

A mountain man needs face cream

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Ski instructor Simon Unkovskoy shuns face masks. Says they mess up his breathing and line of vision. Instead, he slathers on face cream for his on-hill time, whether he's teaching in Colorado or at the Wilmot Mountain Ski School just over the Wisconsin border.

"That puts a layer of--I don't know if you call it grease--but a layer of fat between the skin and the outside world, and that protects you," the 80-year-old said of the Dermatone cream he uses.

Don't ski? Don't want to? Say this face stuff doesn't matter? Dermatologists say it does. A guy needs to protect his mug from the elements, whether dodging moguls or Metra commuters.

"Men's skin is definitely drier in the winter," said Dr. Eliot Battle, an American Academy of Dermatology spokesman, with a practice in Washington, D.C. "Dry is one of the evils of skin care, so a man needs to find some moisturizer, and it also needs to be sun-protected."

Dr. Joshua Fox agreed. "It's probably a good idea to use a sunscreen even on a cloudy day," said Fox, a New York dermatologist and AAD spokesman. But using a cream or lotion is crucial, he said, when skiing or snowboarding because the sun's rays are more intense, thanks to elevation and snow reflection, and there's windburn.

With pricey products plus online purveyors (like Maleface.com) plus contenders from Nivea, Gillette and Neutrogena jamming retail shelves, what's a guy to do?

"The easiest thing for men is to find a moisturizing sunscreen," said Battle, who prefers water-based products to oil-based ones that can clog pores. And go easy on the color or fragrance to avoid allergic reactions.

A moisturizer with SPF 15 or above, Battle said, can ward off skin cancer, keep skin moist and prevent wrinkles, particularly around the eyes, where guys are vulnerable.