

body lotion

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Body Lotion

A light oil-in-water emulsion for skin below the neck. Body lotion is the highest volume product in this catalogue by weight sold, the cheapest per gram, and the one where the difference between an expensive and an inexpensive product is smallest.

Lotion, cream, butter, ointment

The distinction is water content, and it maps directly onto how dry the skin is.

Format	Water	Feel	Right for
Lotion	High (70–85%)	Light, pumps, sinks fast	Normal to mildly dry skin; large areas; summer
Cream	Moderate	Thicker, scoops or squeezes	Dry skin; winter
Butter	Low	Rich, solid at room temperature	Very dry skin, elbows, heels — see Body Butter
Ointment	None	Greasy, occlusive	Eczema, cracked skin, medical use

More water is not less effective — it is a different job. A lotion spreads over a whole body in the time a

butter covers one leg, and **the moisturiser people actually use daily beats the one they own.**

What is in it

Class	Doing what	Names
Water	Bulk	Aqua
Humectant	Binds water at the surface	Glycerin, urea, propylene glycol, sodium PCA
Emollient	Smooths, softens	Caprylic/capric triglyceride, shea butter, plant oils, isopropyl myristate
Occlusive	Slows evaporation	Dimethicone, mineral oil, petrolatum
Emulsifier	Holds it together	Glyceryl stearate + PEG-100 stearate, cetearyl alcohol
Preservative	Essential	Phenoxyethanol, benzyl alcohol, sodium benzoate
Fragrance	The main reason people choose one	Parfum

Urea deserves a separate note. At 5–10% it is a humectant; at 10% and above it is also keratolytic, softening thickened skin. It is the most useful single ingredient for rough heels, keratosis pilaris, and the shins of anyone over sixty, and it is underrepresented on the mainstream shelf outside pharmacy brands.

When to apply it

Within three minutes of getting out of the bath or shower, on skin patted rather than rubbed dry. Damp skin has surface water for the humectants to bind and for the occlusives to seal in, and the difference is measurable rather than folkloric.

Fragrance, plainly

Fragrance is the most common cause of contact dermatitis in this category and body lotion is applied to a very large surface area, daily, often on skin freshly stripped by hot water and surfactant. Anyone with itching that has no obvious cause should try a genuinely fragrance-free lotion for a month before anything else. Note that **"unscented" is not "fragrance free"** — unscented products may contain masking fragrance.

Where it sits in the rules

Cosmetic in the US — FDA primary category (14). Three routes to also being a drug: an **SPF** number, a **skin protectant** claim with a monograph active, or an eczema or psoriasis claim. Note also that the **EU retinol restriction** of Regulation (EU) 2024/996 sets a much lower limit for body lotion — **0.05%** — than for face products, precisely because the applied surface area is so much larger.

Body lotion is also the format where **"and other ingredients"** occasionally appears at the end of a US ingredient list: that is the FDA-accepted trade-secret exemption under 21 CFR 701.3, and it is legal.

Shelf life

Twelve months after opening for a pump bottle; less for a tub. Separation, a sour or solvent-like odour, or a colour change means the emulsion or the preservative has failed. Bottles kept in a bathroom and topped up with water — a surprisingly common habit as they run low — are contaminated from that moment.

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- [Skincare](#) — the shelf this sits on, and the rest of it.
- [Cosmetics](#) — what the label is legally allowed to say, and the full catalogue.
- The rest of *Body, hand and foot* — [Body Butter](#) · [Body Oil](#) · [Body Scrub](#) · [Hand Cream](#) · [Foot Cream](#) · [Foot Powder and Spray](#) · [Stretch Mark Cream](#) · [Cellulite Cream](#).
- [Baby Lotion](#) — the same product, formulated for infants.
- Regulatory statements here follow the FDA and EU sources listed on [Cosmetics](#), read 16 August 2026.