



THE SKINNY ON SWEATING

Exercise creates profound changes in your skin but what does coming into contact with germs from others mean for your health? Nobel Prize winner Dr David Stoll reveals how to keep your outer layer healthy when training

TOP DERMATOLOGIST, NOBEL PRIZE WINNER FOR MEDICINE AND AUTHOR OF *A WOMAN'S SKIN*

The primary focus of sweating is to cool your skin. So when you work out and build up a sweat, it is cooling you down so you can exercise efficiently. On the other hand, too much sweat can clog your pores and give you acne, especially on your back. It's about achieving moderation and wearing the appropriate training clothing so you don't perspire too much. Here's everything you need to know to keep your skin aglow.

THE BEST FABRICS FOR EXERCISE

Generally, most fabrics are safe, but occasionally someone will wear something that rubs them the wrong way. Most of the time this could be due to friction rather than the fabric itself. In scientific terms, this is called a contact dermatitis. Treatment of contact dermatitis is with prescription-strength topical steroid creams, but it's best to avoid rather than treat, so take note of what your workout gear is made of and how your body reacts to it when exercising.

SKIN CARE FOR THE FITNESS SET

For those who regularly exercise intensely, you must shower directly after training to remove excess sweat, which will help you to prevent acne. Also, showering after you exercise will help with the aforementioned contact dermatitis. Sometimes the skin will 'toughen' when it's chronically rubbed. So there'll be less chance of irritation, but the skin may be thickened due to the increased rubbing. Often, the thickened skin will also be somewhat darkened due to pigment produced in response to the rubbing, but that's nothing to worry about.

TOUGHENING UP YOUR SKIN

While you may want to toughen up your skin if you play sports so it doesn't graze as easily, this can be difficult to achieve, but moisturizer may help to hydrate and avoid this. It's better to rely on proper protection when it comes to skin care. Elbow pads, kneepads and even long sleeves to protect against sun exposure are all important for regular sportsmen.

TAKE NOTE OF WHAT YOUR WORKOUT GEAR IS MADE OF AND HOW YOUR BODY REACTS TO IT

TOWEL UP?

Many people question if a towel is all you need as a buffer to skin bugs or irritations when training in communal environments. In this case you still have to wash the surface of your skin because a towel isn't enough of a barrier. If you are exposed to other people's sweat, even slightly, washing off is essential, and using a sanitizing hand lotion is another smart move.

SWIM SKIN

Many people don't realize that you need to protect your skin if you regularly swim in a public pool. After swim training, it is best to always wash off straight away because although most pools are fine, some people are irritated when there's too much chlorine in the pool, which happens regularly.

YOUR MOST IMPORTANT BARRIER

It's well understood that your skin is porous, so what does that mean for products like moisturizers? The determining factor, about something you apply to your skin is the ability of the active ingredient to penetrate your thin outer film. If the particle is of a low molecular weight, like a spray-on creatine like Creatop, it'll penetrate more easily than particles of a larger molecular weight. For example, with so-called collagen creams, the collagen doesn't penetrate because the molecule is too big; it just sits on top of the skin.

Generally speaking, it takes a special formula to get something to penetrate the skin and any over-the-counter cream would have been manufactured by an approved laboratory, so there is little danger of internal damage from skin creams. It's better to stay hydrated than to avoid creams all together. ●



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