

Beauty First+Aid

FOR THE FASHIONISTA

When this season's trends take a toll on you, these treats will ensure your fashion fix is less punishing, more pampering. By Alexandra Kohut-Cole

Fall just may be the season for fashion-related woes. Skinny stilettos are not great for getting anywhere in a hurry. It bags are shoulder-achingly oversized, and even chic toga dresses can mean a dreaded uneven tan.

But every fashionista worth her Louboutins knows that that's hardly any reason to denounce Fall's super trends. Even Gwyneth Paltrow would rather be photographed being assisted down a flight of stairs by her minder than give up her sky-high heels at the premiere of *Iron Man*. And what's good enough for the red carpet is good enough for us.

Thankfully, for every pain-inducing action, there's an equal and opposite pampering reaction.

Arm, shoulder and neck strain

Possible culprit The oversized bag
Fashion diagnosis The latest It bag has the capacity to fit a kitchen sink. But an overstuffed bag could "place a strain on the neck, back and shoulders," says

Valarie Goh of Focus Pilates. Carrying too much weight on one shoulder causes one side of the neck to work hard, resulting in neck strain. In severe cases, this may cause headaches, as neck muscles tense and pull on the base of the skull. The first resort: lighten your load.

First Aid The Back, Shoulder & Neck Blast at Qi Mantra expertly targets the upper and lower back for you. Choose the length of treatment time based on your needs (\$40 to \$120). Alternatively, get a full body workout with the Complete Health Blast, which comprises intensive acupressure for the shoulders, back and thighs (\$70 to \$120).



Qi Mantra



Oversized, overloaded bags can result in back, shoulder and neck strain



Wearing stilettos for too long can strain the back and the heart

Chronic backache, painful feet

Possible culprit Skyscraper stilettos

Fashion diagnosis "High heels cause the body's weight to be centred forward, or on the toes," explains physiotherapist Valarie Goh of Focus Pilates. This makes it harder to balance, requiring more muscular effort to maintain an upright balance or to keep from falling forward, resulting in backaches. "Wearing high heels can also put a strain on the heart and the back," says London holistic therapist Elizabeth Chambers, who recommends foot massages to alleviate the pressure, as well as alternating between high heels and flats.

First Aid Give your feet a break with a Mudslide Hot Foot Treat, which uses hot river stones laced with mud (60 min, \$120, at House). Or try a deep acupressure foot massage to improve circulation, Foot Blast (\$50 for 60 mins, at House). To relieve muscular aches, chronic pain and stiffness, try the Royal Thai Massage (45min, \$70 - \$85) at Comfort Space Helio Asia.



Comfort Space Helio Asia

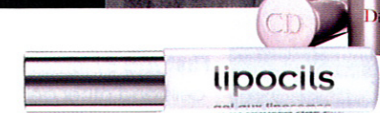


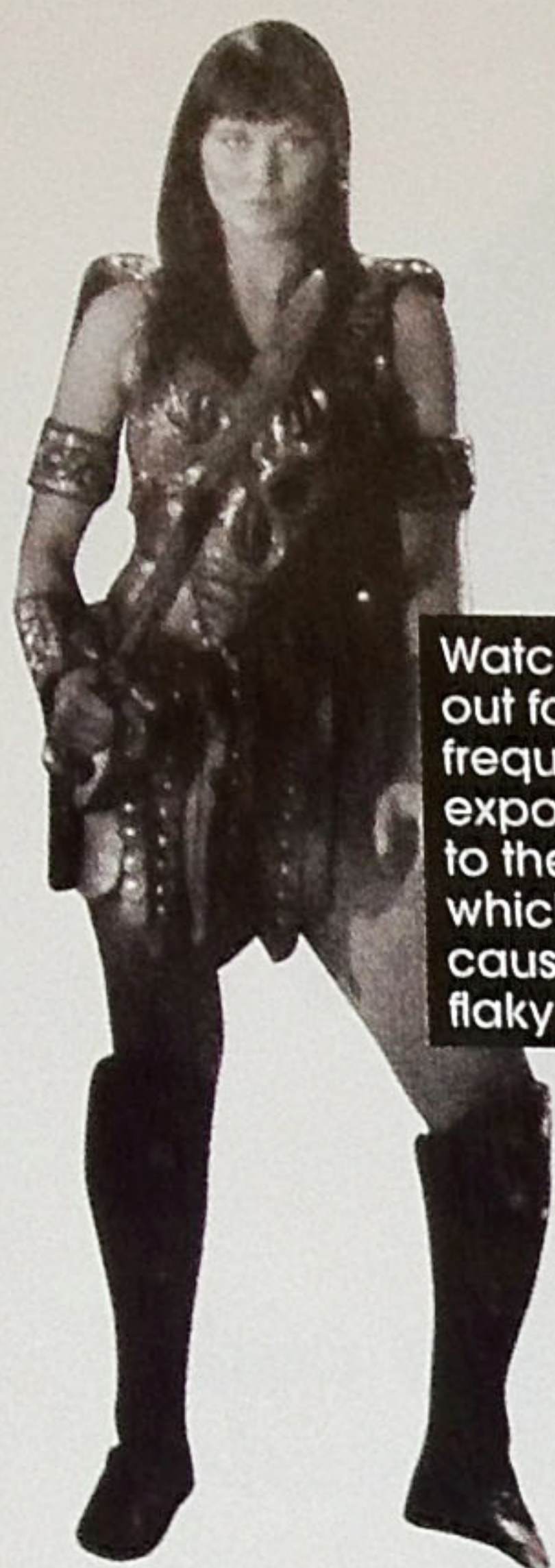
Refresh strained eyes with soothing masks and other treatments

Eye strain

Possible culprits Custom couture lashes and lash extensions

First Aid To prep eyes and prevent any stress from squinting, take five with Shiseido Benefiance Pure Retinol Instant Treatment Eye Mask (\$105). It hydrates and energises with specially-contoured sheets designed to fit the under-eye region. After using couture lashes, try soothing eye treatments such as Dior Capture Totale Multi-Perfection Eye Treatment, \$115, or Estee Lauder Advanced Night Repair Eye Recovery Complex (\$82). Talika Lipocils Eyelash Gel (\$68) soothes eyelashes with witch hazel.





Watch out for frequent exposure to the sun which can cause dry, flaky skin.

Dry skin

Possible culprit

Gladiator sandals

Fashion diagnosis

Traipsing around in this season's gladiator sandals will cause less ankle, knee and back pain than wearing ultra-high heels, but exposing your skin to the elements can cause it to become dry and flaky.

First Aid Before running out the door, apply Dior Hydration Sorbet Creme (\$59) to feet and body – it creates an invisible protective and moisturising barrier to shield skin from the elements and air-conditioning. The Invigorating Foot Reflexology at True Spa (45 min, \$74 to \$110) keeps feet supple with a hydrating massage cream. Regular pedicures not only keep your nails in mint condition, but usually come with a 5 to 10 minute foot massage. Try the Princess Pedicure (\$38) at Pink Parlour, which also entertains guests with *Sex & The City* reruns.



Excessive use of hair extensions can damage the scalp.

Hair loss

Possible culprits

Hair extensions and rebonding

Fashion diagnosis

Hair extensions and rebonding are godsend to those with thin or frizzy hair, but excessive use can lead to hair damage and scalp sensitivity problems.

"Before any of these procedures, protect the scalp and hair with a hydration treatment," suggests Anita Wong, managing director of Phyto Hair Spa by Revamp, at Ngee Ann City.

First Aid To repair damage from hair extensions, try the Regenerative Hair Therapy (\$188) for the Scalp at the Phyto Hair Spa by Revamp which cleanses and detoxifies hair before repairing it with an oxygen therapy mist. For damage by rebonding, the Intense Nourishment Treatment (from \$148) replenishes the moisture inside the hair shaft.



Sunscreens are a must while wearing toga tops

Pinched nerves, and light-headedness

Possible culprit

Skinny jeans, pencil skirts, corsets

Fashion diagnosis

"Skinny jeans that are too tight may cause compression at certain sites of the thigh, and this might damage a nerve in the thigh called the lateral femoral cutaneous nerve. This condition is called Meralgia Paresthetica," says Valarie Goh. Individuals may experience pain, hypersensitivity, burning, tingling or numbness in the lateral thigh that occasionally extends into the groin, buttocks, or outer side of the knee. Wearing restrictive clothing also alters breathing patterns, causing some to feel lightheaded.

First Aid Regular massages improve circulation around compressed body parts. Try massaging the thighs with Estee Lauder Performance Slim Shape (\$71), which not only melts away cellulite but reinforces the skin's natural support. The Cheeky Chai Detox at Spa Esprit (105 min, \$235) improves circulation with drainage massage techniques and detoxes with cardamom, cloves and cinnamon.



Restrictive clothes like corsets can affect breathing patterns



Tan lines and uneven tanning

Possible culprit

Toga tops and dresses

Fashion diagnosis Wear a good sunscreen when wearing toga tops to minimise an uneven shoulder tan. But when the inevitable happens, even up a lopsided tan with Shiseido Quick Self Tanning Gel (\$44) and on each shoulder, dust a little bronze shimmer with Bobbi Brown Shimmer Brick in Bronze (\$66).

First Aid By removing dead skin cells and other debris from skin's outermost layer, exfoliation can help to correct uneven skin tone.

Try a non-abrasive scrub such as the SCO Body Polish sold at Mask (\$177), which uses wholegrain Jojoba seeds. Or try Estee Lauder's Body Performance Exfoliating Body Polish (\$60), which has skin-refining beads for precise polishing, and moisturising beads that contain Vitamin E. For a deep exfoliating treatment, try the Sea Salt Scrub + Body Cream at Comfort Space Helio Asia, which removes surface impurities, polishes and refines the body with finely-milled sea salt, and moisturises skin with a nourishing cream (75mins, \$160 to \$180).