

WELL + GOOD

SKIN-CARE TIPS

I Went On a Buzzy Winter Spa Retreat, and Came Home With 3 Wellness Practices I Can Do Every Day



Ali Finney · February 3, 2022



Photo: Getty Images/ Vicens Prats / EyeEm

Looking down at the sparkly white snow, I was walking in circles, traversing a meditative labyrinth on a winter retreat at the [Miraval Resort](#) in the Berkshires. In truth, the feeling of walking in circles—unclear and unsure about the path unwinding afoot—is why a lot of people wind up here.

The spa, which has its roots in Phoenix, Arizona, and centers on mindfulness, was founded almost three decades ago, and its recent-ish expansions to Austin, Texas, and Lennox, Massachusetts, couldn't be more timely for the fog of the pandemic that's settled over many of us.

At Miraval, experts help guests unwind with simple self-care practices through movement, connecting with nature, and celebrating important cultural traditions (like *kintsugi*, the Japanese art of mending broken pottery and highlighting it with gold to reinforce that brokenness should be celebrated instead of camouflaged). On my trip, I found myself not so much in need of repair, but perhaps craving a refresh following two years of uncertainty and stress—an IRL “Cntrl + Alt + Del” button, if you will.

Happily, I found that while there was beauty in being taken care of at a buzzy resort, so many of the practices are fairly easy to replicate without having to take a trip to a luxury spa. Here, my findings for those who are weary and in need of rest or reset—all things you can do from the comfort of your own home.

In the bathroom: Embrace at-home facials

One of the easiest ways to bring the spa from the hills of the Berkshires into your home is with a DIY facial. All it takes is procuring the right products and layering them on in a proper format—which is particularly important during the winter months.

This time of year, many people need to focus on hydration in their skin-care routines, but here’s the kicker: For hydrating ingredients to work, you first have to make sure all of the dead skin cells are removed from your complexion. Think of your dead skin cells like you would the offensive line in football: If you want to get in there and tackle your issues (so to speak), you first have to bust through the layer that is holding tight onto your skin.

In Miraval’s Renew & Restore Facial, estheticians utilize formulas from Dr. Dennis Gross’s namesake line to do exactly that. First, they sweep away all of the dead skin cells through chemical exfoliation, and then replenish with ultra-hydrating ingredients like hyaluronic acid. Here’s how to replicate the facial at home.

1. Wash your face

Start with a cleanser—whatever you have is fine, but if you're looking for a recommendation, Miraval used the [Dr. Dennis Gross Hyaluronic Marine Makeup Removing Meltaway Cleanser](#) followed by the brand's [Alpha Beta Pore Perfecting Cleansing Gel](#)—and make sure to remove all makeup, sweat, dirt, and debris.

When I wash my face at night, I'm lucky if the cleanser stays on for 30 seconds, but when you're turning your attention to your skin for a facial, you'll want to make sure you're giving yourself a sudsy facial massage for at least a minute. Then, wash it off and towel your face dry.



Dr. Dennis Gross Skincare Hyaluronic Marine™ Makeup Removing Meltaway Cleanser – \$30.00

[SHOP NOW](#)



Dr. Dennis Gross Skincare Alpha Beta® Pore Perfecting Cleansing Gel – \$38.00

SHOP NOW

2. Exfoliate

Next up, you're going to want to reach for one of the Dr. Dennis Gross Peel Pads. In the spa, estheticians utilize more potent acids than we're able to at home, but using the daily peel pads will give you the same effect. I like the [Dr. Dennis Gross Skincare Alpha Beta Extra Strength Daily Peel](#), which pairs alpha and beta hydroxy acids for a complete 360-degree exfoliation.

“Beta hydroxy acids go deeper into the pores and are great for acne, oily skin, and brightening. Alpha hydroxy acids are good for superficial exfoliation,” Shirley Chi, MD, a California-based dermatologist, previously told Well+Good. “So when they’re used together, you get more exfoliation and brightening than when used alone.”

You apply the first step and wait about two minutes; then, you neutralize it with the second wipe. Fear not: It won’t aggravate your skin or leave it feeling red whatsoever, but if you have sensitive skin, opt for one of the brand’s more gentle options.



Photo: Dr. Dennis Gross Skincare

Dr. Dennis Gross Skincare Alpha Beta® Extra Strength Daily Peel
– \$88.00

SHOP NOW

3. Hydrate

Now that you’ve swept away the dead skin cells, you’re going to want to replenish your complexion with hydrating ingredients like hyaluronic acid (it’s the best—don’t overthink it.). Again, if you have an HA that you like, grab it and use it, but if you want the one that the esthetician used on my skin, it’s Dr. Dennis Gross Skincare’s Hyaluronic Marine Hydration Booster.



Dr. Dennis Gross Skincare Hyaluronic Marine Hydration Booster – \$68.00

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4. Protect

Before you leave your bathroom (unless it's nighttime, of course), you're going to want to apply an SPF of 30 or greater. It's doubly necessary to protect your skin following exfoliation because it's more sensitive to the sun and sun damage. This really is the most essential step.

Outside: Meditate with nature

At the Miraval resort, one of my favorite activities was a quick morning equine meditation (which—yes—involves meditating *with horses*). Following the meditation, we brushed and walked three dreamy horses, which served as a reminder of this great wide we live in and all of the creatures we share it with.

If you're interested in meditation but are intimidated by the vastness of clearing your mind, opt for a guided session. There are plenty of apps you can follow, but free options (like the video below from the Miraval Berkshires Resort) are a great reminder that these tools can be inexpensive and are often right at our fingertips.

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While I'll forever be sad that I can't live my best horse-girl life following every meditation, I *can* tune into the needs of the animals around me. Maybe I'll brush my Irish setter. Maybe I'll try to not hate the pigeons that congregate outside my window. Maybe I'll find a pizza rat and send it positive vibes. Who knows! The possibilities are endless.

In the gym: Try familiar movement with a different mindset

On the final day of my time spent at Miraval, I found myself really working to bring all of the puzzle pieces together on a solo walk outside. With the piercing winter air around me, I opted to tune into what I was feeling and move some thoughts and feels versus blasting a Podcast to drown them out. Doing this familiar movement with a new perspective brought clarity and focus, and reminded me that even in the fog of the pandemic, having the right tools of mindfulness and self-care can make things feel clear.

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