



TOUGHEN UP

Strength and resistance training shouldn't be reserved just for the gym, says b+s beauty editor Kelsey Ferencak

your hair

Everything from age, diet and medical conditions, to sun exposure, harsh products and heat styling can disrupt the hair-growth cycle and contribute to weak, porous locks. But, according to Australian Institute of Trichology education director Simone Lee, there are easy fixes for stronger strands.

"To maintain optimum hair health, it's essential to have a healthy diet. Wholegrains [containing biotin and silica], lean proteins and green vegetables can improve your hair-regeneration cycle," she says, adding: "A healthy scalp, minimising stress and exercising regularly are also essential."

Lifestyle aspects aside, there are key beauty rules to follow, too. To start, Lee recommends drying wet hair with a microfibre towel. "It reduces drying time and removes excess water without rubbing or heating hair," she explains. "Another tip is to always use a thermal protectant to provide a barrier over hair and fight free radicals. Also avoid using hot-styling tools more than twice a week, and get gentle hair ties and brushes

made from boar bristles."

Lee recommends investing in a quality argan oil to revitalise brittle hair and a dehydrated scalp, and to look for products that promote hydration, seal the hair cuticle and protect from UV. Following this type of hair-healthy regimen will ensure less damage to your strands, resulting in minimal breakage and frizz, along with a stronger scalp, to promote growth.

your nails

"One of the main culprits of weak and damaged nails is a nutritional deficiency," says Tracey Winder, national trainer at Mavala Australia. "It not only prevents them from growing normally, but can also cause weak, soft and brittle nails. Prolonged exposure to detergents or water, micro nail traumas like picking and overusing synthetic nail

treatments [such as gels or acrylics] lead to continued poor nail quality and can even cause your nails to become weak and flaky."

As your nails are mostly made up of the protein keratin, it makes sense to up your intake if you're dealing with weak tips. Whether it's through good, old-fashioned food or a supplement, a higher-

protein diet is the best place to start. "Diet plays an essential role in the formation and care of healthy nails," says Winder. "Vitamins A, B, C, D and E are the most important for healthy nails,

as well as lots of fruit and vegetables, eggs, olive oil and fish. Minerals like calcium, iodine, iron and magnesium are also essential, and ensuring your diet is rich in silica, a mineral likened to 'cell cement', will help your nails grow faster."

Your next step is hydration and protection. "Use a topical nutritive oil or cream that contains essential amino acids and lipids to restore the nail's elasticity and resistance to chipping," explains Winder. "And keep your nails short and rounder in shape, to minimise wear and tear."



NAIL IT

LIFE BASICS BY NOURISHED LIFE BREATHABLE NAIL POLISH BASE COAT (\$19.95, nourishedlife.com.au)
A breathable and water-permeable base coat that promises no chips or cracks.

MAVALA NAILACTAN NUTRITIVE NAIL CREAM (\$31.95, mavala.com.au)
Amino acids, lipids and vitamins help strengthen and add flexibility to prevent damage and breakage.

FRENCH GIRL CUTICLE (\$29, mecca.com.au) Roll this argan-, pomegranate-, rosemary- and hemp-oil blend over cuticles and nails to hydrate and nourish in one swipe.

GROW GETTERS

VIVISCAL GORGEOUS GROWTH DENSIFYING ELIXIR (\$34.99, available from Priceline) A combination of hair-strengthening ingredients, such as biotin, keratin and zinc, work to thicken and densify limp locks.

PANTENE PRO-V 3 MINUTE MIRACLE REPAIR & PROTECT CONDITIONER (\$13.49 for 400ml, available from Chemist Warehouse) Micro-nourishing technology moisturises, seals cuticles and repairs damage, for soft, shiny strands.

SLIP SKINNIES SCRUNCHIES (\$45 for a pack of 6, slip.com.au) These mulberry-silk hair ties won't crease, pull or cause breakage.





your skin

You may think a seven-step routine is the only way to supple, hydrated and strong skin. But, according to Sydney Skin dermatologist Dr Li-Chuen Wong, one simple step is all you need: "The key to strengthening and restoring your skin to optimum health is to moisturise!"

It all comes down to having a strong skin barrier, which acts as a protective layer, blocking irritants and pollutants from penetrating and sensitising your skin. "Your skin barrier is the topmost layer of skin and when compromised, it can predispose you to red, irritated and dry skin. A common misconception is that sensitive skin is dietary related, but it's fundamentally hereditary and only 10 per cent of bad skin is dietary related."

Tight, dry or flaky skin are often signs of a broken skin barrier, but it can be repaired in one simple step: moisturising. "It replenishes and strengthens the

natural skin barrier, helps prevent allergens from penetrating and avoids further irritation. When it comes to benchmarking ideal skin, think of skin that isn't sensitive, has a normal pH balance [about 5.5], isn't flaky, has a good blood circulation that gives skin a healthy colour, has minimal pore size and is able to retain moisture. In reality, you can't always have perfect skin, therefore, moisturising is key."

When choosing your perfect hydrator, there are two ingredients to look out for: humectants and emollients. "Humectants are used to reduce the loss of moisture," explains Dr Wong. "They're molecules that absorb water from the top layer of skin as well as the environment, and they make your skin feel moist and supple. Emollients help restore your skin barrier by filling in the gaps between your skin cells."

A one-size-fits-all ingredient is colloidal oatmeal. "It has a naturally strengthening effect on dry, irritated skin," says Dr Wong. "It's anti-inflammatory, full of antioxidants and contains natural itch-relieving benefits."



COMPLEXION CONDITIONING

LIBERTY BELLE RX SUPERHERO NUTRIENT HYDRATOR WITH ANTI-POLLUTION BARRIER (\$138, libertybelle.com.au) A hyaluronic-acid-rich cream that doubles as a pollutant protectant, containing a slew of skin-nourishing goodies.

AVEENO DAILY MOISTURISING LOTION (\$9.99, available from Priceline) A powerhouse blend of colloidal oatmeal works to hydrate and soothe skin for up to 24 hours.

MUKTI ALOE VERA MOISTURISER (\$59.95, muktiorganics.com) If traditional moisturisers aren't for you, try this lightweight blend of aloe vera, Kakadu plum, finger lime and calendula.

