

Dry Skin: Seven Home Remedies

Whether it is caused by aging, an underlying skin condition, or environmental factors, having dry skin can be uncomfortable and itchy. There is a range of treatments available to treat dry skin at home – but which are most effective?

Dry skin, also called xerosis, is skin that lacks moisture in its outer layer. If left untreated, dry skin can crack and become infected. Keeping dry skin moisturized is important, but some store-bought treatments can be expensive or ineffective.

This article explores home remedies for dry skin and looks at the scientific evidence behind the claims.

Home Remedies For Dry Skin

Studies suggest that sunflower seed oil may be used as a moisturizer.

There are a variety of home remedies a person can use to relieve dry skin. Most of the treatments below can be used as moisturizers unless otherwise stated. The best way to use a moisturizer is to apply it liberally to damp skin after a bath and let it soak in.

1. Sunflower Seed Oil



A 2013 study found that sunflower seed oil improved hydration when used as a moisturizer on participant's arms.

The same study found that olive oil actually damaged the skin's barrier, suggesting not all natural oils are suitable for use as moisturizers.

2. Coconut Oil

Another natural oil that works well to treat dry skin is coconut oil. A 2014 study found that coconut oil is as safe and effective as petroleum jelly for treating dry skin. It was found to significantly improve skin hydration and increase the number of lipids (fats) on the surface of the skin.

As 2016 research explains, coconut oil contains saturated fatty acids that have emollient properties. An emollient is a fat or oil that acts as a moisturizer by filling in gaps in dry skin, making it smooth.

3. Oatmeal Bath

Oatmeal is another natural ingredient that can help treat dry skin. Adding powdered oatmeal to a bath or using creams that contain oatmeal may help to relieve dry skin.

A 2015 study found that extracts from oatmeal had anti-inflammatory and anti-oxidant properties, suggesting it can help treat dry skin.

4. Drinking Milk

Milk could also offer relief from dry skin, but not when applied to the skin. Research from 2015 suggests that a diet including milk could improve dry skin.

The study found that a fat contained in milk, called phospholipid, improved the skin barrier in mice when added to their diet. More research is needed to see if drinking milk has the same effect on skin in humans.

5. Honey



A 2012 review of research notes that some studies have shown honey to be beneficial for many types of skin diseases.

Some studies suggest that honey may be used as an at home treatment to relive dry skin.

Various studies have found honey to be:

- **Moisturizing**
- **Healing**
- **Anti-inflammatory**

These are all qualities that suggest honey is an ideal at home treatment to relieve dry skin. It is completely natural and can be applied directly to the skin.

6. Petroleum Jelly

Petroleum jelly, otherwise known as mineral oil, has been used as a moisturizer for years.

In 2017, researchers found that the skin barrier in older people improved after they used petroleum jelly. This finding supports the use of petroleum jelly to treat dry skin, especially when caused by aging.

7. Aloe vera

Aloe vera gel may help provide relief from dry skin, according to a 2003 study.

A person with dry skin on their hands or feet can apply aloe vera gel and cover the affected area with a sock or glove. People may prefer to do this before they go to bed and leave the gel on all night.

If dry skin is on another area of the body, applying aloe vera gel liberally and allowing it to soak in may achieve a similar effect.

Prevention



Moisturizing regularly after washing may help to prevent dry skin.

Applying emollients and moisturizers regularly after bathing helps prevent dry skin. People can also prevent dry skin by avoiding things that may trigger dryness or irritation, including:

- **Scratching their skin**
- **Excessive air conditioning**
- **Shaving using a blunt razor or without shaving gel**
- **Bathing or showering too often**
- **Rubbing skin too hard when towel drying**
- **Bathing or showering in water that is too hot**
- **Using lotions that contain alcohol**
- **Wearing clothes that rub the skin**
- **Frequent contact with detergents**
- **Sitting under direct heat from a heater or fire**
- **staying outside in windy conditions without covering the skin**

When to see a doctor

If environmental factors or aging is not the cause of dry skin, a person may have an underlying skin condition. If a person suspects this is the case, then they should speak to a doctor.

If home remedies and store-bought moisturizers do not alleviate the symptoms of dry skin, a person may also wish to speak to a pharmacist about over-the-counter treatments.

It is important to keep skin moisturized and to treat dry skin as soon as possible. If left untreated, dry skin can lead to:

- **Red Patches**
- **Bleeding**
- **Bacterial infection**

Redness, swelling, or pus may indicate a bacterial infection. If a person suspects their skin has become infected, they should see a doctor as soon as possible.