



# SKIN RECOVERY

**TREATMENTS TO COMBAT** SURFACE PROBLEMS

BY OLWEN HYROSS

Summer is definitely over. Days are cooler and nights colder. If your reflection in the mirror is also giving you the chills, perhaps your skin is due for an overhaul to prepare it for the winter months ahead.

## THE DILEMMA

Dry flaking skin, blotches, uneven skin tone could be signs of over-kill...possibly too much sun, product, soda pop or junk food. We've had more than our fair share of rain this year, but when the sun does appear, it is pretty intense. Even during the winter, with the sun's reflection on the snow, the skin still needs the protection of sunscreen. However, over-use can leave the skin looking dull, flaking and lifeless. Flaking is not only related to dry skin types but oily skin can experience this as well...flaking on top, oily underneath - like dandruff of the skin. Even if you don't feel that flaking is a problem for your skin, the results of sleeping in make-up, or just plain old neglect can cause problems that result in a cry for help!



## SEVEN DEADLY SINS

Here is the short list of why your skin may not be reflecting the image of wellbeing: Sunbathing, Smoking, Poor Nutrition, Too Much Alcohol, Caffeine, Lack of Water, Lack of Exercise. Your skin is an outer reflection of what's going on inside your body. Be prepared to make some changes in order to put your skin back on the road to recovery. Fortunately the skin is one organ that renews itself.

## WHAT CAN BE DONE

Here are some solutions. You could put a paper bag over your head, but that's not too cool. Alternatively you can seek help from an expert. A lifestyle consultation should reveal the cause, and determine a plan of rejuvenation. One immediate solution is to stop using soap on your face, unless it is a cleansing bar designed especially for oily, or acne skin. Even specialty bars can become an irritant to sensitive skin and result in "Blotches". Soap surfactant is too alkaline, and drying. It strips the skin of its natural acid mantle, lowering its defenses. It can also make skin photosensitive, causing it to burn faster, which promotes the formation of brown patches. If this is the case, switch to a gel or milk cleanser. Cleansers are gentler on skin, won't dry it out or make it oilier. They actually do a better cleansing

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### OFF WITH THE OLD & IN WITH THE NEW

Like purging your closet of last season's clothes, your old skin needs to be removed to make room for the new. The removal of accumulated scales and discoloration is done by a method of exfoliation. How mild or intense the exfoliation is will depend upon the severity of the problem and the condition, colour and sensitivity of the skin. The experts will know. Before embarking upon any of the following, make sure the "Blotches" are not a skin infection, or disease.

1. Micro-dermabrasion method of exfoliation uses abrasives such as corium crystals. It is very effective but not for the faint hearted. It can be followed by an Oxygen facial that also incorporates anti-oxidant vitamins to help fortify the skin's aging defenses.
2. Gentler methods use an enzyme action produced through a fermentation process that dissolves the dead protein of superficial cells without disturbing the live layers of the skin below. These methods are often combined with a relaxing European type facial, along with a massage.
3. "Peels" known as AHA (Alpha Hydroxyl Acids) contain Glycolic and fruit acids. BHA (Beta Hydroxyl Acids) contain Salicylic acid. They work in varying degrees of intensity by lowering the skin's pH, causing the skin to peel. Neither type can be applied to broken or wounded skin. They are generally stand-alone treatments and may require some recovery time. Dermatologists and Cosmetic Surgeons use stronger versions than Beauty Specialists.



#### DO IT YOURSELF

You can buy home care exfoliating kits. Unlike the professional ones, kits with AHA are self-timed to prevent the removal of too many layers of skin. Those that use abrasives leave more flexibility and should be used with caution. If used too frequently, the skin could end up looking worse, especially if it is mature. Mature skin doesn't regenerate new cells at the same rate as young skin, and if exfoliated too often mature skin will eventually run out of cells. This will result in skin that feels like sand paper or looks like crumpled tissue. A kick-start once in a while is a good thing. It is best to check with an expert.

#### IT'S ALL ABOUT BALANCE

So you took the plunge and today is the unveiling of your new skin. It looks great...smooth, dewy and refreshed! To maintain it you must use

home care products for your skin type that will lock in the newly restored moisture, maintain the correct pH balance, and protect it from environmental damage. Quite a tall order, but these products are available. If you haven't found one's that work best for you, keep searching. Not all products suit all people so don't use the same products that your friend raves about. That brand may not address your particular skin problem. Look for a brand that will. The correct products should be capable of balancing the skin so that it behaves like normal. If your skin is already normal, lucky you! Most of this article won't apply, but make sure that your current products continue to maintain the moisture and pH, and contain some anti-aging properties, or your skin won't remain Normal for long. Seems too much like hard work? Remember the old proverb: "A stitch in time saves nine."