



Beauty

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Handle with care

Dry skin, age spots? What's the best cream for old hands?



Luckily, I am probably your best guinea pig for hand-enhancing products. I have dry, non-dainty, worker bee hands. Because of this, I am more diligent than the average person about handcare. I wear rubber gloves for heavy-duty housework (aka "housework"). I take the gloves on holiday, and there is a tube of handcream at every desk and sink I use. This has been the case for at least a decade, but I'm not sure my efforts have made a huge difference to the state of my hands. There's no turning back, though. Once you've invested this heavily, you can't just stop. Maybe I'd have hands like the Gruffalo by now if I had never splashed out on handcreams and Marigolds.

So, I've decided to go all out. I've upped my game when it comes to my hands. I don't want

them to look like they're keeping it real any more. It was probably the realisation that I am likely to have to work until I am 85 that made we want to have hands that look like they've never done a day's hard graft in their life.

The secret to having nice hands is to pay as much attention to them as you do to your face. Exfoliation is a good place to start. Cowshed has a very nice Mucky Cow Exfoliating Handwash, for a bit of daily, gentle sloughing (£14; cowshed.online.com). For more serious scrubbing-off of dead skin, get Scrub + Happiness, which is part of Soap & Glory's I'm Your Manicure kit (£14; boots.com). My hands felt soft and quite high-class after one three-minute scrub.

If you have little brown age spots on your hands, you can tackle them with laser treatments such as Fraxel. It certainly works, but is probably too extreme for most of us. The best handcream for age spots is Clarins Age Control Hand Lotion (£19.50; clarins.co.uk). It has a sunscreen in it, which, if you are serious about your hand loveliness, is essential. Wendy Lewis, the world-renowned cosmetic surgery consultant (aka the Knife Coach), told me that she uses a minimum SPF30 on her hands "come rain or shine". It stands to reason that since your hands are always exposed, you should protect them. This is why Madonna is rarely seen without her driving gloves.

I've been using Sarah Chapman's Overnight Hand and Nail treatment (see right) every now and again as a kind of face mask for the hands with very pleasing results. But by far the best product I have tried is a new one called Hand Chemistry (£18.99; boots.com). It is one of those products that makes you go, "Oooh!" on first use. It's rich but not sticky. My hands felt and looked instantly softer. But it was after about a week of use that I noticed a difference. My hands are much closer to the chatelaine hands of my ambitions. They're so soft, I've been inviting innocent bystanders to cop a feel. The secret ingredient is a copper derivative, apparently. Who cares though? A ladylike high-five to the people who made this (actually, it's from the people who invented the raved-about Nanoblur face cream). It's very, very rare indeed that I will say this, but really, just go and treat yourself to a tube. ■

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What we love

Prue White's favourite hand creams



FROM TOP: Darphin Aromatic Hand Cream, £25 (darphin.co.uk). Evidens De Beauté The Brightening Regenerating Hand & Nail Cream, £90 (harrods.com). Sarah Chapman Skinesis Overnight Hand and Nail Treatment, £35 (sarahchapman.net). Kiehl's Ultimate Strength Hand Salve, £19 (kiehls.co.uk). Elizabeth Arden Eight Hour Cream Intensive Moisturizing Hand Treatment, £28 (elizabetharden.co.uk).

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