

VOGUE

5 Skin Treatments That Are Better to Do in Winter



As the urge to hibernate starts to officially set in this winter, consider turning those extra layers of cashmere and hours at home into a beauty advantage. The absence of powerful sun rays and inflammatory heat during the coldest months makes it the ideal time to book treatments that would require a recovery parasol (and sometimes a full caftan cover-up) in the summer months.

Whether it's scheduling a dreaded laser hair removal session or finally ridding yourself of that once-inspirational tattoo, these treatments are better endured now than later, according to Manhattan's most in-demand dermatologists.

1. Laser Hair Removal

The technology in laser hair removal is largely based on skin tone, so having an even, tan line-free surface to work with means better, faster results. "Laser hair removal is best to do in the winter because there is less sun exposure than other times of the year," says New York City dermatologist Paul Jarrod Frank, M.D., who sees permanent results in patients within four sessions, each around three weeks apart. "The laser targets pigment, therefore having the least amount of melanin makes the treatment easier, safer, and most effective." Andréa Young, co-owner of Manhattan's Beam Laser Spa, confirms that her practice sees yearly clients who strategically book sessions to coincide with the cooler, darker months.

2. Chemical Peels + Micro-Needling

Peels encourage cell turnover, which can temporarily increase vulnerability to the elements. “Since chemical peels make skin more sun sensitive by removing superficial layers, the winter is an ideal time to try one,” says Jennifer Myers, M.D., founder of SkinCeuticals Advanced Clinical Center. “Also, exposure of treated skin to a lot of heat can sometimes induce unwanted swelling.” Myers also explains that winter’s excessive indoor heating and brisk, cold air can dull the complexion, and a session of micro-needling can allow nutrients like vitamins C and E to penetrate and rejuvenate skin, “giving you a radiant glow without the sun.”

3. Cellulite Reduction

If you’re considering taking the plunge into smoothing procedures such as Cellfina, which uses a small needle-sized device to treat the cellulite-forming bands just beneath the surface of the skin, bundling up is the perfect way to hide any bruising or irritation that might result, according to Patricia Wexler, M.D., founder of Wexler Dermatology. “Cellulite reduction is most frequently done in winter months, when clothing is more complicated and concealing, and activities such as outdoor sports and sun exposure are at a minimum,” she says.

4. Tattoo Removal

Finally willing to part with that permanent note on your wrist reminding you to “breathe”? Book your appointment ASAP. “Given that you can’t be exposed to the sun while undergoing PicoSure tattoo removal and it takes several sessions, it’s best to do so during the winter so you’re not missing out on any fun come summer,” says David Colbert, M.D., founder of New York Dermatology Group. “Plus, you’ll be 100 percent ready for tank tops sans ink.”

5. Laser and Light Treatments

“The best winter treatments for skin are those targeting pigmentation,” says Shereene Idriss, M.D., of Wexler Dermatology. “You can have all the wrinkles in the world, but if your tone is even, then it almost does not matter.” Idriss’s go-to picks for winter brightening are light and laser treatments like IPL (intense pulsed light) and Fraxel. IPL targets pesky blemishes, redness, and brown spots, while Fraxel targets pigment to even out color, or it can single out water to help with fine lines and texture. In either case, now is the time to do it. “Post-treatment your skin is slightly more sensitive to light,” she explains, “which can result in new, unwanted spots.”