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Corporate Citizen

Health: Is your Office Spoiling your Skin?

The perfect air conditioning in office keeps us cool all day but in reality, it damages our skin to quite an extent. Air conditioning dries air and reduces humidity in the environment which affects our skin and hair badly. This lack of humidity in the air seems to affect the water content of the outer layer of the skin, as well as reducing its elastic properties, leading to dryer, rougher skin. Corporate Citizen speaks to two experts in the field and find out what works the best in taking care of skin while giving out best performances in our corporate jobs

Use fingertips to press onto areas of the face and neck which feel dry as you massage it

The sparking point for many an office argument, air conditioning is supposed to help us stay cool in summer. In reality, it often leaves us shivering and battling dry skin and breakouts. Air conditioning dries air and reduces humidity in the environment which affects our skin and hair badly. This lack of humidity in the air seems to affect the water content of the outer layer of the skin, as well as reducing its elastic properties, leading to dryer, rougher skin.

Here are few tips which help your hair and skin to look fresher:



1. Take break from the air conditioner

Much of the changes that are caused by air conditioning will be reversible when you move into a more humid environment. Take break outside the office to refresh your skin.

2. Moisturize with a non-fragranced moisturizer

If your skin feels dry and tight, use a non-fragranced moisturizer to replace the lost hydration from your skin.

3. Keep a facial oil in your desk

To troubleshoot particularly dry spots, apply facial oil at lunchtime and again in the afternoon if needed. Use fingertips to press onto areas of the face and neck which feel dry as you massage it in.

4. Use a hydrating facial mist and splash water on your face

Since air-conditioning dries out your skin, it's important to splash water on your face every couple of hours to keep it hydrated. You can also opt for good hydrating facial mist, preferably one that's fragrance-free, and spritz it on every time you feel your skin tightening with dryness.

5. Eat healthy

There's no point taking care of your skin from the outside, if you're drinking umpteen cups of coffee at work, or ordering fries to your desk. Avoid caffeine and sodas, instead order fresh vegetable juices or stick to water. Eat a balanced diet for lunch—salads, grilled or stir-fried veggies, eggs, phulkas and dals. Cut down on sugar and excess spice and oil.

6. To combat the drying effects of the air conditioner, place a bowl of water in the room.

7. Hot oil massage

Hair becomes rough and dry while sitting in AC. It loses moisture and looks frizzy. Oil massage rejuvenates and re-hydrates dry hair and scalp. Hot Oil massage can be done using any hair oil. Regular oil massages during winters is very useful for hair care.



Preeti Seth, Cosmetologist, Pachouli Wellness Clinic, Delhi

8. Hair packs

Hair packs can be made from natural ingredients as well as synthetic chemicals. Both the type of hair packs are good for providing moisture to hair, reducing dandruff and improving the hair quality. Natural hair packs can be made at home using a combination of ingredients like curd, milk, henna, lemon and neem.

9. Conditioners

Good conditioners help to keep the hair and scalp hydrated. Split ends can also be avoided by using good conditioners. You can use conditioners before washing your hair with a shampoo. Keep the conditioner on for five minutes and then rinse with cold water. Repeat the procedure after washing hair with the shampoo.

The corporate world is a new syndrome that we have coined for ourselves, which brings with it a whole new lifestyle and existence. Earlier, air conditioning was available only to a few privileged ones, but these days it has become a part of life for many individuals. It has become a norm not only in offices and many commercial places, but a few public transport systems as well.

In spite of the relief it brings on a hot sunny day, there are some health problems which occur due to being in an air conditioned environment. Let's look at some of the major side effects of air conditioning on your skin and health.

- Sudden changes in humidity and temperature affects the individual's respiratory system and it even transmits infectious respiratory diseases.
- It dries out skin and mucous membranes
- Airborne dust and fungi cause allergic reactions
- If indoor air contains allergens, you may suffer from nasal issues, headaches, itchy eyes, difficulty breathing and dizziness.

Apart from being in closed and air conditioned environment, long hours in front of the laptop, irregular meals, lack of proper sleep, and many other such factors could lead to concerns like Hair fall, Dark Circles, Premature Ageing, Pigmentation and Acne.

Using good home care regimen, eating healthy exercising, managing stress and getting regular treatments for maintenance from the right professional is required to manage the skin, hair and body.

You may not be able to avoid being in AC but you can follow a few tips to neutralize the effect of being in such environment.

When your body is properly hydrated, you'll look better and feel better



Dr. Chytra V Anand, Founder, Kosmoderma

1. Cleanse, Tone and Moisturise

This C/T/M mantra can be miraculous for many. By following three simple steps, you can keep your skin glowing with natural beauty all day, every day. Use soap free - Ph balanced face wash. Always remove the dirt and make up before going to bed (No matter how tired) and use a good moisturizer/hydrator to protect skin from AC/ Heater.

2. Take antioxidants

Antioxidants fight free radical damage, boost immunity, delay skin ageing and protect against sun damage. It can prolong and even make some reversals of skin damage caused by being in harmful environments. You may take antioxidant supplement and also make sure you get it through a good nutritious diet. Your skin, nails, hair, everything is a direct result of what food you put in your body.

3. Drink enough water

If at all you feel thirsty, it means that you are already dehydrated. Air conditioned environment worsens the condition. Skin is intricately tied to the overall health of your body. When your body is properly hydrated, you'll look better and feel better. Water gives you a radiant complexion and in addition, bloating and puffiness often disappear. So drink enough water and keep going.

4. Protect yourself

Almost 80 per cent of skin ageing is caused due to harmful UV rays. Doesn't matter if you are indoors in an air conditioned place, the UV rays are still damaging your skin. Sunscreen is one of the keys to radiant, youthful-looking skin. Freckles, age spots, spider veins on the face, rough and leathery skin, wrinkles, loose and dull skin, a blotchy complexion and skin cancer can all be traced to sun exposure.

5. Uh oh... Body Odour!

Excessive sweating and body odour is a common problem faced in crowded spaces. Air conditioning makes it even more unbearable as you are in a closed environment. No matter how much anti perspirant or deodorant one uses, you can't hold back the odour. And most people think it is a hygiene problem, this is false. It is sweat related.

Have Botox done for your under arms and palms. With Bengaluru being the hub of IT and BPO's, this is a common procedure among the corporate working people.

The procedure is quick and comfortable. In just 3-5 days you will notice that the sweating has decreased and that you have no body odour worries any more. The results typically last 7 - 9 months. So in a nutshell, follow these tips and change your corporate lifestyle. A little maintenance goes a long way. See a dermatologist if you are facing any skin or hair related issues that are persistent. Most issues are easier to treat in the beginning than at a later stage.

By Sharmila Chand