



WUDU AND SKIN CARE



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Cleanliness is half of faith [Prophet Muhammad PBUH]

Muslims perform wudu (ablution) several times throughout the course of a day; thoroughly washing their hands, mouth, nose, face, arms, scalp hair, ears and feet. Wudu is an essential part of preparing for the prayer. It has numerous physical and spiritual benefits; promoting daily hygiene, physically purifying Muslims before prayer and washing away a Muslim's sins.

However, the repetitive washing of the aforementioned areas may cause some bothersome dryness or aggravate previously dry skin[1-3]. This pattern of dry skin in the areas covered by wudu is what is known as 'wudu pattern xerosis (dry skin)'.

WHAT IS DRY SKIN?

Dry skin, or xerosis, is a very common condition producing cracking, flaking, or scaling of the skin [3]. It most commonly causes itchiness, but may also cause redness, bleeding, and peeling of the skin [3]. Long-term, dry skin may cause complications such as infections, or a myriad of other skin conditions [3]. Some common causes of dry skin are:



- Old age
- Winter weather
- Hot baths/showers
- Harsh soaps
- Irritating detergents
- Medications (eg. diuretics)
- Skin conditions (e.g. eczema, psoriasis)
- Other medical conditions (e.g. diabetes [4])

HOW WUDU MAY LEAD TO DRY SKIN



Our skin needs to stay hydrated [3]. Various fats and proteins on our skin ensure that the skin's moisture does not evaporate, therefore preventing skin dehydration [3]. For numerous reasons, including genetics, we may have fewer of these protective fats and proteins, leading to dry skin [3]. In this state, when we continually wash our skin, we are further eliminating these proteins worsening the dryness [1-3]. This is why, for some, wudu may cause notable dry skin.

TIPS TO KEEP HANDS HYDRATED WHEN DOING WUDU

There are several measures we can take to ensure our skin is sufficiently hydrated when performing wudu. This includes [3]:



- Using an emollient/moisturizer after doing wudu
- Avoiding rough, irritating fabrics when drying hands
- Patting skin dry rather than rubbing it to dry
- Avoiding hot water
- Avoiding harsh soaps/detergents

If you have severe symptoms of dry skin, or if regular management does not work, particularly if you have a pre-existing skin condition, you may consider performing tayammum instead of wudu. In Islam, tayammum is an alternative to wudu in which water is not used [5]. It is reserved for special circumstances in which a Muslim is unable to use water to purify themselves [5].



[1] A. P. Lazar and P. Lazar, "Dry skin, water, and lubrication," *Dermatologic Clinics*, 1991.

[2] E. Proksch and J. M. Lachapelle, "The management of dry skin with topical emollients - Recent perspectives," *JDDG - Journal of the German Society of Dermatology*, 2005.

[3] M. Greenberg, H. Galiczynski, and J. Edward M. Galiczynski, "Dry skin: common causes, effective treatments: ruling out systemic causes is the first step to diagnosing xerosis, and patient education is the key to management. The good news is that dry skin can usually be managed effectively and inexpensively," *JAAPA-Journal Am. Acad. Physicians Assist.*, 2004.

[4] R. S. Kirsner et al., "Diabetic Skin Changes Can Benefit from Moisturizer and Cleanser Use: A Review," *Journal of drugs in dermatology*, 2019.

[5] Sahih al-Bukhari 334