

# Look Young From Top To Toe

Learn how to age-proof your entire body

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If you work hard to stay toned but your muscles are covered in skin that's freckled, crêpey (yes, there's a word to describe those dermatological woes) and wrinkled, you're detracting from your hot physique. So it's important to take care of the skin below your neck as well as you do the skin above it. "I frequently see thirtysomething women with premature signs of ageing on their body skin," says Dr Jonathan Toogood, plastic and reconstructive surgeon at Somerset Aesthetic Surgery. The damage is thanks to extensive UV exposure to the hands, forearms, neck and chest area – and all because women haven't been as vigilant with their skincare efforts from the neck down. Protect your whole body with these tips.

## DÉCOLLETAGE

### > Treatment tricks:

Chest skin is nearly as fragile as facial skin, so you have to treat it that way. You want a moisturiser that contains a small amount of alpha hydroxy acids such as Environ Derma-Lac Lotion (R215), which promotes cell regeneration and suppleness and reduces fine lines. Apply to the area morning and evening. Boost your efforts by applying a serum to plump and hydrate skin before bed. (Try Clarins Renew-plus Body Serum, R560 for 200ml.)

Got a chest full of freckles? Toogood recommends Optimised Pulsed Light (OPL) treatments to

target pigmentation on the chest area. You'll need at least four treatments, spaced four to six weeks apart (from R1000). To turbocharge the results, he suggests you add on superficial- to medium-depth chemical peels two weeks after laser (peels range from R400 to R700 per session).

> **Prevent future damage:** It's imperative to use good broad-spectrum sunscreen (SPF 30 to 50) daily and if you're in direct sunlight, it should be reapplied regularly, says Toogood. And he recommends nothing less than SPF 30 for black women's skin too. Even though darker skin tones have an increased tolerance



to sun exposure and a slower ageing process, it doesn't mean they can't develop pigment irregularities or show signs of premature ageing, he warns. Choose one with antioxidants to fight free-radical damage. Try (1) Eucerin Sun Lotion Body Extra-light SPF 50 (R170 for 150ml).



## HANDS

> **Treatment tricks:** Eradicate sun spots by smoothing on a soy-laced SPF cream daily (try Neutrogena Anti-Ageing Handcream SPF 25, R70).

"Avoid lotions with hydroquinone – they don't penetrate deeply enough to have a noticeable effect," says dermatologist Dr Francesca Fusco. For puffy veins, Fusco suggests taking a 250mg supplement of horse chestnut seed extract twice a day – it's been shown to improve circulation and minimise bulging veins.

> **Prevent future damage:** "Hands get dry because they have fewer oil glands than the rest of the body to help keep them hydrated," says Fusco. So choose a gentle hand cleanser that won't strip hands of moisture – try (4) Good Earth Mango Seed Oil Cleansing Hand Wash (R32, Clicks) – and rinse with tepid water. Once a week, give your hands a facial-like treatment: massage with a gentle exfoliator (try Crabtree & Evelyn Pomegranate Conditioning Hand Scrub, R350), rinse, then smooth on a deeply hydrating, botanicals-infused cream – try (5) Clinique Even Better Hand Cream (R380 for 75ml). Finally, "slip on cosmetic gloves and go to bed," says Fusco. "Your hands will be soft by morning."

## LEGS

> **Treatment tricks:** To remove dark veins, ask a dermatologist about sclerotherapy, a procedure in which a solution is injected on-site to permanently dissolve capillaries. "In one or two sessions, you can eradicate clusters on the thighs, calves, shins and ankles," says US-based dermatological surgeon Dennis Gross. (From R1750 at Skin Renewal clinics.)

Brown spots and other pigmentation problems can be concealed with self-tanner or by rubbing lotion mixed with liquid highlighter along your legs to fix a flaky texture, suggests make-up artist Tim Quinn. But you'll need

a specialised anti-ageing body cream to reap longer-lasting treatment benefits.

If you're really serious about uneven skin tone, look for a hydrator with a skin-brightening complex with anti-tyrosinase to help shrink sun spots and the look of discolouration. Get friends to club together for a birthday gift of (3) La Prairie's Skin Caviar Luxe Soufflé Body Cream (R3280) – it's dosed with gently exfoliating black willow tree extract.

Nothing ages your legs quicker than flaky skin and dry patches. If you're stretched for time, you'll love a hard-working

shower-meets-body-moisturiser like (2) Nivea's In-shower Body Moisturiser Skin Conditioner (R40 for 400ml, on shelves from October). The version for dry skin is enriched with almond oil to leave your legs (and body) feeling silky. Wash with your regular body cleanser, rinse, apply this moisturiser and rinse again.

> **Prevent future damage:** In addition to slathering on an SPF 30 to SPF 50 sunscreen, moisturise daily with a product that's infused with vitamin K to help shrink the look of varicose and spider veins. Try Coverderm Vanish Jambes (R627 for 75ml).



> A woman's chest reveals her age faster than her driver's licence does. Hormonal changes, a natural loss of collagen and cumulative sun exposure can result in brown spots, loosened skin and wrinkling.

> Hands take a real beauty beating. Veins can bulge if you lose a lot of weight, and constant use of sanitising gel (which often contains moisture-sucking alcohol) will cause skin to look dry and leathery.

> You can thank your parents and your kids for some leg issues (spider veins, varicose veins and cellulite are genetically rooted and can crop up during pregnancy). Loose, dry and uneven-toned skin are the products of too many days spent tanning at the beach.

> Feet can get a little nasty-looking as you get older. Bunions, corns, hammertoes and calluses are often the result of decades of teetering around in high heels and cramming your feet into too-tight shoes. Yellow or discoloured toenails are caused by either a fungal infection or trendy dark polishes that can stain the nails.

## Don't buy shoes that feel tight – even if they're sexy and on sale

### FEET

#### > Treatment tricks:

Have a professional pedicure once a month and, at home, use a foot file once a week for two minutes to slough away dead skin, says nail- and skincare therapist Michelle Du Toit of Radiance Skin & Body Therapy (try Tweezerstone Pedro Callus Stone File, R220). If your heels are cracked, apply a thick heel balm nightly – Du Toit says the greasier the texture, the better. If your feet just need some maintenance, then two to three times a week will do – try (6) Elemis Treat For Feet Foot Cream (R365 for 75ml).

Suffering from yellowing toenails? Du Toit advises taking a holiday from nail polish (this way you'll see if you've picked up a fungal infection or nail damage) and switching to buffing your toenails for a natural finish. If you have time, try bleaching your nails with a homemade paste. Squeeze some lemon juice into a teaspoon of baking powder, and rub the paste onto your nails with a cotton pad. Rinse, then buff. To rid nails of discolouration caused by infection, see a podiatrist, who can give you a topical treatment or prescription.



Corns can be reduced with the help of a foot file. Use it in the shower to slough off the top layer of hard skin, then apply foot cream. Wearing roomy shoes can help too, says Gina Badenhorst, secretary of the Podiatry Association of South Africa, because corns develop over areas of pressure. Wide-width shoes can also prevent hammertoes and bunions from getting worse, but if yours are truly unsightly or painful, you may want to consider surgery, she says.

#### > Prevent future damage:

Du Toit advises daily moisturising and treating with a foot file but never overusing it (the more you file, the more thick skin will grow back, she says). "If you don't have troubled feet and only have time to do one thing, just apply heel balm."

Alternate between wearing heels and flats to avoid placing too much pressure on the balls of your feet, and don't buy shoes that feel tight – even if they're on sale. The wrong size can cause a world of damage, says Badenhorst. ■