

## SELF-CARE

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Physical activity isn't the only way to take care of your body. Nourishing your skin, hair and nails is also important! You may already treat yourself to regular baths in cold weather, but do you also treat your skin? By adding oils, Epsom salt and bath scrubs to your regular bath routine, you are helping to protect your skin from the harsh elements outside.

Bath and shower scrubs provide excellent exfoliation for your skin by removing dead skin cells from your body, leaving it smooth, bright and soft. While there are a number of great body scrubs on the market, you can also make your own homemade scrubs using ingredients right from your kitchen cabinets! You can combine any number of ingredients together, such as brown sugar, olive oil, coconut oil, salt, grapeseed oil, green tea, mint, lime, coffee grounds or cocoa powder, to name only a few. It is best to use scrubs about 2-3 times a week for full effectiveness. Exfoliating anymore could potentially cause irritation.

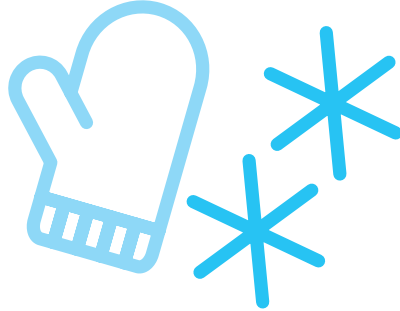
After you exfoliate is the perfect time to use an oil. You could apply a body oil right to your skin or you can put an oil in your bath ahead of time. While there are plenty of bottled oils on the market, there are also dissolving bath drops that work really well too. Like scrubs, you can also use a variety of ingredients to customize your own bath oil. One fun way to do this is by infusing an oil with herbs of your choice over the stove or in a crockpot. Of course, some oils may become greasy when put into the water. This is why I recommend using aloe vera and bath salts in your creation. These ingredients will help to emulsify the oil in the bathwater. Otherwise, you may be better off

using olive oil or turkey red oil.

While I love a good body scrub or bath oil, my favorite bath item is actually Epsom salt. Using some in my bath or as a foot soak really helps with all of the aches and pains that I incur throughout my busy work weeks. Another thing that I love about using Epsom salt is that you can purchase it with a variety of different essential oil blends, making the salt smell heavenly.

For nail care, you will want to find a good cuticle oil to use daily. This will keep your cuticles from becoming hard and causing irritation when they poke out from the sides of your nails. It can also help to prevent ingrown toenails. If you don't feel like buying one at the store, use any cold-pressed oil, such as vegetable, olive or almond. If you are interested in attaining strong, shiny nails, I would definitely recommend a clear nail strengthener. Apply it like nail polish to freshly clean nails and remove after about a week of wear. Reapply as needed and for increased strength.

If you are having a bluesy winter, where you feel sluggish and have constantly dry or irritated skin, try implementing some of these tips to your daily routine. Not only will they make your body feel better, it will also make you feel good that you took time out of your busy schedule to take care of yourself. And taking care of yourself is one of the best investments that there is.



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