Here Comes The Sun

by Cristina Migliaccio

The sun's out. The temperature's heating up. And the clothes are coming off. We're all set to display our skin in all its glory. We march off to buy the ideal bathing suit of the season: Hmm, maybe it's the dressing room's fluorescent lighting, but were those spider veins and cellulite dimples there last summer? Okay, so maybe we're not quite so ready. But with a little natural damage control, we'll be picture perfect in no time.

Beauty isn't all about the physical. Your "glow" comes as much from well-kept skin as from inner harmony. Stay positive, laugh, and remember it's summer! Take time out to enjoy it — stroll on the beach, meditate a bit more, or grow some new plants. But, back to the outer you: All of this means wearing sunscreen, drinking lots of water, eating healthy, and exercising — more ways to keep skin robust! As for the plethora of products you might try, keep in mind that the active ingredients may become less effective over time. If you don't see an expiration date on the label, inquire about it. Ready, set, go tackle your skin woes!

FRECKLE FREEDOM

Yes, freckles are beautiful. But sunning for even a few hours can give you more brownish marks than you bargained for. The ultraviolet rays make them look not only darker but like they've multiplied. Just to make sure we're on the same wavelength: True freckles are pretty harmless, but aren't raised bumps (i.e. moles) or toughened skin (i.e. sun spots). Zero sun exposure is the only fool-proof remedy to keep them completely at bay. But if that's unacceptable, don the sunscreen, and try one of these treatments.

Home Spa Solution: Lemon juice or buttermilk. For day, Janice Cox, author of Natural Beauty From the Garden (Henry Holt), suggests applying a thin layer of lemon juice with a cotton ball. Follow with a moisturizer. For night, swab a thin layer of buttermilk onto freckles. Wash off in the morning. Fading time varies, but you should start seeing results in about eight weeks.

Creamy Remedy: Naturopathica Botanical Skin Brightener ($38 for 2 oz.). Look for products with good whitening agents, such as uva-ursi (a burberry enzyme) and kojic acid (a natural bleach). Unfortunately, they don't zap freckles into oblivion. Once you stop using them, the marks will probably reappear. Use the products for at least two weeks to see results. Others to try: NuSkin Skin Brightening Complex ($17.50 for .5 oz.); D'Arcy Skin Lightening Cream ($35 for 2 oz.).

VEIN VICTORY

Weight gain, hormonal changes, standing for long periods of time, or simply genetics may be the reason for those icky varicose veins. When blood collects in an area because of poor circulation, vessels become swollen and distorted. They usually start out as annoying spider veins, which are smaller, red, and don't swell the surface of the skin, but can gradually become more pronounced.

Home Spa Solution: Comfortable warm baths. "People with varicose veins should avoid
Your Natural Guide To Flawless Summer Skin
stressing their bodies with extremes,” says Tamara Friedman, owner of Tamara Institut De Beaute in Farmington Hills, Mich. So avoid boiling hot or icy cold water. Keep your feet propped up while you’re soaking. Of course, drink lots of temperate liquids to help the body function properly.

Supplement remedy: Nature’s Life Horse Chestnut Seed Extract ($9.95 for 50 capsules). A study from the Archives of Dermatology showed that taking 100-140 mg of horse chestnut seed extract everyday for two months reduced the swelling, itching, and pain of varicose veins. Others to try: Sundown Herbs Vein Guard Horse Chestnut (about $6 for 60 capsules); Pharmaton Venestat ($15.99 for 60 capsules).

Professional method: Shiatsu. “It not only helps to rebalance the whole body, but also keeps the blood moving,” says Julie Tersigni, owner of The Shiatsu Studio in New York City. If your circulation’s good, then you don’t have to worry about bumpy veins that mar smooth skin. If you’re afraid you might get them, a shiatsu therapist can check a couple of meridians (for the heart and small intestine) and give you a diagnosis.

STRETCH MARK HEALING
Rapid growth spurts and sudden weight gain cause elastin and collagen fibers to distend and break, resulting in annoying stretch marks. The good news: These harmless marks will fade in time. The bad: They never totally disappear.

Preventive: Cocoa butter. Your skin will think it’s gone to heaven when you rub some on. The reward: more supple, accommodating skin that bounces back much faster. If cocoa butter isn’t your thing, try light sesame or coconut oil.

Creamy Remedy: Mustela Stretch Marks Double Action ($32 for 6.8 oz.). If you’ve already got a few, don’t panic. Soy protein, borage oil, and antioxidants will all stimulate collagen growth to help make these marks less prominent. Others to try: Naturpathica Borage Seed Stretch Mark Oil ($16 for 4 oz.); Jason A-Plex3 Butter with vitamin E ($6.50 for 2 oz.).

Professional method: Ultra-strong alpha-hydroxy acids. You’ll need high concentrations of AHAs, which you can’t buy in a store, to significantly diminish stretch marks, says Friedman. Spas will customize the strength and blend of the treatment for your skin type.

SCAR ZAPPERS
We all have our share of lost battles with unseen furniture and sharp objects, leaving us with gouged and cut skin. Most wounds disappear on their own. But if you’re accident prone, you might be left with keloids, raised or depressed scars. They form when the healing process gets messed up, i.e. excess collagen settles in the wound, says Diane Madlès, M.D., clinical instructor at Albert Einstein Medical College in New York City. Luckily, keloids don’t necessarily have to be worn as permanent badges of honor.

Preventive: Vitamin E oil. A classic cure for fading scars and helping them heal is this emollient. If this is too sticky for you, mix it with a bit of apricot kernal or light sesame oil. Avocado oil is also a good choice because of its high vitamin E content.

Creamy Remedy: Mederma ($30 for 1.76 oz.). The onion extract in these gels is purported to help scars disappear, but takes time, up to 3-6 months. Warning: The extract is an allergen for some people. Or try Derma E Scar Gel ($19.95 for 2 oz.).

Professional method: Comfrey root poultice. “Comfrey is known to help grow new cells and is great for all types of healed wounds,” says Arcus Flynn, owner of Flynn’s School of Herbology in New York City. Try this recipe, based on her Antibiotic Ointment: Boil water,
BODY PARTS

We all know that each of us has specific skin “types” for our face: dry, normal, oily, or combination. But different areas of the body have specific “types” too. For example, “the torso has a lot more oil glands than the arms and legs,” says Mary Ruth Buchness, M.D., chief of dermatology at St. Vincent’s Hospital and Medical Center in New York City. In other words, slathering the same moisturizer from head to toe won’t yield optimal results. To keep your skin comfortable and healthy as the humidity heats up, follow these guidelines.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PART</th>
<th>SKIN TYPE</th>
<th>SOLUTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Upper Chest, Back &amp; Shoulders</td>
<td>Normal to Oily</td>
<td>Consider this area an extension of your face, and handle with care! If your skin’s the normal kind, use your facial cleanser for this area to maximize its lumenescence. If you’re getting annoying pimples on your chest and back, try this old Indian remedy for oily skin: Mix plain yogurt with some bajra grain (sold at Indian food stores). Keep the mixture at a creamy, dense consistency. Apply, and let dry until it starts crumbling off. Rinse. Or use a gentle product containing salicylic acid. Follow with witch hazel, an astringent, on a cotton swab.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stomach</td>
<td>Normal</td>
<td>We tend to forget to take care of this area — especially since we can cover it up in one-piece swimsuits. Keep your tummy twinkling with a little TLC: Scrub with a gentle natural exfoliator, like Epoch Polish Bar ($12.25 for 3.4 oz.). Rub on Burt’s Beeswax Moisturizing Creme ($12 for 2 oz.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arms</td>
<td>Normal (especially those elbows!)</td>
<td>A regular body moisturizer is enough to keep normal skin supple. But if you have the dry variety, try this spa-like remedy, inspired by the Body Polish treatment at The Spa at Saddlebrook Resort in Tampa, Fla. Pour some Bath and Body Works Stress Relief Body Polisher ($10 for 14 oz.) onto a loofah and attack “back of arm” bumps and scaly skin. Follow with a heavy-duty moisturizer that traps water into the skin, like Bath and Body Works Stress Relief Body Lotion ($10 for 9 oz.).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Legs</td>
<td>Normal to Dry (think knees)</td>
<td>Like the arms, normal skin can look good with any quality moisturizing lotion. But for the dry: Exfoliation is the key to keeping skin radiant. Also try taking occasional showers using olive oil as your cleanser, keeping oil away from eyes and other sensitive areas. It’ll leave your gams feeling silky-smooth for weeks.</td>
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and add enough powdered comfrey root to make a little mud pie. Place the pie into a small cloth bag. Let cool slightly, and apply to scar for 15-20 minutes.

CELLULITE HELP

Unfortunately for females, 80-90% of us will develop cellulite after puberty whether we’re overweight or not, says Diana L. Howard, Ph.D., vice president of technical development at Dermaologica. Even the slimmest, fittest women are susceptible. Don’t get depressed. A regimen including exercise and a healthy diet will help decrease cellulite formation. And we’ve found some other ways to help you diminish these dimples.

HOME SPA SOLUTION: Aromatherapy. Essential oils can help improve circulation and lymphatic drainage. (Spas have been using them for years with different treatments.) Lavender, lemon, eucalyptus, and juniper are all effective. Try this recipe from Valerie Gennari Cooksley, author of Aromatherapy (Prentice Hall): Mix 10 drops each juniper and lavender essential oils, 30 drops each eucalyptus and lemon essential oils, and 1 tablespoon distilled witch hazel lotion. Add mixture to 6 ounces of unscented lotion (not made with mineral oil). Mix well, and massage onto cellulite-prone areas.

CREAMY REMEDY: Dermaologica Streamlining Body Toner ($23 for 7.5 oz.). The (Continued on page 95)
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Ingredients in these creams (the plant
ativies caffeine, theophylline, and theo-
zone) are reputed to increase lipase
ity, which means less cellulite via
erated fat breakdown. Experts disagree
how effective they are. But there’s
evidence they work. Others try:
’s Bees Cellulite Creme ($12 for 3.5
Clarins Body Lift 2000 ($46 for 7 oz.).

Essential method: Manual Lymph
naging (MLD). It’s perfect because it
go to rid of the body of lymph fluids
but increasing the blood flow which
avates cellulite, says Dr. Howard.

Going for treatments twice a week
ly (for faster results) should show
ficient improvements. Mara Stern at
Spa in New York City recommends
ng at least six treatments, one every
da. The catch: It’s high mainte-
— you have to keep going back to
appearances up.

OOTING IT OUT

ks to sun damage, gravity, and a nat-
crease in facial fat as we grow,
you might begin seeing signs of
feet and smile lines when you look
mirror? Personally, I think they add
eter. However, if you don’t buy that
inkle wrestling match we think
ight win.

Spa Solution: Homemade exfolia-
etting rid of dead skin cells is the best
to bring your best face forward. Try
gentle recipe from Catherine Bardey,
of Secrets of the Spas (Black Dog &
ual): Finely grind 1/2 cup oatmeal,
2 tablespoons of honey and 1/4 cup
yogurt. Mix until the consistency is
ike. Smooth on face and neck, and
y 15 minutes. Rinse. Use it in the
ing for all-day dewiness.

my Remedy: Kiehl’s Ultra Protection
Cream and Sunscreen SPF 18 ($22.50
oz.). Feed your face. Antioxidant
is with retinoid derivatives are great
erses. Over time, they help to
elastin fibers to keep skin smooth.
ally try: Bath and Body Works Face
ly Retinol Cream ($12 for 1 oz.);
Without Cruelty Vitamin C Eye
$24.95 for 1 oz.).

Essential method: Resurfacing treat-
Traditionally, we think of glycolic
ow there are newer, milder exfolia-
ethods to round out the wrinkle-bat-
useful. Different spas offer their own
e, natural options instead; like using
id-based peels. Calculate how much
at done, what time you have to
ick and pick your weapon.

atever method you use to
your perfect summer skin, don’t
orget to have a little fun in the sun. Try
pating the European self-love disposi-
tion: Accept your body for what it is —
man, and not so perfect. And then, take
care of your skin naturally. You’ll feel
more comfortable in that sleeveless shirt
or swimsuit, or even baring it all! ☮

KID STUFF

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page 56. $8 for 2.5 oz. 800-849-7112.

Weleda Diaper-Care. A must-have for
der baby rashes, this combination of almond oil,
lanolin, beeswax, and extracts of calendula
and chamomile flowers offers quick relief
from skin irritations. $6.95 for 1.4 oz. 800-
241-1030.

The Baby Lane Inkibabe Flushable
Linens. Made from wood pulp, they’re
fully biodegradable, super absorbent, and
hydrogen peroxide bleached. $4.95 for 80
sheets. 888-387-0019.

Mustela PhysiObebe No Rinse
Cleansing. Great for times when a water
source isn’t nearby. A no-rinse formula
made with allantoin (an aloe vera leaf extract).
$12.50 for 10 oz. Also try their Extra
Thick Cleansing Cloths, soaked in a vege-
table-based lotion. $7.50 for a box of
100. 800-422-2987.

The Baby Lane Prefold 100% Chinese
Cotton Diapers. Diaper service quality at a
much more affordable price. The double
strength of the prefold makes for less leaks,
and less hassle. $18.50-$31 per dozen,
depending on baby’s weight. 888-387-0019.

GIFT SETS

Baby Bee “Getting Started” Kit.
Includes mini-containers of Skin Creme,
Butterball Bath, Diaper Ointment, Dusting
Powder, Apricot Baby Oil, and two
Butterball Sponges in a clear plastic bag.$11.
800-849-7112.

Origins Newborn Gift Set. Create your
own gift with any of their baby products.
Price depends on your selections and
cludes a basket that’s topped off with a
cute ribbon. 800-ORIGINS.

Naturopathica Baby Care Box. Includes
full-sized containers of Gentle Baby Wash
for Body and Hair, Comfrey Diaper Care
Cream, Relaxing Baby Massage and Bath Oil,
Baby Massage Guide, and Terry
Cloth Bath Mitt.$65. 800-669-7618.

Healthy Times Baby’s Herbal Garden
Bathtime Gift Collection. Includes
Honeysuckle Baby Bath, Sweet Violet
Lotion, Sunflower Baby Bath, Aloe &
Chamomile Baby Bar, Organic Cotton
Wash Cloth.$19.90. 619-513-1550.

Spa Time Baby Gift. Includes Fussy
Time bath aromatherapy, Baby Massage
(oil pictured on page 56), Baby Wash,
Baby Bathers gloves for mom or dad,
Baby Wrap hooded towel, and Baby
Mozart CD in a keepsake box.$80. 877-
4-BABY-SPA.

WATER WORKS

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massage therapist, joined me in the tank.
She began by rubbing my feet. Then
maneuvering behind and partially beneath
me, she used her arms, hands, and legs to
support my back and neck. “This is differ-
ent from a regular massage. Since there is
no surface under you, I have to use my body
weight for support,” she explained, observ-
ing that when she and the solution cradle
the body, clients often feel like they’ve
returned to the womb. As she stretched me,
my vertebrae seemed to realign perfectly.
Her gentle hands felt nurturing and healing.
After an hour long underwater massage, I
emerged energized, with clear sinuses and
slippery skin — and a true believer in water’s
healing properties.

HOW CAN I USE IT AT HOME?

No need to go to a pro. Everyone has
access to water and can perform this simple
hydrotherapy at home. Experts are split
on the dangers of doing this. Some say
there are none; others say pregnant
women and those with high blood pres-
sure should avoid hot water cures. Your
best bet: Consult your healer before self-
treatment.

• For sinus problems: Apply a hot com-
press over the affected area for three
minutes, followed by a cold one for 30 seconds.

• For muscle strains and sprains: Dr.
White recommends applying cold packs to
reduce inflammation for up to 72 hours
after an injury. Then alternate between hot
and cold compresses. Start with the hot;
apply for three minutes. Follow with an icy
one for 30 seconds. Repeat three times.

• To detox and relax: In her book
Inspirations (self-published), Dr. Goldberg
recommends pouring two pounds of Epsom
salts into a tub. Soak for 20 minutes, once
a week.

Water’s mystical properties have been
ported since the beginning of time. It’s
one of Earth’s most abundant elements
and a powerful force of nature. Essential
for life, the liquid should be tapped for its
healing abilities. After all, hydrotherapy at
home is easy, inexpensive, and works.
Since you can’t always splurge on a spa
service, next time you’re in need, turn to
your sink, tub, or shower. I know I will. ☮

To find a spa that offers hydrotherapy, contact Spa
Finders (www.spafinders.com). For a naturopathic
doctor near you, who provides these services, the
National Association of Naturopaths (www.naturop-
pathic.org) can provide you with a referral.