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Ida Ben Shetreet - Director, Publications Department
Laura L. Woolf - Director, English Language Publications

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פינת הבטיחות - החשמל בבית
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A Word From The Editor

Around this time of year many of us start thinking about freshening things up; with the coming of summer weather, it can be hard to resist the urge to smarten up our home décor, our wardrobes, or our personal style. To celebrate the spirit of the season, we've packed this issue of ConsumerFocus chock full of tips and advice about hiring workmen, professional floor polishing, clothing-care, and smart shopping for washing machines and gold jewelry. "Baduk" shares their findings on shampoos and skin creams, and we've put together some budget-friendly style and decorating ideas. Just for fun, you can pamper yourself with our recipes for good-enough-to-eat homemade spa treats. And finally, we take an in-depth look at what the law says about what to do when you've changed your mind about a purchase and what your rights are.

We hope you enjoy this issue of
ConsumerFocus.

Happy consuming!

Laura Woolf

Editor, ConsumerFocus Magazine



Plumbers, Electricians, and Painters, Oh My!

How to Prevent the “Shiputznik” from Working You Over



The plumber refuses to quote a price over the phone for opening a drain? The air conditioner technician regrets to inform you that a valve is broken and will be a small fortune to replace? The painter ‘forgets’ to include VAT, materials, and the door and window frames in his price quote? A great many complaints received by consumer organizations are about unscrupulous workmen and overcharging for standard jobs. Here are some ways to avoid having the “shiputznik” work you over.

Plumbers

When the drain is clogged most people reach right for the phone to call a plumber. But you can save yourself money by first trying to remove the clog by setting a pail underneath the sink trap and removing the cleanout plug and washer. If the drain is only slightly clogged, a few quick probes with a screwdriver may solve the problem. It’s a good idea to familiarize yourself with your plumbing and to observe where to open up your pipes before you actually have a problem and the sink is full of filthy, disgusting water.

If none of your efforts are successful, then you will have to call in the professionals. The first time that you call a plumber on the phone it’s not always easy to know who you are dealing with. As a general rule, if a plumber is unwilling to give you a price quote for a standard service such as opening a clogged drain or changing a pipe, and tells you he needs to see it first, be wary. If you have the time and patience (and your kitchen floor is not flooding!) call a few plumbers and ask their prices in order to get an idea of what you should be paying before you agree to have one come to your home.

SMART SHOPPING

Air-conditioner Installation

When you purchase an air conditioner, be sure to ask whether the price you are quoted includes the installation, and exactly what is included in the installation price. For example, if you need a new electrical outlet, will this be a separate charge? When the installation technician comes to your home, ask to see certification that he and his company are authorized to install air conditioners. Ask for price quotes in writing, on official company stationary. It is worth noting that not all air-conditioner repairs need necessarily be expensive. For example, if you are told that a cable needs to be replaced, this is not a reason to panic; most cables do not cost more than approximately 100 shekels. Don't let an unscrupulous technician try to convince you otherwise. Before replacing any part, it is worth asking the technician why he thinks it needs replacing. Ask him to explain exactly what he is doing. This advice applies to all kinds of repairs, not just air conditioners.

Painters

Before hiring a painter, be sure that he intends to prepare the walls for painting, and whether the preparatory work is included in the price quote. A professional painter will smooth the walls and fill in cracks and holes. Beware of painters that simply intend to slap on a coat of paint without any other preparation. Find out whether you will need to supply the paint and materials, and be sure to include their costs into your budget. Keep in mind that purchasing the paint yourself allows you to shop around for the best prices. If you wish the painter to supply the paint and materials, find out whether his price quote includes them. Many cut-rate painters will quote an astonishingly low price, and only later inform you that the materials are extra. Find out whether the painter will bring drop-cloths to protect your furniture and possessions, or whether you must supply those as well. Be sure to receive a written, detailed price quote.



Electrician

Just like with clogged pipes, there are initial steps you can take on your own when your electricity “crashes” that may be able to help you avoid calling the electrician. In many cases, your electricity will shut itself off simply because it is overloaded, e.g. you are operating too many electrical appliances at once. Try turning off the appliances and see if you are able to open the fuse. If you cannot open the fuse, this probably means that there is a short circuit in one of your appliances, which can be dangerous. Unplug the appliance, and call an electrician. Never engage a non-authorized electrician that does not have a certificate from the Ministry of Labor

SMART SHOPPING

What to Look for when Purchasing a Washing Machine

The Israel Standards Institute certifies both domestic and imported washing machines for sale in Israel. Their inspections focus on safety features, ability to withstand high temperatures and water pressure, quality of heating mechanisms, the stability of the machine during use, and other important elements. Be sure to look for the Israel Standards Institute “tav taken” when purchasing a machine, and keep in mind the following:

- Be sure to measure the space intended for the machine, including the space necessary for opening the door.
- Evaluate your specific needs, including how often you do laundry and your average load size.
- All imported machines should have a “tag energia” (a list of energy specifications) and include the manufacturer’s name, model name and/or number, load capacity, electricity requirements, and water requirements.
- Be sure that the machine you purchase comes with a user’s manual and that the electrical plug conforms to Israeli outlets.
- If the washing machine is installed in a cabinet be sure that it has a mechanism to prevent flooding.
- Only allow a professional technician to install the machine and ensure its stability.
- Top-loading machines generally use less electricity and



water, but have a smaller load capacity. Front-loading machines usually have a larger load capacity, but use more energy and water. It is also necessary to bend over to load the machine. Note that the larger the machine opening is, the easier it is to load the laundry into it.

- Be sure that any machine you choose has a thermostat that allows you to determine the water temperature.
- Investigate whether the machine has water-saving devices such as a half-load setting.
- Check that the trap is easily accessible.
- The more features a washer has, the more it usually costs. Ask yourself whether you really need to have four or more water levels, dozens of cycle and setting combinations, or specialized cycles for fabrics such as silk. The basic cycles and settings can handle most washing needs, and you can replicate most special cycles with buttons or dials. An electronic touch pad may allow custom programming, but it can also be more confusing to use, especially at first.
- Keep in mind that parts for imported machines may be more expensive and more complicated to obtain.



What is a “Tav Teken?”

A “tav taken” is certification from the Israel Standards Institute that a product meets quality and manufacturing standards in Israel.

How to Decipher Garment-Care Symbols

Proper care and laundering of clothing extends their life and keeps them looking good for longer. But all too often the care tags come with confusing symbols instead of written instructions. So how can you be sure when to machine or hand wash your new sweater, or whether to put that cotton blouse in the dryer? The Israel Standards Institute sorts it out for us.

Laundering



- *Maximum temperature 95
- *Regular laundry cycle
- *Spin dry



- *Maximum temperature 95
- *Permanent press
- *Gradual rinse cycle



- *Maximum temperature 75
- *Regular cycle
- *Regular rinse
- *Regular spin dry



- *Maximum temperature 60
- *Regular cycle
- *Regular rinse
- *Regular spin dry



- *Maximum temperature 50
- *Permanent Press
- *Gradual rinse cycle



- *Maximum temperature 40
- *Regular cycle
- *Regular rinse
- *Regular spin dry



- *Maximum temperature 40
- *Permanent Press
- *Gradual rinse cycle



- *Maximum temperature 40
- *Gentle cycle
- *Regular rinse
- *Spin dry
- *Do not wring



- *Maximum temperature 30
- *Delicate cycle
- *Regular rinse
- *Delicate spin cycle



- *Hand wash only
- *Do not machine wash
- *Maximum temperature 40
- *Handle with care



- *Do not launder
- *Handle with care when wet



- *May use chlorine bleach



- *Do not use chlorine bleach

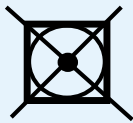
SMART SHOPPING



*Machine dry
*Regular cycle



*Machine dry
*Low temperature



*Do not machine dry

Dry-Cleaning



*Dry-clean only



*Do not dry clean.

Ironing



*Use hot iron (up to 200)



*Use warm iron (up to 150)



* Use moderate iron (up to 110)
*Steam may cause damage



*Do not iron
*Do not steam



S A F E T Y C O R N E R



Electricity

Each year many Israelis are injured in and around their homes because of carelessness and lack of knowledge about electricity. Licensed Electrician Jonathan Z. Kremer shares the following simple safety precautions to help you avoid damage and harm.

- All outlets in your home should be of the three-pronged type. Replace all the older two-pronged outlets. Do not use adapters that allow you to plug a three-pronged appliance into a two-pronged outlet.
- Regularly inspect electric cords for damage. If you see a crack in the insulation, repair or replace it.
- Do not overload electrical circuits. This may happen when you plug too many appliances into the same outlet using adapters. Avoid using 3-way adapters (octopus adapters) for high-power appliances (irons, heaters, ovens, microwaves, etc). Multi-outlet strips can be used with computers and small electrical devices.

- Keep all electric appliances away from water, including sinks and bathtubs. Never touch anything that runs on electricity when your hands are wet.
- If you have small children in your home, insert plastic safety caps in all unused electrical outlets.
- Keep electric appliances and light bulbs away from flammable liquids or materials.
- Make sure that children don't play near outdoor electrical poles or Electric Company panels.
- Don't run extension cords and cables under rugs.
- Carry appliances by their handle and not by their cord.
- When taking a plug out of a receptacle, don't pull it out by the cord.
- Most appliances, such as televisions, need to have a free flow of air around them so they do not overheat and start a fire. Do not obstruct the flow of air around such appliances.
- Have a multi-purpose fire extinguisher at hand, near your electrical panel.
- Your electrical panels should be examined by an electrician at least once a year. During the year connections in the panel constantly heat up when the power that is being used is at a high level, and cool off again when the power consumption goes back down to normal. The changes in temperatures cause the connections in the panel to expand and contract, which loosens them and could cause the connections and the wires to start burning. This very dangerous situation can be avoided by having your main and sub panels checked at least once a year (preventive maintenance) by a qualified electrician.

For more information and advice about electricity in Israel, visit www.megavolt.co.il

ALL THAT GLITTERS?

Get What You Pay For When Buying Gold Jewelry

Gold jewelry is not an everyday purchase, so when we do shop for gold, whether it's to purchase a wedding ring, a special gift, or an heirloom piece, it's important to shop wisely. Consumers choose gold jewelry based on two main factors; design and price level. The price of a piece of jewelry is influenced, among other things, by the purity level of the gold (karat weight). How can you be sure that the karat number you are quoted is the true weight of a piece?



Here's what the Israel Standards Institute recommends:

What the Law Says

In order to protect consumers, the law mandates that all gold jewelry crafted in Israel must undergo verification of the karat weight.

The law determines karat weights as follows:

- 999.9 thousandths* -24 karats
- 916 thousandths -22 karats
- 875 thousandths -21 karats
- 750 thousandths -18 karats
- 585 thousandths – 14 karats
- 375 thousandths – 9 karats.

With the exception of 24-karat-gold, which is the purest concentration of gold that you can buy, gold is usually mixed with other metals. A thousandth is the percentage of pure gold contained in the metal.

The lower the karat weight, the less expensive a piece of jewelry should be, unless the piece is set with precious or semi-precious stones or has an elaborate design. Items containing less than 375% pure gold (9 karats) cannot be sold as "gold."

The markings on gold are regulated, and gold items may not be sold without the following three symbols:

- **Manufacturer's or importer's symbol (usually initials)**
- **Symbol of karat weight**
- **Symbol of certification that the karat-weight symbol is correct.**

The manufacturer places the first two symbols upon the item. The symbol of verification is placed by the Israel Standards Institute following inspection. Be aware, however, that there is no obligation to display the symbols on items weighing less than 2 grams. Nevertheless, even items weighing less than 2 grams must be brought for verification by the Israel Standards Institute.

ALL THAT GLITTERS?

Among the most common markings you'll find the following:



The symbols may often be too small to discern clearly, so when shopping for gold jewelry you may wish to equip yourself with a magnifying glass. Better jewelry shops will also often have them. All jewelry shops must display a chart of karat verifications in a prominent place.

When making a purchase of gold, in addition to a receipt, ask the shop to provide you with documentation of your piece's weight in grams, and the karat weight.

A merchant that sells gold jewelry that lacks the necessary symbols and verification is violating the law, and you may file a complaint with the Ministry of Trade, Industry, and Labor (see Resources Guide). If you own a piece of gold jewelry weighing over 2 grams that was purchased in Israel and that does not have the proper symbols, or if you have doubts over the authenticity of a piece, you can have it checked by the Israel Standards Institute (see Resources Guide).

Types of Gold

Colored Gold

Gold itself comes in only one color, yellow. There is no such thing as naturally occurring rose or white gold. Such colors are achieved by mixing yellow gold with various other metals. These metals, such as copper, silver, or nickel, and called "alloys," produce the different shades of gold. Note that 24-karat gold, since it contains no alloys, tends to be soft and needs extra care to avoid damage.

Yellow Gold

24-karat-gold by definition will always be "yellow gold" as it is pure and contains no alloys. However, it is possible to produce a color close to yellow while adding other metals to create 10, 14, and 18 karat yellow gold. These will be more durable than the pure 24-karat-gold.

Rose Gold

Rose gold, also known as pink gold or red gold, is obtained by increasing the copper-colored alloys and decreasing any silver-colored additives.

White Gold

White gold is created by increasing lighter alloys of silver, zinc, nickel and copper to tone down the yellow gold. The resulting 14-karat white gold contains as much gold as 14 karat yellow gold but is nearly white in color.

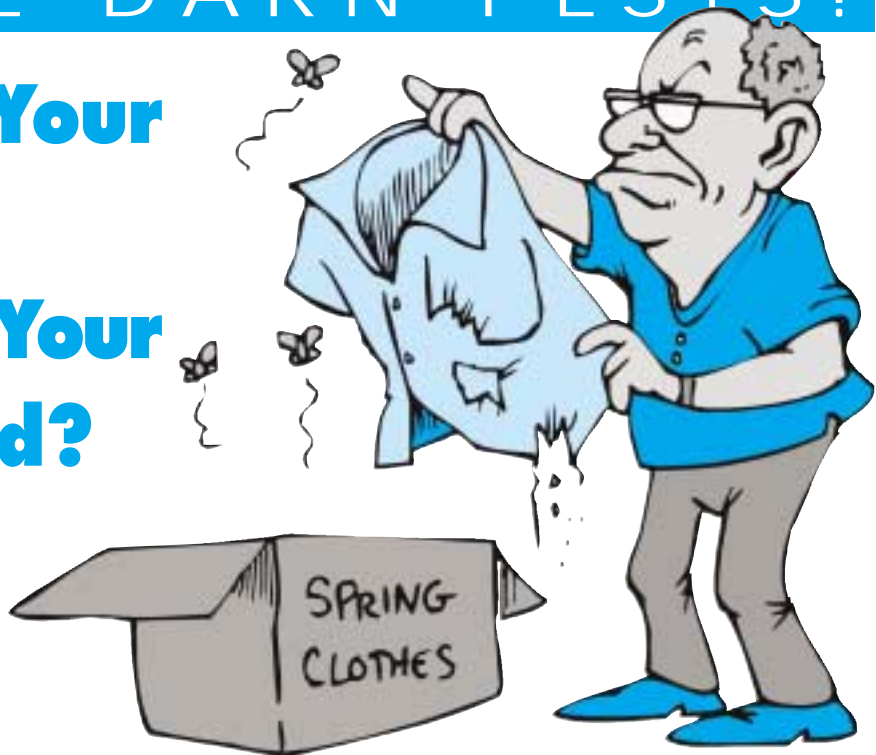
Filling and Plating

Gold-filled jewelry is created by forming a tube of solid gold (usually 14 karat) that is then "filled" with a base metal and bonded together. Gold plate is a film of gold particles that have been adhered to any kind of base metal by means of an electroplating (or dipping) process. It will not usually last as long as gold-filled pieces.

THOSE DARN PESTS!

Holes in Your Clothes? Moths in Your Cupboard?

Here's What to Do



Moths, known in Hebrew as “ash,” can cause real damage to clothing, upholstery, and carpets. Unfortunately, many Israeli homes lack sufficient closets and storage spaces to store clothes properly and reduce risk of infestation. Here’s what you need to know to keep these pests at bay.

Clothing Moths

Clothing-moths should not be confused with the common food- and grain-infesting moths that you often see flying around the house. Clothes moths are usually smaller, only about 1/4 inch in length, while most food-infesting moths are about 1/2 inch in length. Clothes moths are relatively easy to catch when they land, and usually only fly around the immediate area of an infestation. Also, unlike food moths, they tend to flutter about rather than fly in a direct, steady manner.

Life Cycle

Females of most clothes-moth species lay an average of 40 to 50 eggs over a period of about 2 to 3 weeks. They die once they have finished laying eggs. The eggs themselves are attached to threads of fabric with an adhesive secretion,

and larva hatch in 4 to 10 days.

It is the larvae that cause damage by feeding on wool clothing, carpets, rugs, upholstered furniture, furs, stored wool, animal bristles in brushes, wool felts in pianos, and fish meal in fish food. They will also feed on synthetics or other fabrics that are blended with wool. Damage often appears in hidden locations such as under collars or cuffs of clothing, in crevices of upholstered furniture, and in areas of carpeting covered by furniture. Fabrics stained by foods or perspiration are more vulnerable to moth damage.

Keeping Moths Under Control

Clothes moths can be limited by a variety of methods, including periodic dry cleaning or laundering, proper storage, freezing, heating, or using an insecticide. Although you can usually deal with clothes-moth problems on your own, you may need to call in an exterminator for difficult or widespread infestations.

An Ounce of Prevention

The best way to prevent or control moths is to periodically

THOSE DARN PESTS!

clean those parts of your home that can attract and harbor them. These include:

- Under heavy pieces of furniture;
- Along baseboards and in cracks where hair and debris accumulate;
- Closets, especially those in which woolens and furs are kept.

The vacuum cleaner is your best tool for most of this cleaning. Be sure to dispose of the bag contents promptly; they may include eggs, larvae, or adult moths.

Infestations may first begin in woolen garments or fabric remnants stored for long periods. Such items should be periodically hung in the sun and brushed thoroughly, especially along seams and in folds and pockets. Brushing destroys the eggs, and exposes larvae. Larvae are strongly repelled by light, and will fall from clothing when they cannot find protection.

You can also dry clean items, or thoroughly launder items in very hot water (at least 48° C) for 20 to 30 minutes which kills all stages of insects. This is the most common and effective method for controlling clothes moths in clothing, blankets, and other washable articles. However, many woolen garments should not be washed in hot water, so dry cleaning may be the only suitable cleaning option. You can also place clothing in a dryer on the highest setting for about 15 minutes or in a freezer for about two days; this is usually enough to kill eggs.

Always keep fabrics clean; moths are less likely to feed on clean fabrics than on heavily soiled ones.

Storage

Before storing susceptible items, first be sure that they are clean and free of eggs or larva, then store in airtight containers. You can also place insect repellants inside the storage containers, but if the container is not airtight they will not work well. Old-fashioned mothballs are generally effective, but they are toxic and must be kept away from children and pets. They also have an unpleasant odor, and if they come into contact with plastic buttons, hangers, or garment bags, can cause the plastic to soften and melt. There is some evidence that natural, non-toxic combinations of herbs can repel moths. One mixture you can try includes:

56 grams (two ounces) dried rosemary, 56 grams (two ounces) dried mint, 28 grams (1 ounce) dried thyme, 28 grams (1 ounce) dried ginseng, 204 grams (8 ounces) of whole cloves. Blend the herbs and make into sachets using cloth bags.

Other natural products that are believed to be effective as moth repellents include lavender, lemon, hyssop, winter savory, and cedar shavings.

I Think My Clothes are Infested... What Do I Do Now?

If you do detect clothes moths, you can use an insecticide on articles that cannot be dry cleaned, laundered, heated, or frozen. Find a product designed specifically for clothes moths and follow the directions exactly. Insecticides for clothes-moths usually contain pyrethrins, which can be sprayed directly on fabrics and generally do not leave toxic residues.

Some insecticides have an oil base. Do not spray them on silk, rayon, or other fabrics that stain easily.

Rugs and Carpets

Closely inspect areas beneath heavy furniture and along carpet edges for infestation. Area rugs can be dry-cleaned or hung out in the sun and vacuumed. If you have wall-to-wall carpeting, pull the edges back so that you can apply insecticide to both sides. If the rug pad contains animal hair or wool and has not been treated by the manufacturer, spray it also. Sometimes felts and hammers in pianos become infested and damaged. You will usually have to have repairs made by a professional piano technician. You may also want to consider using synthetic felts.



F A C I N G F A C T S

There's No Such Thing as a Miracle in a Jar!



Imagine a perfect cream that will give you skin that is "nourished," "glowing," and "repaired." Many of us are willing to spend whatever it takes to achieve the miracles claimed by manufacturers of costly, luxurious moisturizers. But are we really buying empty promises? The answer, according to "Baduk's" investigators; it is likely that we are.

To understand how moisturizers work, it's worth knowing a little about the structure of skin. Skin is composed of

several layers. The lowest layer is called the dermis, and is made up of connective tissue, sweat and oil glands. The outermost or top layer of skin, that which is visible to us, is called the epidermis, and rests on top of the dermis. The thickness of the epidermis varies with your age, your sex, and the part of the body on which it is located. The epidermis itself is covered by another layer, known as the stratum corneum. The stratum corneum is composed of cells that are almost pure protein, and is, for the most part, dead.

Many manufacturers claim that their products can penetrate more deeply than their competitors, and change the structure of your skin cells. However, any preparation that can actually alter cell structure must be licensed as a drug and cannot be sold as a cosmetic. In actuality, no creams can penetrate the upper stratum corneum layer of skin to reach the living epidermal cells. Nor do they need to, since it is the outer layer that dries out.

Your body loses moisture from the dermis through the epidermis. This process is accelerated in cold, dry, winter weather, and during Israel's hot dry summers. Home heating, sunlight, harsh soaps, and smoking can also dry out the skin. When the outer layer of the skin, the stratum corneum, lacks sufficient moisture, it will start to feel dry, wrinkle, and even crack.

Skin also contains sebaceous glands that produce sebum, an oily substance that contains waxes and lipids. Sebaceous glands are embedded in the dermis over most of the body. They are more concentrated in the scalp, face and forehead. Sebaceous glands are most active in men and young women, while the lowest levels of sebaceous activity is among more mature women, making them particularly vulnerable to the effects of dry skin.

The majority of skin moisturizers fight dryness in two basic ways. The first way is by utilizing ingredients known as humectants that attract water to the stratum corneum. Examples include glycerin, lactic acid, glycolic acid, hydrolyzed proteins, citric acid, hyaluronic acid and salicylic acid. Some humectants are capable of attracting water from the air and tissues surrounding the skin, but can only work well when there is sufficient humidity in the air to

F A C I N G F A C T S

draw from. Synthetic humectants, such as the glycols (propylene glycol, glycerin) can cause irritation and dermatitis in some people.

The second way that moisturizers work is through the use of ingredients that physically block moisture loss. Oils limit evaporation from the skin and are very moisturizing because they create a barrier to water loss. However, oil-based, water-free products (ointments or oils) are usually unpleasant except on extremely dry skin. Other water-free bases contain lanolin or cholesterol that absorb water. These absorptive bases are less greasy than water-free products, however, lanolin sometimes causes allergic reactions in sensitive individuals.

Even the best moisturizer can provide only temporary effectiveness. There is at least one way to maximize the effects, however, and that is to moisturize immediately following a bath or shower, while skin is still moist. Also, be sure to drink enough water on a daily basis.

Some Good News

It is true that there have been some breakthroughs in skin care. One of these is the use of alpha hydroxy acid, which does seem to be able to improve skin appearance. Alpha hydroxics are naturally-occurring acids that can be extracted from fruits, sugar cane, and milk. They work by decreasing the "glue" that holds dead cells onto the surface of the skin, helping the dead cells to slough off leaving behind a layer of smoother, softer skin. Products containing alpha hydroxy acids have been on the market for more than a decade, and today you can even find products such as shampoos and cuticle creams that contain them. Alpha hydroxy acids have lately been joined by beta hydroxy acids (BHAs). The main difference between alpha hydroxy acids and beta hydroxy acid is their lipid (oil) solubility. Alpha hydroxy acids are water-soluble only, while beta hydroxy acid is lipid (oil) soluble. This means that beta hydroxy acid is able to penetrate into your pores, which contain sebum, and exfoliate the dead skin cells that are built up inside the pore. Because of this difference in properties, beta hydroxy acid is more suitable for use on oily skin with blackheads and whiteheads than alpha hydroxy acid.

Many cosmetic companies offer products containing AHAs and BHAs, and there is some evidence that both types of acids can be effective even in the low concentrations found in over-the-counter creams. However, more effective preparations containing much higher concentrations of AHAs or BHAs can be prescribed for you by a health-fund dermatologist and will cost a fraction of their glamorous counterparts. A dermatologist will also be able to help you to determine the suitable products for your particular skincare needs.

Body, Hands, and Face

The main difference between creams for body, face, and hands lies in their viscosity. Face creams are generally thinner than hand creams, which are designed to stay on in rough conditions. Body creams fall somewhere in between. A bigger difference between products is their price. Face creams are generally far more expensive than hand and body creams, leading to the question, can we use body creams on our face? Read on for the answer.

"Baduk's" investigators tried out 30 different creams, using a variety of hand, face, and body creams. Using a special apparatus they measured the level of moisture in the skin prior to applying a moisturizer, then again after one hour, two hours, and four hours.

Every one of the creams tested raised moisture levels in the skin during the first two hours following application. Following this, the moisture levels generally decreased overall. The products that achieved the highest moisture levels over time were the face creams. Hand creams fell in the middle range of effectiveness, followed by body lotions. On the other hand, the face creams were not dramatically more effective than the hand and body lotions. There was also no correlation between the price of a cream and its effectiveness. As "Baduk" points out, when we pay a lot of money for face cream we are also paying for elegant packaging, a pleasing fragrance, and a famous name, all of which can offer an undeniably pampering experience. However, if your priority is to save money, "Baduk" suggests buying a good body lotion that contains a sunscreen and using it for your face as well.

F A C I N G F A C T S

Understanding the Hype

Some of the Common Ingredients Found in Moisturizers



Liposomes are microscopic sacs, or spheres, manufactured from a variety of fatty substances, including "phospholipids," which are natural components of cell membranes. When properly mixed with water, phospholipids form liposome spheres, which can "trap" any substance that will dissolve in water or oil. Manufacturers say that liposomes act like a delivery system. They claim that, when present in a cream or lotion, liposomes can more easily penetrate the surface skin to underlying layers, "melt," and deposit other ingredients of the product. However the material actually used in cosmetics may be obtained either from natural or synthetic sources.

Comdogenics- comdogenics are substances that can cause clogged pores and blackheads. A number of products on the market claim to be "non-comdogenic," that is, are free of pore-clogging substances. Despite the fact that it is difficult to verify such claims, it is worthwhile seeking out such products if your skin is oily or prone to breakouts.

Nayad is a trade name for yeast extract. Nayad is described as a system that takes yeast cells and refines them hundreds of times, resulting in a highly concentrated, odor-free, unusually potent yeast extract. Test subjects report a "noticeable smoothing of lines and wrinkles." According to the American Food and Drug Administration, there is no data to either substantiate or refute these claims.

Manufacturers add vitamins to cosmetics because foods containing vitamins A, D, E, K, and some of the B complex group are necessary in our diets to maintain healthy

skin and hair. Using these vitamins in cosmetics that are applied to the skin surface implies that they will nourish skin. However, according to the American Food and Drug Administration, there is no clinical proof that a vitamin applied to its surface can nourish skin.

Aloe vera is a plant from the lily family that has effective anti-irritant properties. It is listed as an ingredient in many skin lotions, but, according to the American Food and Drug Administration, much higher concentrations of aloe vera are required than most products contain for the anti-irritant properties to work.

Chamomile: Chamomile is known for its soothing properties, and is a popular additive to teas. However, its presence in moisturizing creams has not been proven to have any measurable effects on skin.

Collagen (from young cows) is the protein substance found in connective tissue (connective tissue binds together and supports organs and other body structures.) A great deal of research has been done on the different types and uses for collagen. In cosmetics, collagen has a moisturizing effect. It is not water soluble, but it holds water. According to the American Food and Drug Administration, there is no convincing evidence that collagen can penetrate the skin and have an effect below the surface.

Cerebrosides (from animals or plants) are a type of glycolipid (a chemically combined form of fatty substance and carbohydrate) produced naturally in basal epidermal cells, the deepest layer of skin. After cerebrosides are formed, they are secreted to the outside of the cells and serve as a protective coating. As new cells form in lower layers of skin, the older skin cells move closer to surface layers and start to dry out. During this process, the cerebrosides are chemically changed and form ceramides, part of a network of membranes between cells. Skin moisture and suppleness comes from this network. The raw material for cerebrosides in cosmetics comes from cattle, oxen or swine brain cells or other nervous system tissues. Alternatively, the raw material may be isolated from plant sources. The cosmetics industry claims that the use of cerebrosides in skin products results in a smoother skin surface and better moisture retention. The American Food and Drug Administration has not evaluated the studies on which these claims are based.

From Baduk #16

J U S T F O R F U N

Save Money and Pamper Yourself – Try These Homemade Spa Treats You'll find most of the ingredients in your cupboard, or at your supermarket, pharmacy, or nearby health-food shop.

Banana Hair Mask

Mash together one ripe banana with 1 teaspoon of olive oil. Smooth onto your hair from the roots down. Massage the mask into your hair and scalp, and then wrap your hair in plastic wrap or a hot towel for 15 minutes. Rinse, shampoo, and condition as normal.

Apple Exfoliation Mask for Oily Skin

Grate one medium-size apple and mix together with 5 tablespoons of honey. Smooth over your face and leave on for ten minutes. Rinse off with cool water.



Pretty Dangerous! Cosmetics Safety Tips from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration

- The most common injury from cosmetics is from scratching the eye with a mascara wand. Eye infections can result if the eye scratches go untreated. Never try to apply mascara while riding in a car, bus, train or plane. If mascara flakes into your eyes while you sleep, you might awaken with itching, bloodshot eyes, and possibly infections or eye scratches. To avoid eye infections or injury, remove all makeup before going to bed.
- Sharing makeup can also lead to serious problems. Cosmetics become contaminated with bacteria that the brush or applicator sponge picks up from the skin--and if you moisten brushes with saliva, the problem is much more severe. Washing your hands before using makeup will help prevent exposing the makeup to bacteria.
- Artificial nails must be completely sealed because any space between the natural nail and the artificial nail gives fungal infection an opportunity to begin. Such infections can lead to permanent nail loss.
- Keep makeup containers closed tight when not in use.
- Keep makeup out of the sunlight to avoid destroying the preservatives.
- Don't use eye cosmetics if you have an eye infection such as conjunctivitis (pink eye), and throw away any makeup you were using when you first discovered the infection.
- Never add any liquid to a product unless the instructions tell you to.
- Throw away any makeup if the color changes or an odor develops. Preservatives can degrade over time and may not be able to fight bacteria.

J U S T F O R F U N

Cucumber Mask for Oily Skin

Mix a cucumber (do not peel), one teaspoon of mint, one tablespoon of lemon juice, and one egg white together in a blender. Refrigerate the mixture for ten minutes, and then apply to your cleansed face. Rest for 15 minutes, rinse first with warm water, then cool water.

Avocado Moisturizing Mask.

Peel a ripe avocado, remove the stone, and mash with a fork until it is creamy and smooth. Apply the avocado mask immediately to your cleansed face, and rest for ten minutes. Following ten minutes, rinse off with warm water and apply your regular moisturizer.

Banana Moisturizing Mask

Mash half a banana until smooth and creamy. Apply to your cleansed face and rest for 15-20 minutes. Rinse first with warm water, then cool water. Pat your face dry and apply your regular moisturizer.

Yogurt-Honey "Anti-Aging Mask"

Combine 2 tablespoons of non-flavored yogurt, a teaspoon of honey, and one tablespoon of lemon juice. Break open 3 capsules of vitamin E and blend into the mix. Smooth onto your cleansed face and relax for 15 minutes. Rinse off with warm water and apply moisturizer.

Oatmeal Exfoliating Mask

Mix one pack of plain instant oatmeal with water until you achieve the consistency of a paste. Dab the mixture onto your cleansed face. Rest for two minutes, then rinse with lukewarm water.

Olive Oil Hand Smoother

Mix together 170 milliliters (1/2 cup) of table salt, 170 milliliters of sea salt, and 170 milliliters of olive oil. Massage hands with the mixture, rinse with warm water, and apply hand cream.

Peppermint/Lavender Foot Bath

Mix 170 milliliters (1/2 cup) Epsom salts with 5 drops of peppermint extract, 3 drops of tea tree oil and 3 drops of lavender oil together in a large pan or bowl of warm

water. Soak your feet for 10-15 minutes, then dry and apply moisturizer.



Oops!

In the recipe for Jerusalem Kugel that appeared in ConsumerFocus #3, the step for adding the eggs was inadvertently omitted.

Here is the corrected recipe.

1 package of thin noodles
6 eggs
cup vegetable oil
1 1/3 cups sugar
Salt and pepper to taste

Cook noodles to al dente stage (slightly firm), drain and rinse. In a separate pan, combine sugar and oil and cook on medium heat, stir constantly just until the sugar becomes brown and syrupy. Be careful not to overcook and burn. Add noodles and coat thoroughly with the sugar syrup. Add salt and pepper to taste, and let cool. Add eggs to cooled mixture. Bake for 45 minutes to 1 hour at approximately 180 degrees centigrade (medium heat), until the top forms a crust.

SMART SHOPPING

Looking Good on a Budget



Update your look and your wardrobe, and look like a million bucks for a few shekels!

- Do your homework before you set out to shop. Look through your closet to see what you already have and what you need. Make a list to keep your shopping focused.
- Take the time to figure out what suits you. Buying clothes that you don't look or feel good in is simply a waste of money because you will never wear them, or be miserable when you do. Try on a few of your outfits, and take a good, honest look at yourself. What cuts and lengths flatter your figure? Which outfits make you look sleek and svelte, and which make you seem 5 pounds heavier? Which colors make your eyes sparkle, and which add years to your face? If you are unsure, ask a friend that you can count on to tell you the truth. Your goal is to accentuate your good features and hide your flaws. Wear darker colors and smaller prints on the parts of your body you wish to de-emphasize, and lighter colors and bolder patterns where you want to accentuate. Wearing the same shades of any color (not just black!) can help you look taller and slimmer. Set guidelines for yourself and stick to them.
- Decide on three key colors that either match or will coordinate with what you own and keep most of your purchases within these color families.
- Before purchasing an item, ask yourself what you already have in your closet that it will go with, and where you will wear it.
- Buy more solids than prints. They will work with more things and you'll get bored with them less quickly.
- Watch for the sales. The 'end of the season' in Israel is pretty much in keeping with the schedules overseas, meaning that winter clothing will often begin to appear in the hottest part of August, but go on sale in December when you are actually looking for a warm, cozy knit; summer items will become available around March and go on sale in June and July when you are ready for something crisp and cool.
- Don't buy too-trendy pieces at end-of-the-year

SMART SHOPPING



sales if you don't plan on wearing them until next year. By next year the trends will have changed and you will look and feel dated. Invest in classic styles, in the cuts and colors that flatter you.

- A good shoemaker (*sandler*) can clean, resole and restore your shoes. He can also change heels and other hardware.
- Shop the 'bazaars' for basics such as tee shirts, socks, sweatpants and sweatshirts, even underwear and bathing suits. Bazaars are also a good place for finding baby and children's clothing. Often you will find clothing manufactured in Israel for sale overseas. These items are sometimes overstock or "*sug bet*" (defective), so be sure to check for missing buttons, crooked seams, and other flaws. Try things on when you can. Often a *Sug bet* item will have a minor defect such as a crooked label or missing button that you can fix yourself.
- Update your look with accessories. Inexpensive

jewelry, scarves, and belts can take your basics from one year to the next.

- Find out where the closest bead shop is, and learn to make your own jewelry for next to nothing. A few beads on a wire can become earrings to match your favorite dress; a charm or stone on a leather cord can be a unique necklace. The proprietors of shops are usually helpful and happy to advise you on how to craft your pieces.
- The bazaars and "dollar" shops can be a good source of inexpensive jewelry, as well as beads and jewelry supplies. You can also purchase earrings and necklaces for a few shekels and take them apart to use in other projects or remake them to suit your taste. Invest in jewelry pliers to help you do a professional job.
- Scout out the yard-goods stores for trimmings and buttons. Pieces of stylish trimming can be made into belts or added on to revive last summer's half-dead tee shirt or straw hat. Sometimes just changing the buttons on a jacket or shirt can give you a whole new look.

SMART SHOPPING

- Wide pieces of trimming can be used to lengthen girls' skirts. Try eyelet lace or grosgrain ribbon.
- Bring items that are ill-fitting, outdated, or the wrong cut for your figure to your local tailor or seamstress. Sometimes a strategic alteration can add years to the life of a garment.
- Unless you are in love with a particular shade or formula of makeup, you don't need to spend a lot of money on luxury-brand cosmetics. The bazaars and discount makeup shops carry inexpensive brands and overstock of name brands in colors and formulas similar to the high-end luxury items. They are also good sources for hair accessories, makeup brushes and sponges, and other tools. More important than how much you pay for a cosmetic is using the right tools and correct application techniques. Books and Websites are good sources for quick and easy makeup lessons. Inexpensive but well-blended makeup, in colors that flatter your skin tone, will look far more chic than randomly applied patches of garish color that cost you an arm and a leg.
- When purchasing cosmetics at discount shops or bazaars, be sure never to purchase anything in



an open or damaged package, that has an unpleasant odor or consistency, that has separated, or has changed color. Makeup has a shelf life, and using products that have expired can be harmful as well as unpleasant.



- Think carefully before purchasing costly makeup or perfume just to receive the "gift with purchase." First ask yourself if the products you must buy in order to receive the gifts are items that you need or use. Most gifts consist of sample-sized products. Ask to see the contents of the gift bag. Are they items that you will use or have wanted to try? Are the complimentary eye shadows or lipsticks in shades that suit you? Are you a fan of the perfume that comes in the purse-sized bottle? If your answers are "yes" then go ahead and enjoy your gift. If you have little use for a gift ask yourself if it is really worth the money. If you want the gift because it contains one or two items you really would like, compare prices and see if simply buying regular sizes of these items would be more practical.