

The Skin Barrier Reset

For anyone dealing with dryness, stinging or sensitivity that no new product seems to fix.

✓ CHECKED AGAINST CLEVELAND CLINIC, MAYO CLINIC AND THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE ON AGING

1

Warm, not hot

Cleveland Clinic compares hot water on skin to hot water on a buttered knife. The natural oils go instantly.

2

Soap-free cleanser

Soap cannot tell good bacteria from bad, so it strips both. Fragrance free, formulated for sensitive skin.

3

Three to four months

Cleveland Clinic says that is how long it typically takes to start seeing the benefit of the change.

1. Turn the Water Down and the Clock Back

The single habit doing the most damage in most bathrooms.

WHY THIS WORKS

Cleveland Clinic dermatologist Melissa Piliang uses the butter analogy: put a buttered knife under hot water and the butter melts instantly, and hot water washes away the healthy natural oils on your skin the same way. Mayo Clinic adds that some experts consider it ideal to bathe no longer than five minutes at a time, in warm rather than hot water, and to pat rather than rub dry so some moisture stays behind.

DO THIS WEEK

- ☐ Switch to warm water for face and body
- ☐ Keep showers to about five minutes
- ☐ Pat or blot dry, never rub
- ☐ Apply moisturizer while skin is still damp

SOURCE: CLEVELAND CLINIC, HOW TO TELL IF YOUR SKIN BARRIER IS DAMAGED; MAYO CLINIC, SKIN CARE: 5 TIPS

2. Swap the Soap and Shorten the Wash

Gentler cleansing beats stronger products every time.

WHY THIS WORKS

Cleveland Clinic says soap strips natural oils and washes away good bacteria, because it cannot tell the difference between good and bad. The advice is a mild, soap-free cleanser formulated for sensitive skin and fragrance free. Dr. Piliang also pushes back on cleansing for a full minute, saying there is no benefit and that the fatty layer of the barrier can begin to break down. Mayo Clinic agrees that strong soaps and detergents strip oil from skin.

DO THIS WEEK

- ☐ Use a mild, soap-free, fragrance-free cleanser
- ☐ Massage on, rinse off; skip the minute-long wash
- ☐ Pause scrubs, acids and retinoids while it settles
- ☐ Do not pile products on broken or irritated skin

SOURCE: CLEVELAND CLINIC, HOW TO TELL IF YOUR SKIN BARRIER IS DAMAGED; MAYO CLINIC, SKIN CARE: 5 TIPS

3. Rebuild With Ceramides, Then Protect

Replace the mortar, then stop taking it back out.

WHY THIS WORKS

Cleveland Clinic advises looking for products containing ceramides, fatty acids and lipids, which naturally make up a large percentage of the skin barrier. About 50% of the epidermis is made of ceramides, which help prevent moisture loss. The same source recommends gentle fragrance-free products, regular moisturizing, and a broad

DO THIS WEEK

- ☐ Choose a moisturizer with ceramides or fatty acids
- ☐ Add hyaluronic acid if skin is dry
- ☐ Wear broad spectrum SPF 30 or higher every day
- ☐ Give it three to four months before you judge it

spectrum sunscreen of SPF 30 or higher daily. Mayo Clinic sets the same SPF 30 bar with reapplication every two hours.

SOURCE: CLEVELAND CLINIC, SKIN CARE TRENDS; MAYO CLINIC, SKIN CARE: 5 TIPS

EVERY CLAIM ABOVE, TRACED TO ITS SOURCE

Cleveland Clinic, How To Tell if Your Skin Barrier Is Damaged · <https://health.clevelandclinic.org/skin-barrier>

Cleveland Clinic, Skin Care Trends · <https://health.clevelandclinic.org/skin-care-trends>

Mayo Clinic, Skin care: 5 tips for healthy skin · <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/adult-health/in-depth/skin-care/art-20048237>

National Institute on Aging, Skin Care and Aging · <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/skin-care/skin-care-and-aging>

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