprit: Alcohol and salty snacks

Remedy: De-puffing roller-ball and potassium-rich foods

Alcohol and salt can cause the delicate skin around your eyes to retain water, hence those bags you're packing. Grab an eye roller-pen (like The Body Shop Natrulift Refreshing Eye Roll-On) and try this tip from makeup artist Mary Schook: Applying light pressure, work the roller-ball along the puffy half-moons above and below your eyes, from the outside in, several times to work the fluid out. Also, "potassium helps balance electrolytes in the body and regulate fluid levels," explains Snyder. She recommends eating bananas and asparagus — both are high in potassium — drinking lots of water, and snacking on celery, which acts as a natural diuretic.

THE DAMAGE:

WEAK NAILS

Culprit: Too many manicures

Remedy: Hydrating cuticle oil

We know you want to look pulled together for every holiday fete, but weekly manicures can take a toll on your nails. According to Wechsler, repeatedly subjecting your nails to polish remover and quick-drying lacquer can cause them to peel or split. Give your nails a polish-free break for a few days and massage nourishing products like Sally Hansen's Vitamin E Nail & Cuticle Oil into your cuticles and nails throughout the day and before bed.

THE DAMAGE:***DRY, FLYAWAY HAIR AND ITCHY SCALP*****Culprit:** Low-humidity weather plus frequent hat friction**Remedy:** At-home hair treatment

Slather an ultra-hydrating hair treatment (try Weleda Rosemary Hair Oil) onto dry hair — it absorbs moisture more efficiently. The oils will loosen dead skin on your scalp and dissolve product residue on your hair so that when you wash (with a moisturizing shampoo, please!), unwanted gunk will rinse away easily. Follow up with a scalp- and strand-targeting healing mask such as Kérastase Age Premium Masque Substantif. Smooth renegade flyaways with a silicone-free hair serum — work a bit through damp hair before blowdrying.

THE DAMAGE:***CRACKED HEELS*****Culprit:** Running around town (in heels, no less) and drier air**Remedy:** Foot file and cream

"We typically see more dry, cracked heels in the winter, not only because of cold weather, but also because of neglect," says Carol Jo, a Bliss Spa lead nail technician. After all, it's easy to forget about your feet when they're hidden under layers of tights and boots. Jo recommends smoothing rough spots with a foot file once a week ("Use on dry skin because the file cannot grip wet feet") and moisturizing with cream every day.

THE DAMAGE:***UNDER-EYE CIRCLES*****Culprit:** Spotty sleep**Remedy:** A solid eight hours and a deft concealing strategy

A few good nights of sleep will likely banish those new shadows under your eyes, but in the meantime, use this trick from bicoastal makeup artist Emily Kate Warren, who's all too familiar with jet lag: "Mix a brightening cream or highlighter that's the same color as your skin tone with your foundation or concealer, lightly dab on the mixture, let it dry for 20 seconds, and then set it with a light dusting of powder." She also recommends a few swipes of bronzer all over your face to draw attention away from tired eyes. In other words, fake it till you make it.

FRESH STARTS 1. DR. DENNIS GROSS SKINCARE Active Vitamin D Serum-Oil, \$65. 2. SIN-CARE Sleep Doctor Booster Serum, \$70. 3. SK-II WS Brightening Derm Specialist, \$125. 4. OSKIA Bedtime Beauty Boost, \$120. 5. BORGHESE Fango Ferma Firming Mud Mask for Face and Body, \$70. 6. CLINIQUE Moisture Surge Intense Skin Fortifying Hydrator, \$36. 7. PERIOSCIENCES AO ProVantage Blast, \$25. 8. CARITA Supreme Wrinkle Solution Filler, \$95.

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