

Would you be enticed by an advertisement for a coat that is waterproof, stretchable, and washable; that invisibly repairs small cuts, rips, and burns; and that is guaranteed to last a lifetime with reasonable care? Sounds too good to be true, but you already have such a coat—your cutaneous membrane, or skin. Skin is absolutely essential because it maintains your body's boundary. (This is why you can swim for hours without becoming waterlogged.) Structurally, the skin is a marvel.