

MEN'S JOURNAL

EXPERT ADVICE

The Guide to Hand Care for Men

You know the stuff in liquid dispensers on the walls of public restrooms? "Most of these soaps are alcohol-based and will tear your skin apart," says Paul Jarrod Frank, M.D., a dermatologist in New York City. The more you wash, the drier they get. That's not a pass to skip the sanitizing, but for road trips, pack your own pocket-size moisturizing cleanser like Aveda Hand and Body Wash (\$6; aveda.com) that conditions skin while removing the grime.

"Men have thicker skin than women, so to soften rough hands you need something that's going to penetrate," Frank explains. "Plain old moisturizer won't work." What does: Aquaphor Advanced Therapy Healing Ointment (\$7, drugstore.com). "Ideally, guys should rub Aquaphor on their hands before bed, put on a pair of gloves and let it soak in while they sleep," Frank says. What's that? Not a gloves-to-bed guy? You can also apply before heading to the garage to work on the car or before doing yard work — or any other place where wearing gloves feels a bit more natural.

Your hands get far more sun day-in and day-out than your face ever will, and while it can take up to 15 years for sun damage to appear, eventually your hands will be covered in brown spots and freckles. "You need to wear sunscreen 365 days a year. Period," Frank says. "Put it on your face and hands after you groom yourself in the morning, while your skin is still slightly damp for best absorption." Neutrogena Men's Sensitive Skil Oil-Free Moisturizer (\$7; neutrogena.com) has SPF30 to prevent sun damage.

When is dry skin not just dry skin? When it's eczema, a medical condition that causes skin to become inflamed, leading to the appearance of dryness. "Guys come in all the time saying, 'Doc, I don't know what's wrong, I keep putting on moisturizer and my hands are still dry and itchy,'" Frank says. "That's because it's eczema, which is more common on the hands than many people realize." If you are constantly moisturizing and don't see any improvement in your dry skin, check with your doctor — if it's eczema, an OTC topical hydrocortisone cream can clear things up quickly.