

Baby, it's Cold Outside!

Contributed by Gotham BeanGirl
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A Gotham BeanGirl Column

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Ah, winter! Hot cocoas, smiling faces, higher tips and gingerbread lattes. Tis the season… Well, quite frankly, Bah Humbug! Why, you ask? If you are a barista living in the colder states, winter and the holidays bring with it cracked dry hands, chapped lips and cold temperatures in a business where the door continuously flaps open to welcome stressed out streams of cranky customers.

Baristi everywhere take heart! There are a few simple things you can do to ensure an easier passage through this “winter wonderland”.

Evan Stepanek

NYC Baristo for 3+years

“I make sure I drink plenty of water. You have to hydrate internally as well as externally…and I moisturize like crazy!”

All barista notice an increase of dry cracked skin on their hands and lips when the cold winds start to blow. For some, this may be a minor aesthetic annoyance. However, for others, these winter cracks become so deep and painful they impair the ability to work let alone turn out masterpiece lattes.

What to do? Prevention, as always, is key.

Hydration

When the colder months approach we often neglect to hydrate our bodies. Hot cocoas, lattes, apple cider – these are all deliciously comforting but they cannot substitute for the essential – water! You expend as much, if not more, energy stocking milk, emptying out cans, refilling supplies and steaming milk as you did this summer only now you are not visibly sweating. So remember – the first step is to hydrate your body from the inside. Eight glasses of water daily is the rule of thumb and this number increases with your activity level.

Moisturize

Many begin to notice rough patches of skin first forming around their cuticles and fingertips. This painful onset of winter

skin has most barista reaching for a variety of hand creams. After interviewing several barista, we found a common trick of the trade. Whatever your cream you prefer – slather it on at night then slip cotton gloves or white cotton socks over your hands before going to sleep! You will wake up in the morning with soft re-hydrated hands. Many barista specifically swear by petroleum jelly and recommend the treatment be done to poor aching feet! As for lips? Keep your favorite balm handy and reapply often!

Protect

Wearing rubber gloves while carrying out maintenance duties also helps. Think of all the wear and tear when your hands are exposed to hot and cold temperatures simultaneously. Add water, dish soap and cleaning solutions to the mix and your hands are headed for serious winter trouble. Taking the time to slip on gloves can really make the difference.

Layer

It’s not only hands and lips that suffer this time of year. Many baristi find themselves huddling near the espresso machine, not to steam or pull, but to keep from shivering! When asking many barista how they managed this problem the same answer often popped up – layers.

Layering clothes helps trap air between the layers of fabric. This, in turn, keeps you warm. Cotton layers in form of tanks and T-shirts provide needed layers while allowing the body to breathe. Many outdoor enthusiasts use these tips to help them regulate their body temperature during activities such as cycling and running. Although being a baristo or barista is not an outdoor activity, there is no reason not to employ these same tactics to keep you warm on shift.

Indulge

You work hard – now indulge! Regular manicures help keep ragged cuticles and nails at bay. Not to mention they are relaxing! Hunt for a clean and reliable nail salon in your area and make a habit of treating your hands. And boys, manicures are not just for girls!

So remember: Hydrate, Moisturize, Protect, Layer and Indulge! Follow these tips and soon even you will be Ho-Ho-Ho’ing your way through the winter.