

allure

THE BEAUTY EXPERT

DECEMBER 2004

TOTALLY SOFT SKIN

10 Steps to Perfect Smoothness

THE PARTY DIET

Stay-Slim

SEXY EVENING Sheer Gold Silver, Easy

9 SLEEP ON IT.

When outside temperatures plummet and the radiator begins clanking, your bedroom can become drier than a Baptist retreat. And after a night of sleep, so can your skin. This is the one period in your day when you can lube up liberally without much of it rubbing off. Slather a rich moisturizer over the legs, arms, feet, and hands half an hour before climbing into bed. This will allow it to sink into the skin, preventing that butter-dipped feeling when you hit the sack. Intense spot treatments are also opportune: To heal her own cracked, chapped hands, Washington, D.C., dermatologist Elizabeth Tanzi sleeps in cotton gloves over a thick layer of Vaseline. "I wash my hands 50 times a day, so dryness is a huge issue for me," she says. "But with this treatment, I wake up feeling baby-soft."

Crack Down

Chris Rock should crack you up. Winter weather should not. Skin on the elbows, knees, and heels can become brittle in cold weather—and need special attention.

- **GREASE UP.** Sealing tiny, almost imperceptible fissures and keeping the surrounding skin properly hydrated will prevent possible infections, says Howard Fein. He recommends twice-daily applications of a heavy, occlusive formula, such as Aquaphor Healing Ointment, followed by a mild cortisone cream, such as Cortaid, if there is itching and inflammation. (Another cult-favorite moisturizer is Zim's Crack Creme, which was first developed to soften cement workers' hands.) Alpha hydroxy acids will burn like hell, so avoid them at all costs.

- **CLOSE THE GAP.** The most powerful creams are no match for deeply cracked skin. To heal splits, Fein swears by a household staple: "Liquid superglue." A small drop lasts three to four days, which is usually sufficient. But a second drop can be added if necessary."

- **SEE A PROFESSIONAL.** If cracked skin doesn't improve after two weeks of at-home treatment, call a dermatologist to rule out eczema, infection, or other ominous ickiness.