

Skin Care

Contents

Baking Soda	4
Lemon Juice	5
Oatmeal	5
Shampoo	6
Toner	7
Egg Mask	8
Powdered Milk Bath	9
Stocking List	10
Sunburn	11
Chapped Lips	12
Chapped Hands	13

Most cosmetics (and by this I mean cleansers and the like as well as makeup) have some really nasty stuff in them. Someone once suggested that if you wouldn't put it in your mouth, don't put it on your skin. It's a good rule of thumb, really. Also, if you're worried about that sort of thing, one could complain about animal testing. If you're so worried that you want a guinea pig to check the chemicals on, why are you even considering smearing it all over your eyelids? Be sure to test any of these recipes on a small part of your skin first to see if you're allergic. These shouldn't set off any allergies, but you never know. Any new skin products, if working properly, will cause acne at first. They're getting all of the ipurities out of your skin. Don't fight that.

Baking Soda

Expensive store bought facial cleansers can be replaced with one simple, cheap chemical: baking soda. A 60 cent box will last you for weeks. Go to a pool supply and get it in bulk, though, if you can. It keeps, and it's useful for everything: clogged drains, cleaning, cooking, odor control... If you're on a budget or on the move, just get a small box at a time and store it in a cleaned and dried soda bottle to keep it from moisture.

For the basic use, soak your skin in really (not dangerously!) warm water or under a washcloth for showers, then form a paste with the soda and water until it's just a little thinner than toothpaste and smear on like normal cleansers. Rinse well, or you'll have itchy white powder all over your face.

Lemon Juice

Warmed lemon juice, just a little in the microwave or over a tea light in an oil diffuser (I put a sauce dish on a baby food jar with a light inside.) is a magnificent astringent. Soak a cotton ball and spread over the face. Technically, any heat will open the pores, but the acid in lemon juice bleaches skin, leaving a nice smooth and even complexion. It soaks into the pores, too, reacting with baking soda cleansers to push gunk out of your skin.

Remember that vinegar and baking soda experiment in first grade? It's the same principle. If you use this, use oatmeal in the baking soda. The reaction stings a little, but it's exothermic and feels really nice after a few seconds.

Oatmeal

Oatmeal in the baking soda, in a 1-1 ratio, will help keep your skin from drying too much during the lemon juice reaction. I recommend grinding it into a nice powder before using it, because whole oats clog drains... which could be useful, depending on where you are. I've experimented with the gel inside aloe leaves mixed in with the soda before, but not enough to recommend it. It's best at this point to just use that as a lotion as needed. A half-inch off of the top of one leaf will do.

Shampoo

Baking soda can be a shampoo, but that gets more expensive than store bought, even in bulk. Don't bother. We have read about chopping a bar of soap up, boiling it until liquid and mixing it with water to make shampoo, have not yet tried it.

You can also just use soap, which will clean your hair just fine for a lot less.

Toner

For a toner, make a very strong tea of one part basil and one part cucumber peels. In a pinch, just basil will do. Make it in decent amounts, then freeze it in ice cubes and store in the freezer in baggies. This stuff spoils within days, so thaw one cube at a time and use quickly. This should be used cool to close the pores, but not too cold, and applied just like the astringent.

Egg Mask

A beaten egg is one of my favorite facial masks. Beat the egg, then pour out just enough to coat your face and divide the rest into an ice cube tray for freezing. They'll keep in baggies too. After cleansing, smear onto the face (or whatever) and let it dry for a few minutes. Rinse off. There's all sorts of vitamins in egg that does wonders for the skin. Honey can be used instead. I don't currently have any suggestions for vegan masks, but I welcome input.

Powdered Milk Bath

Throw a cup of powdered milk under a running faucet for a milk bath. If one can only find it in pre-wrapped packets, one packet is perfect.

Stocking List

For those who are more luxuriously minded, here is a list of things to keep on hand:

- Powdered milk
- Baking soda
- Lemon juice (Don't bother with concentrate, just get the big bottles.)
- Eggs
- Honey
- Dried basil, or get a plant (Any house plant lowers your carbon footprint AND freshens your air.)

- If you can get an aloe vera plant or five, do so. Every household should have one of these.
- Cucumber peels (When you eat cukes, Dry the peels for storage, or use fresh)
- Plain oatmeal (NOT quick oats)
- Small bowls (I use Asian style sauce dishes, but if you have access to a ceramics studio this could get pretty)
- Mortar and pestle (Once again, everyone should have one of these.)
- Ice cube tray
- Ziplock baggies
- Cotton balls or a small cotton cloth

Sunburn

Baking soda in cool bathwater is nice and soothing, or for a lotion use the gel inside the leaf of an aloe vera plant. Don't make this mistake: nonstop ice packs on a bad sunburn. the woman got frostbite on top of the burn (The doctor was baffled!), and the cold-on-hot made for huge blisters and skin peels the size of her palm. Nasty. The best suggestion is to wear block (Only storeboughts or zinc oxide cream can get strong enough for the most sensitive, but there are weaker recipes around.) or stay in the shade. A grave shift job is useful there.

Chapped Lips

Most recipes mostly boil down to beeswax, oils, and sometimes menthol or camphor. Some like the aromatic coolness of menthol and camphor, while others hate the smell. Some people claim that the camphor or menthol make for softer lips, but when you stop using it actually makes you more susceptible to chapping for a while.

Chapped Hands

Aloe would work on chapped hands too, but use sparingly. The gel doesn't store well, and a little pinch goes a long way. Every household with a window should have an aloe cactus or three. They'll fix just about any skin damage. If you can't get a plant then look at a natural foods store or even a corpgov pharmacy for aloe gel with a high percentage of real aloe vera, many shaving gels now also contain aloe and other helpful vitamins and herbals.

Another tact is to visit a farm store and look for the udder softening cream used on cows and goats, many people swear by this for their own hands.

Note for the inked: one trusted piercer says he tells the newly tattooed to rub personal(sex) lubricant on the healing tat. It's good for delicate skin.



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