

CREATING YOUR OWN SKIN CARE ROUTINE

Your Guide to
Developing the
Best Skin Care
Regimen for You

Brought to you by



E S T . 1 9 8 9

and Liz Thompson
from Organic Beauty Source



INTRODUCTION

Ever notice how the skin care items that work for your best friend or coworker leave your skin unhappy? Maybe you've tried the most popular products, those that celebs and popular vloggers use, only to end up with less than stellar results.

This is because you have your own unique skin type with individual skin issues, like acne, rosacea or sensitivity at play. Choosing items designed to work on *your* skin will result in a healthy, balanced complexion.

Unfortunately, it's not always as easy as buying products made for oily, sensitive, or whatever your skin type may be. Some complexions get away with generic protocols and agree with every product recommended by a specific line, but often you will get the most benefit by hand selecting different products that target your specific needs, whether they are made by the same brand or not.

Sounds like a lot of work, right? Don't let this information dissuade you. Setting up your best personal skin care routine does not have to be time consuming, super costly, or difficult.

In this guide you will learn which products and ingredients work best on your skin, fit into your lifestyle, and meet your skin and health goals. And they won't necessarily be what works for your bestie. Let's get started.



WHY A CUSTOMIZED SKIN CARE PLAN IS IMPORTANT

Of course, using products built for your particular skin type is essential in keeping skin glowing. But there is more to it than choosing items labeled for normal, dry, or oily skin. Most people have at least one issue they are looking to treat, whether it be banishing blemishes or getting to the bottom of which ingredient is causing irritation. Just because you have oily skin does not mean it behaves exactly like the next person with oily skin. Everyone's complexion is unique.

Then there is the climate issue. Where you live, the season, and weather determines what to use on your skin. Sure, your staple items may stay the same, but you may want to add in a skin treatment or swap something out as the weather dictates.

Lifestyle is another important consideration when choosing skin care. Certain medications, your job, stress, and diet all affect your skin. There are ingredients and lifestyle techniques that can help relieve the effects of those issues.

Think you can't undo what's been done? If you were a little lax in the sunscreen department over the years, didn't always moisturize adequately, consume too much sugar, can't seem to quit smoking, or have sagging skin in your DNA, don't fret. There are many natural ingredients and skin care practices that do wonders to prevent premature aging and helping skin to bounce back.



START AT THE BEGINNING: KNOW YOUR SKIN TYPE

DETERMINING YOUR SKIN TYPE

Tips, Tricks, Things to Look For

The best place to start is to identify your skin type. It's as fundamental to healthy skin as diet is to keeping your body fit. Skin type is what you were born with. It doesn't change from season to season, diet to diet, or as you age. Your skin may have different needs at these different times, but your skin type will not vary.

The six main skin types:

- Normal
- Combination
- Oily/Acne
- Dry
- Sensitive
- Aged/Mature

Normal Skin

The skin is constantly battling pollutants in the air, chemicals in the products we use on ourselves and in our homes, and the quality of food we eat. Due to this toxic assault, "normal" skin is a bit of a misnomer.

Normal skin type is more accurately described as skin that is non-problematic. It is neither overly dry nor oily, is relatively blemish-free, and experiences little to no irritation.

Taking care of this skin type requires daily cleansing and moisturizing, regular exfoliation, and premature aging preventative treatments.

Combination Skin

This skin type is usually oily in the T-zone (forehead, nose, and chin), while the rest of the face is normal or dry.

For best results when caring for combination skin, use cleansers and toners designed for all skin types, and treatment products designed for specific skin issues. For instance, you may benefit from an oil balancing facial mask in the T-zone and a hydrating serum on the rest of the face.

Regularly treating the different areas of the face may bring the skin into balance, eliminating the need for the separate treatments.



Oily/Acne Skin

These two skin types are often grouped together because, while not all oily skin has acne, most acne prone skin is oily.

Generally, oily skin produces more oil than it needs, feels thicker than normal and dry skin, and has larger pores. The production of excess oil often leads to pimples and blemishes.

There are also several internal factors that lead to oily skin and acne. hormonal imbalance (often the case with teen and adult-onset acne), a diet high in fat and oil, high stress levels, and humid climates.

Excess oiliness and acne can be controlled, but it takes work. Daily cleansing with a mildly antiseptic wash and following up with a light moisturizer is a good starting place.

If you think keeping acne prone skin squeaky clean will help to banish blemishes, think again. Yes, all skin types benefit from regular cleansing, but over cleansing or using harsh ingredients to rid the skin of excess oil actually exacerbates the problem. When skin is stripped of natural oil, it ramps up oil production in an attempt to catch up. This extra oil is trapped under the flaky layer of skin created by over cleansing, and pimples are born.

A useful tip for dry skin types is to leave the skin slightly damp before applying moisturizer. This helps the skin to better drink in and retain more of the hydration it lacks. Another good idea for those with dehydrated skin (really for all of our skin, no matter what type!) is simply drinking more water. A good rule of thumb is to drink $\frac{1}{2}$ ounce of water per pound of body weight daily. So for someone weighing 150 pounds, that's at least 75 ounces, or nearly 10 glasses of water each day.

Dry Skin

Dry skin may result from medication, too much sun/wind, poor diet, normal aging, not drinking enough water, or using harsh soaps and chemical-heavy skin care products.

The two types of dry skin are oil dry, which means oil glands are not producing enough oil to hydrate the skin, or water dry, which is dehydrated skin.

With oil dry skin, you may experience both dry and oily areas, which can make treatment confusing. Simply applying a heavy cream will not necessarily solve the problem –in fact it can aggravate the issue. Our own natural oil is our skin's best moisturizer. The trick is getting the oil glands to cooperate.

The best treatment is to use products that can stimulate the skin's natural oil production, thereby providing good moisture.

Dehydrated skin has enough oil but may still feel dry and flaky. This type of skin will appear thin and you may even be able to see small capillaries near the surface of the skin. Additionally, the skin can appear to have a fine texture but feel coarse to the touch.

To improve the look and feel of dehydrated skin, and replace the lack of moisture, choose products formulated for dry skin.

Sensitive Skin

Yes, sensitive is a legitimate skin type, but not all skin experiencing sensitivity falls into this category. To find out whether your skin is truly sensitive or not you'll have to get to the bottom of why it is upset.

There are those born with easily upset skin that can't tolerate harsh chemicals and even certain natural ingredients. Then there are others who tend to be upset due to allergies, improper care, or chronic skin conditions, like rosacea, psoriasis, or eczema.

No matter what makes skin irritable, sensitive skin is weakened skin. Most product lines focus on making suppressive, anti-inflammatory products that merely target the symptoms of sensitivity: red, dry, tight, itchy, burning skin. This skin needs to be exercised, strengthened and fortified before healthier skin can be achieved. Anything that can add to the inflammation negates this process.

Gentle, calming ingredients that nourish and protect are essential in strengthening and bringing this skin type back into balance.

Eliminating harmful cosmetic ingredients is a good place to start. Often people who think they have sensitive skin are experiencing a reaction to chemical ingredients.



Aging Skin

While growing older is inevitable, prevention is key to warding off premature skin aging and keeping the complexion looking its best as we mature. A regular skin care regimen, sun protection, and healthy diet and lifestyle all benefit the look and feel of our skin.

Smoking, overdoing the alcohol, and consuming too much sugar all lead to premature aging. Thankfully, there are ways to undo some of the damage done and keep some signs of aging at bay.

As we age, collagen production slows and skin's elasticity breaks down. This causes a deflated, saggy look. Dark spots and discoloration appear, along with fine lines and wrinkles.

There are natural ingredients that plump the skin, even skin tone, and soften lines. Regular facials can also help to keep skin looking youthful.

SKIN TYPE CHEATSHEET

Normal Skin

- Non-problematic skin

Care Tips:

- Daily cleansing & moisturizing
- Exfoliate 1 X week
- Try adding in premature aging products

Oily/Acne-Prone Skin

- Overproduction of oil glands
- Skin feels thicker
- Large, visible pores
- Often leads to breakouts

Care Tips:

- Daily cleansing is a must!
- Don't try to strip skin of its natural oils
- Exfoliate 2 x week
- Spot treat blemishes

Sensitive Skin

- Weakened, easily irritated skin
- Redness, itching & other visible signs of inflammation

Care Tips:

- Use gentle, simple products
- Avoid harsh chemicals, abrasive scrubs & heavy fragrances
- Goal is to calm & restore harmony

Combination Skin

- Usually oily T-zone
- Normal-to-dry in other areas

Care Tips:

- Use different products to treat area-specific concerns
- Goal is to bring balance to the skin

Dry Skin

2 types:

- Underproductive oil glands
- Dehydrated skin

Care Tips:

- Use products to jump start skin's natural oil production
- Choose rich, emollient ingredients that protect against water loss

Aging Skin

- Fine lines & wrinkles
- Skin looks saggy & sallow
- Dark spots & discoloration

Care Tips:

- Prevention is key!
- Add richer products formulated for mature skin into your protocol
- Choose ingredients that:
 - Plump the skin
 - Replace lost hydration
 - Improve skin texture & clarity

TACKLING SKIN ISSUES

We all have issues. Skin situations crop up from season to season and in different times of life.

Maybe you had relatively clear skin as a teen only to end up battling adult acne. Perhaps you experienced some lasting discoloration due to pregnancy or your skin seems to have dried out once you turned 40.

Life happens and it happens to skin too. There are ways to combat the effects of skin issues that crop up, whether ongoing, like allergies and skin conditions, or temporary, like seasonal upset.

Rosacea

Rosacea is a skin condition that causes persistent redness and usually affects the areas of the face that normally blush: forehead, cheeks, chin, and lower nose. The small blood vessels in these areas enlarge and become more visible through the skin, looking like small red, veiny-looking lines. Rosacea and the look of dilated capillaries, or couperose, a component of rosacea, are basically a more acute form of inflamed, sensitive skin.

This condition can be controlled by dietary habits. Refined sugars, alcohol, spicy foods, and high temperatures, whether in environment or food – and stress – can trigger Rosacea.

By alternately sedating and gently stimulating the skin, toxic material will flush from the tissue and capillaries. Overtime, this will strengthen the skin, causing the redness to be alleviated.



Psoriasis & Eczema

Eczema is a recurring skin condition characterized by a dry, flaky, itchy rash. It can appear anywhere on the body and can be difficult to distinguish eczema from psoriasis.

Psoriasis is a disorder, where angry red eruptions appear on the surface of the skin & begin to itch. You will want to look for products that will bring topical relief and soothe the affected area.

It is believed that eczema and psoriasis may be completely controlled by diet alone. Avoiding dairy and gluten-containing products (often wheat and corn) normally alleviates these two dermal issues. Stress can also be a factor that will exacerbate the symptoms.

Many protocols for these skin conditions are very similar to those for sensitive skin

Rough Texture

Rough and uneven skin texture is a common condition. Sand paper skin may be more prevalent in dry climates and cold times of year, but it can happen to anyone, any time.

You may even experience certain areas of the face that are rougher than others. Dry, dead skin cells build up on the skin's surface, leading to a rough feel and dull appearance. Overdoing the sun can also cause uneven skin texture.

Regular exfoliation evens skin's texture, creates a smooth surface, and enhances your glow.

Hyperpigmentation

Excess melanin production is what causes hyperpigmentation, areas of dark discoloration on skin. Melasma is a condition brought on by the hormonal changes during pregnancy, most often affecting the abdomen and face.

Damage from UV rays is another common cause of discoloration and dark spots. And post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation is sometimes seen with scarring.

Proper sun protection is effective in lessening the severity of hyperpigmentation and preventing further damage. Other natural ingredients, like vitamin E and rosehip oils, are also good for lightening dark spots.

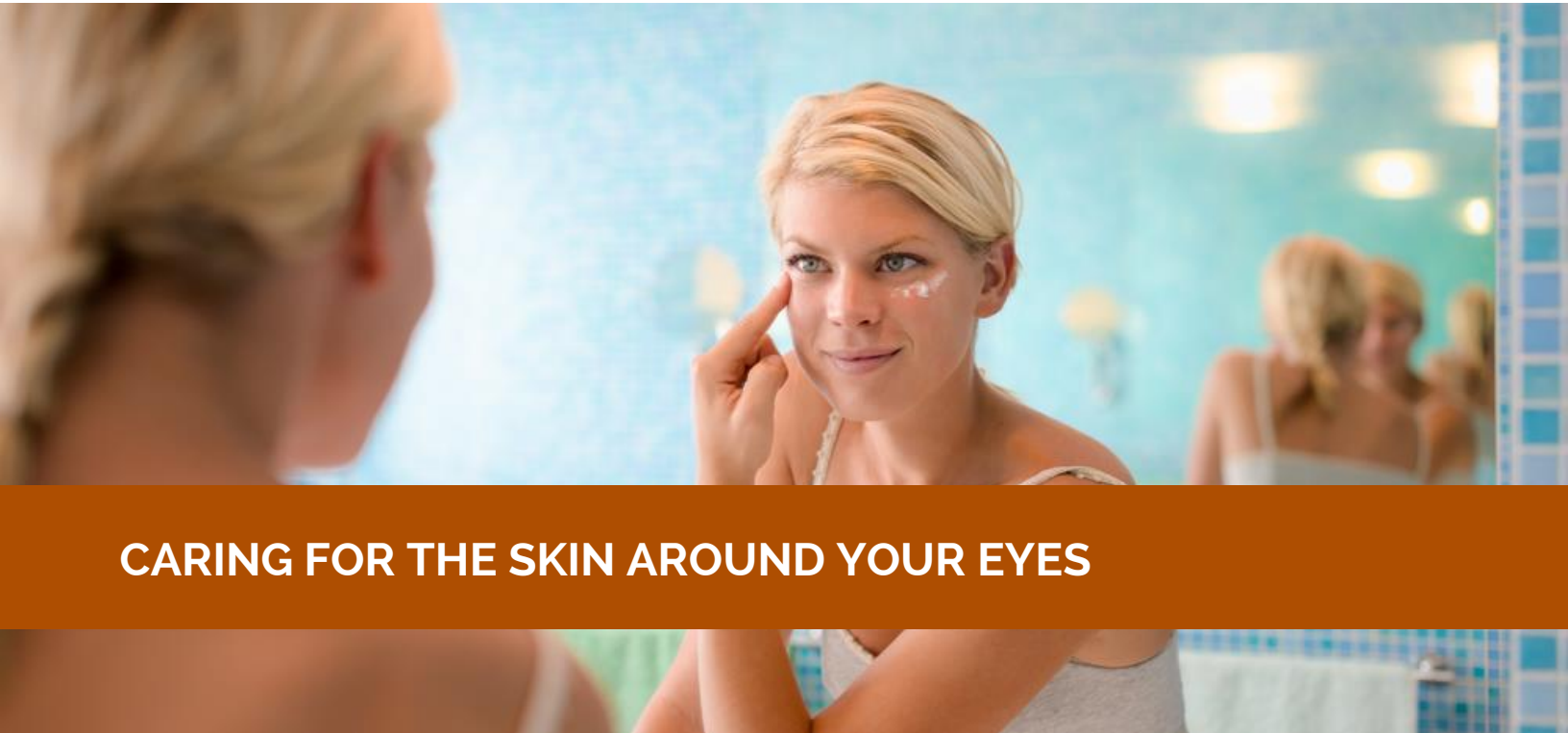
Truth About Pores

You've likely noticed many products claiming to shrink pores. The truth is, pore size is based on heredity and can't shrink.

The good news? You can make pores appear smaller by keeping them clear.

The reason pores look large is mostly due to built up dead skin cells, excess oil, and makeup. Regular cleansing and exfoliation goes a long way toward improving the appearance of pores.

Before setting up a new skin care routine, it is important to note personal goals and priorities for your skin. Are you looking to lessen the look of wrinkles or dark spots? Get acne under control? Diminish the appearance of rosacea? Or maybe you'd like to use all vegan or gluten-free products. Come up with a list to guide you on your healthy skin journey.



CARING FOR THE SKIN AROUND YOUR EYES

The skin around your eyes is thinner and more delicate than other areas of the face. This is why it shows veins and darkness more easily. It is also more prone to puffiness and wrinkling, and it may be more difficult to treat dryness here too.

Most eye creams are formulated to be extra gentle on this sensitive area and there are several formulas to choose from depending on the issues you are addressing.

Fine lines: Ingredients that smooth the skin will diminish the appearance of lines.

Lightly hydrating oils are perfect for softening lines and supporting delicate skin.

Wrinkles and Crow's Feet: When dealing with wrinkles around the eyes you need ingredients that are gentle, yet powerful.

Richly hydrating plant oils and butters hydrate and plump the skin. Apply a nourishing cream at night to repair skin while you sleep.

Dark circles: Often hereditary, shiners can also be caused by lack of sleep, dehydration, medications, and feeling under the weather.

An eye cream made with natural brighteners, like caffeine and *Cypress oil*, work well to combat darkness and make your peepers look more lively.

Puffiness: While heredity comes into play here too, eye puffiness can also be brought on by overindulging in alcohol or junk food.

A gel eye treatment that cools and tightens skin will tone down swelling. *Cucumber* extract is particularly good for treating puffy eyes.

EXPERT TIPS

Delicate skin needs a gentle touch. Never tug or pull on eye skin. Pat on eye product around the eyes with your ring finger and allow to soak in.

Keeping an eye product in the refrigerator is a cool treat for tired or puffy eyes.



INGREDIENTS

USING ESSENTIAL OILS

Essential oils are plant hormones, or phytohormones, found in the seeds, leaves, branches, bark, roots, berries, flowers, sap, needles, and peels of plants.

These phytohormones, like human hormones, control the functioning of the plant. This similarity makes essential oils ideal for therapeutic use. Each essential oil has its own unique properties, making them useful in addressing a wide range of skin types and issues.

Because these powerful oils are obtained from plants, they include chlorophyll, which has been shown to increase oxygen levels in the body, keeping tissues healthy and functioning efficiently.

Nutrients in essential oils hydrate and detoxify the skin. Many oils hold antibacterial, anti-fungal, and antiseptic qualities too.

These little beauties are also chock full of antioxidants to keep skin healthy and youthful, and carry lovely scents for aromatherapeutic benefits.



Because they are so potent, care must be taken when using essential oils. Most are too strong to be used on their own, with the exception of *Lavender* and *Tea Tree* oils.

If you are using these oils on their own, and not in a prepared skin care product, add a few drops of the essential oil to a carrier oil, like *Jojoba* or *Sunflower*. Always avoid contact with eyes. If you are pregnant or have serious health concerns, contact your physician prior to use.



SEAWEEDS

Superfood for skin straight from the sea, *Seaweeds* are rich sources of vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, amino acids, omega-3 & 6 fatty acids, and lots of other healthy stuff. All great, but what does it do for your skin?

Algae and other seaweeds provide essential hydration, and alleviate dryness and discomfort. This ingredient soothes irritated skin, evens skin tone, and gives the complexion a healthy glow.

Also a powerful anti-ager, seaweed firms the skin and lends a more youthful look. That's why this natural ingredient is well-suited to all skin types.



BOTANICALS

Like essential oils, botanical extracts provide individual benefits to skin. Because plants are more compatible with the human body, botanical ingredients more efficiently affect with the skin than synthetic ingredients.

Herbs, berries, teas, and other plant materials are used as oils, hydrosols, and extracts in skin care preparations to support and nourish skin.

INGREDIENTS BY SKIN TYPE

Each skin type is unique and requires different treatments. The benefits of natural ingredients are wide ranging - Something for everyone.

Oily Skin

When working to keep oiliness and acne under control, opt for ingredients with antibacterial, anti-inflammatory, and balancing properties.

Tea Tree oil and *Willow Bark* extract are antibacterial and help to prevent breakouts. *Citrus* extracts clear pores and ward off pimples, and *Niaouli* essential oil improves congestion.

OIL FOR OILY SKIN?

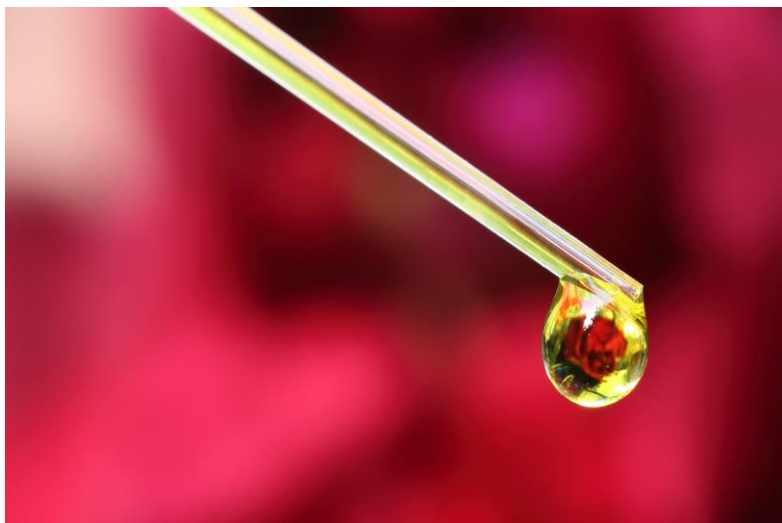
You bet! Even oily skin types need moisture. Light natural oils are absorbed easily into skin and leave behind no greasiness. Some even clear pores and offer antibacterial benefits while hydrating skin.

Try *Sunflower Seed oil* to give skin its moisture boost while cleansing pores.

Sensitive Skin

Sensitive skin issues require ultra-mild ingredients.

Aloe Vera is a gentle, non-greasy hydrator that also calms upset skin. *Chamomile essential oil* calms irritation and moisturizes, and *Cucumber extract* cools angry complexions.



Aging Skin

Addressing anti-aging concerns can be tricky. You want to create a youthful glow but also need to pamper and protect the skin. Rich hydration and gentle, yet powerful, ingredients are essential in an aging skin care protocol.

Shea Butter offers intense hydration that minimizes the appearance of wrinkles and plumps the skin. *Rosehip oil* gives a smooth feel and brightens the complexion. And antioxidants are a must for aging skin. *Green Tea* fights free radical damage and calms the skin.

Universal Skin Types

Then there are those ingredients that are so well-rounded they suit all skin types.

Jojoba oil is the most closely matched to the skin's own naturally produced oil, making it a great choice for normal on down to sensitive skin types.

Another important ingredient everyone should include in their skin care regimen is *Seaweed* to detox and hydrate.

Aloe Vera is an all-round healing, skin supportive ingredient. And *Green Tea* isn't only for your cup. Getting some of this powerful antioxidant on your skin each day will help to prevent damage that leads to premature aging.

INGREDIENTS TO AVOID

DEA/MEA/TEA

Abbreviations for diethanolamine, monoethanolamine, and triethanolamine, these ammonia compounds are added to cosmetics as emulsifiers and foaming agents. Ethanolamines are linked to cancer, organ toxicity, reproductive issues, and skin irritation.

Formaldehyde

Some synthetic preservatives, like urea, release this carcinogen, which is also a skin and lung irritant, and organ toxin and neurotoxin.

GMOs

This is a term used widely in foods, but is also a concern in personal care, as in aromatherapy and essential oils. Certain crops are commonly contaminated with GMOs, like corn and soy.

Heavy Metals (Metalloestrogens)

Many common metals, such as aluminum, that show up in cosmetics are suspected hormone disruptors. Like parabens, they accumulate in the body. But metalloestrogens take longer to flush out, causing longer exposure to toxins. Heavy metal levels that are too high are thought to increase risk of cancer, cause developmental and reproductive issues, are organic and immune system toxicants, and may cause allergic reaction.

Methylisothiazolinone (MIT)

Widely used in cosmetics as a preservative, MIT is a potential neurotoxin and may impair fetal development. It has also been shown to cause allergic reaction. If a cosmetic product claims to be "paraben-free", check to see if it contains MIT.

Microguard

A combination of gluconolactone and sodium benzoate, it is used as a part of a preservation system. Sodium benzoate carries safety concerns and is thought to be an organ system toxicant.

Petro Ingredients

Petrochemicals, like petrolatum, mineral oil, and paraffin wax, are ingredients derived from petroleum - yes, crude oil. They commonly contain impurities linked to cancer.

Pharmaceuticals

Synthetic ingredients are sometimes used to offer a quick fix by treating symptoms, when it comes to personal care products. But these man-made ingredients do not address the underlying problem, and can weaken and suppress the human immune system.

Phthalates

Phthalates are often used in skin care, makeup, hair care, and nail polish, and are listed by the European Union (EU) as an "endocrine-disrupting compound of high concern.". They can also negatively affect fertility and fetal development. Phthalates are generally not found on ingredient listings because they fall under the federal "fragrance" loophole.

Sodium Lauryl/Laureth Sulfate (SLS/SLES)

SLS and SLES are esters of sulphuric acid used to make products like shampoo, face wash, and toothpaste foamy. They are known penetration enhancers, altering the epidermal structure and allowing other chemicals to more easily sink into skin, and are often contaminated with chemical carcinogens. These ingredients have also been shown to irritate skin and eyes, and may cause permanent eye damage.

Synthetic Colorants

Artificial color ingredients are petrochemicals that are tested on animals due to carcinogenic properties. They also cause skin irritation, allergic reaction, acne, and possibly ADD symptoms.

Talc

An ingredient that has been used for generations, talc can be contaminated with asbestos that can be a respiratory toxin and carcinogenic.

Triclosan

A heavy duty antibacterial and preservative used by hospitals, this ingredient can be found in hand soaps, hand sanitizers, and even toothpaste. But triclosan comes with a host of health concerns including possible contamination with chloroform and dioxins, skin, eye, and lung irritation, hormonal disruption, allergic reaction, organ toxicity, and bioaccumulation.

Urea

A man-made synthetic used as a preservative and to make skin feel soft. It is also a known penetration enhancer, altering the skin structure so other chemicals can more easily make their way into deeper layers of skin and the blood stream. This chemical releases formaldehyde, a human carcinogen, and can lead to allergic reaction, reproductive issues, and skin and eye irritation.

SYNTHETIC FRAGRANCES

Fragrance ingredients are ubiquitous in conventional beauty and personal care products. Even those labeled “unscented” often contain chemical fragrance to mask other scents.

It's not just the headache and ick factor that come with these harmful ingredients. Skin irritation, dizziness, allergic reaction, respiratory distress, and endocrine disruption are all linked to synthetic fragrance ingredients.

You likely won't find individual fragrance ingredients on a product label. Due to a federal trade secret loophole, manufacturers (while required to disclose all other ingredients) can use the blanket term “fragrance” or “parfum” on labels in order to protect a signature scent recipe. This means nasty ingredients could be lurking in a product without the creator having to say so in the ingredients listing.

How to Spot Synthetic Fragrances

To steer clear of these harmful ingredients, learn to spot the signs of a chemical brew.

Usually, but not always, synthetic ingredients smell unnatural. This is your first heads up.

Next, read ingredient listings. This is the best way to make sure the products you purchase are free from harmful synthetics. It may not tell you what type of fragrance ingredients are used, but manufacturers who use natural fragrance ingredients will usually note this on the packaging.

Also, look for phthalates. These are chemicals often found in plastics, solvents, synthetic fragrances, air fresheners, and nail polish. Some studies have indicated phthalates as endocrine disruptors that can cause reproductive issues like low sperm count.

The phthalates used most in synthetic fragrance are diethyl phthalate, diethyl hexyl phthalate, and dibutyl phthalate. These may also appear on ingredient listings as DEP, DEHP and DBP.



Learning to read ingredient listings is your best defense against toxins in skin care. Forget the front label of a product, skip straight to the full ingredient listing and scan for the harmful ingredients listed here. In a rush? Check the first five and last five ingredients. The first five ingredients comprise the majority of the product, the last five are usually fragrance and preservative ingredients.

PRODUCT TYPES

CLEANSERS

Cleansing may be considered the most elemental of skin care steps. Lather and rinse, right? Not so fast. The way you cleanse could be doing your skin a lot of good or causing plenty of trouble.

If you are experiencing redness, irritation, or breakouts and can't seem to pinpoint which product is causing the fuss, it's time to take a look at your cleanser.

Types of Cleansers

As with all other skin care products, there are different types of cleansers formulated for specific skin types.

Gel cleansers are great for those with oily skin or when your face needs a thorough cleansing, like after working out. There are milk or cream cleansers that work well on dry skin types and in winter months. Then you have cleansing oils and balms, terrific at removing makeup and clearing pores.

Which Type of Cleanser Should You Use?

Gel Cleanser: Normal, Combination & Oily/Acne-Prone Skin Types

- Great for everyday cleansing.
- May need to switch up with changes in climate, lifestyle factors & frequency of washing

Purifying/Astringent Cleansers: Combination & Oily/Acne-Prone Skin Types

- Great for deeply cleansing the skin
- Pair with other formulas for double cleansing

Creams, Oils & Balms: Dry & Mature Skin Types

- Normal & Combination skin types can use, as needed for extra hydration
- Great for use at nighttime

Unscented/Fragrance-Free Cleansers: Sensitive Skin Types

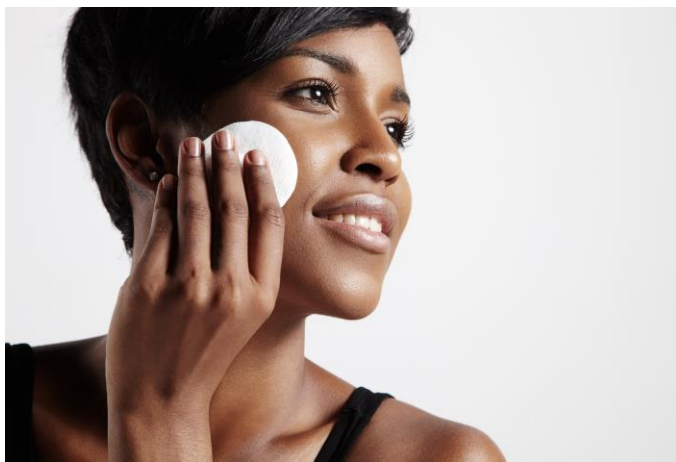
- Simple formulas, made with calming ingredients
- Use for morning & nighttime cleansing

Micellar Cleansing Water: All Skin Types

- Perfect for face and removing eye makeup
- Suitable for all skin types

Remember, if your skin isn't dirty no one says you have to wash it. A simple splash of warm (not hot) water, Micellar Cleansing Water or hydrating toner may be all it needs between daily washings.





MAKEUP REMOVERS

You know it's important to remove your makeup every single night. Did you know your facial cleanser may not be up to the job?

Makeup is made of oils and is designed to stay on skin. A gel or other light cleanser may not be able to bind to oils in makeup and remove them completely.

The best way to cleanse skin of makeup is with cleansing oil or balm, followed by a daily cleanser. Yes, even for oily skin types. Makeup remover wipes made with natural ingredients, like coconut oil, are also effective and easy on skin.

Have you tried micellar water? Miniscule oil molecules are suspended in water, making it great for removing makeup. Not only does it bind to and whisk away makeup, but cleans the skin without stripping away natural oils.

Simply swipe the skin with a cotton pad soaked in micellar water and follow with a daily cleanser, if you prefer.

EXFOLIATORS

Dry, dead skin cells build up on the skin's surface, causing clogged pores, blemishes, flakiness, roughness, increased appearance of wrinkles, and uneven skin tone. Removing that dry top layer not only makes skin look better but allows products to better penetrate the skin and do their job.

Regular exfoliation is important to keeping skin healthy, but overdoing this step can cause major damage. Many acne skin care systems, for instance, come with an exfoliation product meant for daily use. That is simply too much sloughing and will cause redness, irritation, inflammation, dryness, and an increase in breakouts.

Once or twice weekly, depending on your skin's needs, is plenty of exfoliating. Choose an exfoliator that works with your skin type.

There are two types of exfoliants, physical and enzymatic.

Physical exfoliants remove the dead skin cells by sloughing them away. You know these as loofahs, exfoliating cloths and brushes, and sugar and salt scrubs. There are also granular scrubs made of ground coffee, nut hulls, fruit kernels, silt, and clay.

A few things to know before you start sloughing:

1. Always be gentle, no matter your skin type or the exfoliant used
2. Exfoliating once per week is usually enough, twice if you are experiencing acne or seriously rough skin
3. Never exfoliate broken or irritated skin.

With physical exfoliants, it is important to choose products that are not overly abrasive, as these can cause tiny tears in the skin, leading to irritation and possible infection.

Save the gritty scrubs for your feet and use a finer exfoliant on your face.

Dry, oily, normal, and combination skin types do well with physical exfoliants.

Enzymatic exfoliants are non-abrasive and ideal for more delicate skin types. Fruit acids and extracts are applied to the skin in mask or peel form, which loosen the sebum that holds the dead skin cells.

Rinse away and skin is silky smooth, no need for scrubbing. This type of exfoliant is appropriate for sensitive skin types (though you may want to limit time left on skin) and mature skin.

TONERS

Not everyone uses a toner. Wondering if a toner has a true purpose in your healthy skin care routine?

Toners are designed to do a variety of things - take that clean feeling one step further, ward off blemishes, balance oil production, or refine the look of pores.

Toners can even be used in place of cleanser when skin simply needs a refresher.

If you are treating oily skin, you'll benefit from a toner with antibacterial properties to keep skin clear.



Those with dry skin should select a toner that includes hydrating ingredients. Toning products made with astringents can be too drying for this skin type and may cause irritation.

Sensitive skin types will want a toner made with skin calming ingredients.

SERUMS

The popularity of serums may be relatively new to the beauty world, but are they ever important. These skin care beauties provide a wealth of healthy skin benefits in a concentrated dose. Made of active botanicals, essential oils, and floral waters, serums come in gels, lotions, and oil blends.

Oil serums are the perfect way to plump and smooth tired, sagging, deflated skin.

Use a calming lotion serum to tone down irritation and soothe sensitivity. Algae serums are well suited to all skin issues, from calming irritation, to balancing oil, to improving radiance.

MOISTURIZERS

Moisturizer is a big deal in any good skin care regimen. All skin types benefit from proper hydration. The key is to choose the right level of emollience for your skin.

There are three main types of moisturizer – lotion, cream, and oil.

Dry skin types benefit from a thicker moisturizer made with hydrating butters like *Shea Butter*.

Normal to oily skin types do well with lighter hydrators, like *Aloe Vera* and *Coconut oil*.

And facial oils work well on all skin types depending on which oils are used.

Yes, some serums are oil blends. If you are using a gel or lotion serum you may want to apply a facial oil on beforehand.

There are many different types of oils used in facial oil blends. Lighter oils are used for oily skin types, to offer light hydration and balance.

Richer oils are suited to dry and mature skin types, softening lines and wrinkles and lending deep down hydration.

There are even oil combinations for brightening, smoothing, and treating discoloration.

Typically, a facial oil is applied before your moisturizer. This way, it delivers those skin nourishing benefits deep into the skin.



If you are battling super dry skin, try applying your facial oil and then your moisturizer to seal in emollient ingredients and prevent moisture loss.

Don't be afraid to get a good, nourishing nighttime cream to apply before going to bed. What's so special about a facial moisturizer for night? These are made with ultra-nourishing ingredients that go to work overnight. Plus, you don't have to be worried about greasy looking skin while you sleep.

MASKS

A true treat for skin, masks fix so many beauty problems. If you are getting ready for a big day, battling breakouts, or simply need a skin pick-me-up, this is your go-to product.

If you have oily or acne-prone skin, don't go for the drying effect. Instead, think balance. Ingredients that regulate oil and clear pores benefit this skin type more than a product that leaves skin flaky and irritated.

Dry skin should use a mask made with hydrating ingredients that soften lines, plump the skin, and boost radiance.

To banish dull skin, try a mask made with fruit enzymes to resurface, even tone, and smooth the skin. An antioxidant-rich mask will prevent damage and restore health to mature skin.



TREATMENTS

Then there are the specialty products designed to treat specific issues. These items contain carefully targeted ingredients to address different skin ailments.

Anti-aging treatments support collagen and elastin, even out discoloration, soften wrinkles, and plump skin.

Natural acne treatments are much gentler than chemical products, but still work to keep skin clear. These items are designed to balance oil production, clear pores, calm redness and inflammation, and prevent future breakouts.

Sensitivity, due to birthright or circumstance, often responds to specialty products. Items formulated with super mild ingredients that give a soothing, calmed feel, and tone down redness and irritation, benefit upset skin conditions.

Rosacea may not fully go away but can be dramatically reduced with proper care. Learning what triggers your outbursts means you can work to avoid them.

Sun exposure, alcohol, and spicy foods commonly aggravate rosacea. Sun protection, nontoxic cosmetics, and non-abrasive products all keep this skin type calm, as do treatments made with ingredients that cut down on inflammation and tone down redness.

Eczema and psoriasis are often linked to diet. Intolerance to wheat, dairy, and eggs are common. Synthetic ingredients are also known to exacerbate these conditions.

Choose skin care products made with nontoxic ingredients, that are fragrance-free and include anti-inflammatories to calm eczema and psoriasis.

PUTTING TOGETHER YOUR PERSONALIZED ROUTINE



We all need a good routine. From diet and exercise to the time you turn in each night, healthy habits keep you fit and feeling good. Same goes for skin care. You need your daily essentials to keep your skin in ship shape.

Let's say you have dry skin with a few new lines you'd like to see disappear, and you'd also like to make sure all products you use are cruelty free. Great! Now, where to begin.

WHAT YOU NEED

We have covered the basics of identifying your unique skin type, the issues you want to conquer and the products that will set you in the right direction. With this information, you can now plan out the daily skin care regimen that will get your complexion glowing.

The best method for success is to establish a protocol for the first-thing in the morning and one for right before you go to bed. We will also add in a plan for those special weekly or monthly treatments.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN DAY AND NIGHT SKIN CARE

Typically, your morning program aims to get the skin going for the day and protecting it from environmental factors.

Think of it like having your morning coffee. For men, this often involves shaving and grooming while women focus on prepping the skin and promoting calm.

Night protocols are about renewal. Replenishing lost moisture, correcting problems and stimulating the body's natural efforts to rejuvenate.



RISE AND SHINE ROUTINE

Cleanse

In the morning you don't have makeup or the grime of the day to remove. The goal here is to feed the skin and give it the fuel to deliver throughout the day. You don't need anything too aggressive.

A seaweed-based cleanser, packed with vitamins and minerals, is a good choice. This will take away any oil that's accumulated overnight and stimulate the skin, giving it a healthy, rosy appearance.

Tone

If you have oily skin this helps to keep those pores clean. Formulas for dry, sensitive skin types lightly hydrate and condition the skin. Toners also keep the skin slightly damp, which allows for better penetration of your other products.

Expert Tip: Steer clear of formulas that sting the skin or leave it feeling too tight. It should feel refreshing!

Facial Serum (optional, but well worth it)

Ah, the good stuff! In the morning use a serum that encourages a balanced, clear complexion. You want your skin to look healthy and hydrated during the day. Most serums contain powerful antioxidants that fight free radical damage and environmental factors that can break down skin cells and lead to premature aging.

Avoid serums with retinoids and other ingredients that can cause sensitivity in the sun. You may have several different serums that you want to use together. There is no rule that says you can only use one. Mix-n-match to fit your skin care needs.



If you have oily skin or live in hot humid climates a good serum may be all you need during the day. Save the heavy creams for night or layer. Play around and figure out what's best for your skin and lifestyle.

Hydrate with a Moisturizer

The day is long and locking in moisture is important to keeping your complexion looking its best. And, similar to serums, your day creams or lotions help to protect the skin from the stresses of the day.

With formulas made to take away the shine of oily skin, simply hydrate or even out the skin tone, there is something that works for all skin types. You can use the same moisturizer during the day or at night but a good rule of thumb is to save the heavier, luxurious creams for night.

Eye Care

The eyes can make you look years younger – or older – than you really are. Lightweight gel formulas are perfect for the daytime. They soak in quickly and often have ingredients that depuff, brighten and hide signs of overwork. Target the area under your eyes where dark circle and bags may be most prominent.

If you are battling deeper wrinkles and crow's feet, a rich, creamy eye cream is a good idea. Concentrate it on the outer corners of the eye area near the orbital bone.

Protect with a Sunscreen

Sunscreen is very important. No matter your skin type or complexion, the sun is one of the largest factors in premature aging, not to mention the risk of skin cancer.

Some daytime moisturizers contain SPF. If not try a lightweight, fluid formula that will sit on top of other creams and serums without feeling too heavy.

Remember if you will be out in the sun for prolonged periods of time it is important to reapply often.

RELAX AND RENEW NIGHTTIME ROUTINE

Remove Makeup (if applicable)

It is crucial to remove all traces of makeup at night. If left on, makeup can clog pores, cause breakouts and lead to a grimy-looking complexion.

There is also a psychological reason. A clean, fresh face just feels good!



Micellar Cleansing Water quickly and effectively wipes away makeup without leaving behind any greasy residue or stripping the skin of essential moisture. And on those nights when you need a quick solution, Micellar Water is your go-to. Just swipe with a cotton ball and you are ready to slip off into dreamland.

Micellar Water is also a great option for men who want a quick and easy wash.

Cleanse and Purify

If gentle is the goal for your morning cleanse, complete should be the mantra at night. You want to use a cleanser that effectively removes any last bits of makeup and all the dirt, grime and oil that has accumulated during the day.

Oily skin will want something that purifies without over drying the skin. Dry, sensitive and mature skin types may benefit from a creamy cleanser that will melt away impurities without sacrificing any moisture.

Expert tip: Massage cleansers into the skin. Avoid scrubbing too vigorously and pulling at the skin. If you feel like you need a little help, try using a natural facial sponge or an Ayate washcloth. Just be aware to keep you sponge clean and replace often.

Tone

The same reasons to use toner in the morning apply to your evening routine. If you want to change it up a bit, try a face essence, which has properties similar to a toner and serum.

Correction Products & Face Oil Serums (optional, but still well worth it)

This is your chance to pinpoint those problem areas. Think anti-aging (loss of firmness, sallow-looking skin, lines and wrinkles), anti-acne, dark spot treatments, etc.

You want to apply these formulas closest to the skin to ensure contact with the area of concern and complete absorption. A good rule to follow, products for acne and breakouts should go on first, directly over inflamed skin.



When using active formulas, take special care not to overdo it! It's a good idea to alternate the use of harsher products, like retinols, to every other day.

The serums you use at night should also target your unique skin problems. Also, consider adding in extra nourishment and upping the hydration you get from your day protocol.

Those with combination skin types will want to use different products on different parts of their skin. Use a hydrating serum on dry areas and products for oil balancing on those areas that get shiny.

Opt for serums made with natural ingredients. Using essential oils and pure botanical oils is ideal because our bodies can more easily put to use plant-based formulas than harsher synthetics.

Expert Tip: Change up your serums to reflect the time of the year and the current condition of the skin. What works in the winter may be too much in the summer. On the other hand, you may find that even though it's warm outside you are a little on the dry side.

Night Cream & Eye Care

Bring out the big guns! Save the more expensive, rich, luxurious creams for the evening.

You have a solid 8 hours (hopefully) for your skin to drink in their delicious textures and nutrients. These creams tend to feel too heavy for wear during the day, or to layer makeup on top. At night they feel as comfortable on the skin as a warm, fluffy blanket.

Expert Tip: To really reap the benefits of your products take a few extra minutes to give yourself a face massage. This stimulates blood flow for better absorption and kick starting cell renewal.

Finish out your nighttime program by gently patting on a silky cream-based eye cream. Use your ring finger to apply the cream and be careful not to rub the cream on. Pulling the delicate skin around the eyes can weaken it, paving the way for lines and wrinkles.

Now curl up, rest and wake up to beautifully pampered skin.

WEEKLY TREATMENTS

Exfoliation and masking may not be for every day but they are very important to maintaining the overall health of your skin. Think of these as mini at-home facials.



Exfoliation

The old saying says you can't have too much of a good thing. Well, that's not true about exfoliation. Too much exfoliation can irritate and weaken the skin. Not a good idea. On the other hand, proper exfoliation results in smooth, healthy-looking skin and is essential in the turnover of old skin cells. This is key to keeping the skin looking ageless.

Expert Tip: Most skin types do not need to be exfoliated more than once or twice a week. This is especially true for sensitive skin types. Use something easy to remember, like garbage day, to polish your skin. Think of it like ridding your skin of all the garbage that has built up.

Don't forget to factor in the season. Avoid chemical peels in the summer when you are exposed to more sun and never exfoliate broken or inflamed skin.

Masks

Depending on your skin type you may want to mask once a week, once every two weeks or even once a month.

Sunday is the perfect day for some self care, try making this your day to mask. Light some candles, take a bath, listen to your favorite music, lay back and relax while the mask goes to work.

HOW TO PROPERLY LAYER YOUR PRODUCTS

So, now you have all of these new products. In what order do you use them?

The Korean beauty trend introduced us to the notion of several products layered on in a specific order. Here is how to make that work with your skin care regimen.

There is an application protocol to achieve max benefits from all of your lovely products. Each of these products is designed to deliver specific results and you want them to be as effective as possible. The simplest way to remember a proper layering order is, beginning with clean skin, go from thinnest consistency to thickest, and in order of importance. In other words, a light serum is more effective when applied before a heavier facial oil or moisturizer. If your concern is treating acne, let's say, you would want your blemish control treatment closest to the skin, so layer that first.

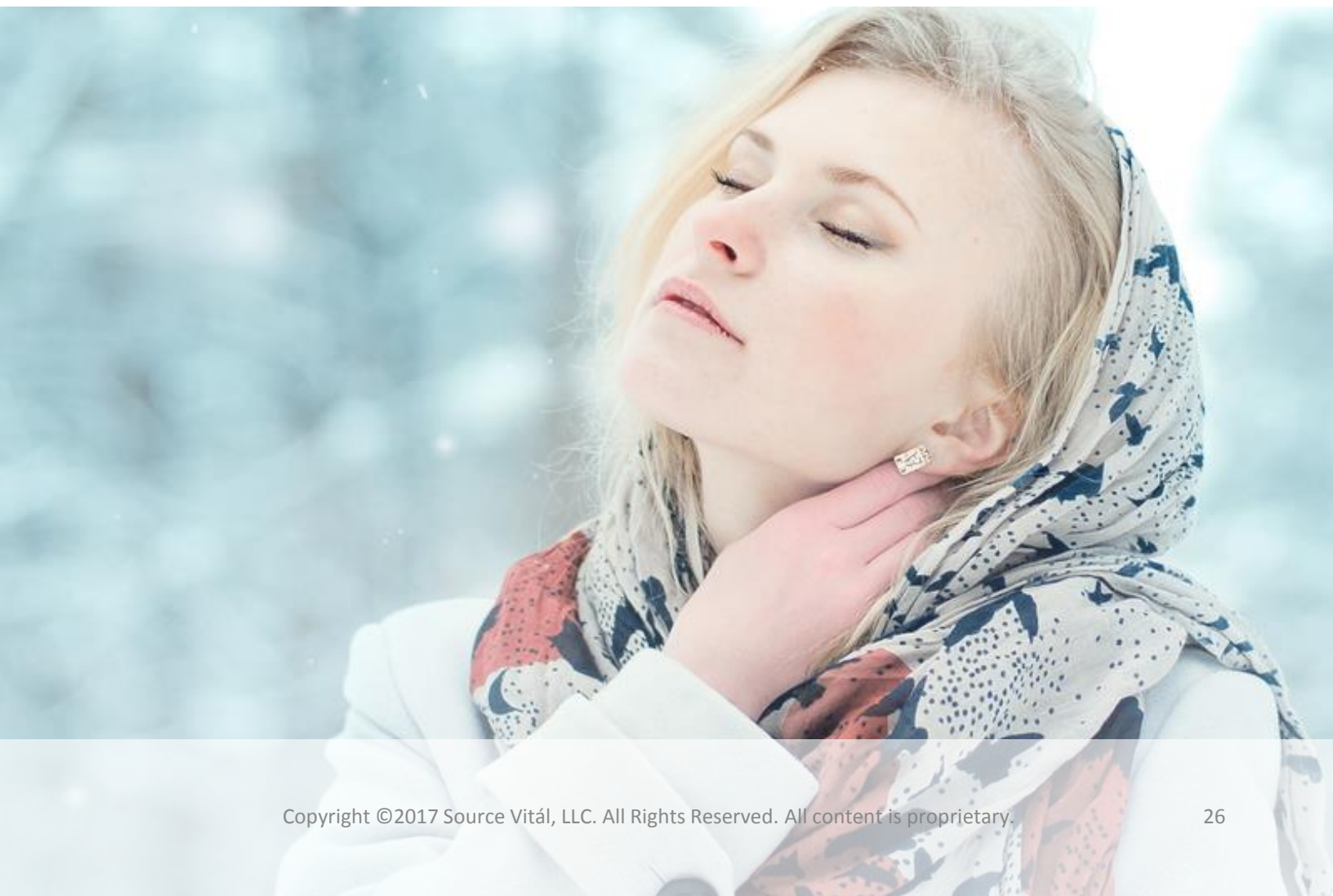
Seasonal Tweaks

Like we talked about, your skin type doesn't change but the way your skin behaves can shift with the seasons.

For instance, someone with dry skin will likely need to up their moisturizer game in winter months to a richer cream or add in a protective balm. If you have oily skin, you may be surprised your foaming cleanser is increasing breakouts or causing flakiness in drier months. Even those with normal or dry skin types benefit from a lighter cleanser and moisturizer when weather is humid. One product that is a mainstay year-round is sunscreen.

Consistency

The most important part of achieving and maintaining healthy skin has nothing to do with the products you use and everything to do with a regular routine. Sticking with a skin care regimen will keep your complexion balanced, happy, and well behaved.



APPLICATION TIPS



DOUBLE CLEANSING

Is your skin sallow or breaking out? Notice more wrinkles or clogged pores? Could be how you are cleansing. Double cleansing is a method that cleans the skin deep down, clearing pores and removing debris. Here's how it's done. Begin by warming a small amount of cleansing oil or balm in hands, and gently massage into skin. This will loosen and remove makeup, dirt, and built up sebum, boost circulation, and rev up a nice glow. Rinse with warm water and a soft cloth. Now follow up with a cleanser that suits your skin type. This can also be an exfoliating cleanser if you are experiencing congestion or extra rough skin.



SKIN CARE COCKTAILING

Most skin types have a variety of needs. If you feel you have to choose between skin care treatments, cocktailing is just what you need. Cocktailing skin care is a bit like layering, but the trick is to combine two or more products of the same type to boost their effectiveness, or two different product types to treat one concern. Of course, this ramped up efficacy means they are also more potent, so start by cocktailing every few days to see how skin reacts. Not all products mix well together. The best matches are products with similar consistencies. For example, if you are looking to prevent premature aging, an antioxidant lotion and sunscreen lotion pair up well. Oils mix well with other oils, or lotion and cream moisturizers. Adding a few drops of your favorite facial oil to your night cream will give skin an extra boost of hydration and morning glow.



MULTIMASKING

Korean beauty is big on multimasking. This skin care technique is designed to support skin and provide nourishing benefits. Think of it as prevention against future skin damage. Multimasking is all about choosing products that address the different areas of the face. If you have an oily T-zone and dry cheeks, use a pore clearing mask on oily areas, and a hydrating mask everywhere else. Maybe you tend to breakout around your mouth that time of the month. Ward off zits with a detoxifying mask in this area. Play around with what works for your skin and indulge weekly.



FACIAL MASSAGE

If you rarely to never partake of facial massage, you are not alone. But this is one skin care ritual that should be incorporated into every routine. Facial massage increases blood flow and oxygen, boosts collagen production, and relieves stress. All of which lead to healthy, glowing, youthful skin. It also relieves puffiness, speeds up skin healing, and clears congestion. You can do self massage with a facial oil or treat yourself to a spa facial with massage. One to three times weekly is optimal.



SKIN CARE TOOLS

Certain skin care issues are relieved with the use of skin tools, like brushes and sponges. Brushes are good for deep cleansing, especially beneficial to acne-prone skin. For more delicate skin types, a facial sponge offers gentle cleansing that removes makeup and dead skin cells. Rinse brush heads thoroughly after each use to keep them bacteria-free and opt for disposable sponges.

WHAT YOU MAY EXPERIENCE WHEN BEGINNING A NEW REGIMEN

These days, versus ten or so years ago, there are plenty of natural skin care options that are also high performance.

Choosing items appropriate for your personal skin type and the issues you wish to address will prevent most problems in transitioning to healthier beauty products.

But sometimes you may experience some upheaval before you get to the good zone. Here's a look at the most common situations and how to deal with them.

BREAKOUTS

You should not experience acne when switching to products that are well suited to your skin type. If you see clogged pores, it is a sign your skin does not like a product you are using. Full on pimples mean what you are using is either too oily or overly drying, or your skin is reacting to certain ingredients.

REDNESS AND IRRITATIONS

There is the fresh, slightly pink zeal of just exfoliated skin. And then there is the angry red of irritation. Two very different things. If your skin looks burned, inflamed, or upset, discontinue use of the problem-causing product. This is irritation and further use could lead to skin damage.

TRIAL AND ERROR

Trying one new skin care product at a time not only allows you to hone in on any ingredients of concern, but helps your skin transition to a new routine.

Use the new product for a few days (unless you experience irritation) before adding in another. This should be enough time to see if the product agrees with your skin. Many natural skin care brands and stores offer samples so you can try products out before purchasing full sizes.

It can be difficult to switch from products that your skin is used to, to something entirely new. Most often, if your skin likes a product, it will agree with other products from that same line.

Most products available online come with full ingredient listings, detailed descriptions, and user reviews. If you have trouble finding a full ingredient disclosure or the description is underwhelming, this is a good sign to move on.

Manufacturers of high quality natural skin care are proud of their products and ingredients, and provide full details.

SEE AND FEEL THE BENEFITS

Remember, no skin care treatment is a magic eraser. A product that advertises instant results will likely disappoint.

Take a moment to look at your skin. Does it look supple, clear, and glowing, or at least more so than before you switched products? How does your skin feel? It should be comfortable, hydrated, and smooth.

If your skin isn't irritated, dull, waxy, extra oily, overly dry, or seeing breakouts, keep using your new products. It could take a little while to get to the good stuff.

YOUR SKIN CARE ROUTINE WORKSHEET

WHAT IS YOUR SKIN TYPE?

WHAT SKIN ISSUES DO YOU WANT TO ADDRESS?

WHAT ARE YOUR LIKES, DISLIKES, AND SKIN CARE GOALS?

LIST ANY KNOWN ALLERGIES TO SKIN CARE INGREDIENTS

LIST OF PRODUCTS WELL SUITED TO YOUR SKIN TYPE

ABOUT SOURCE VITÁL APOTHECARY

Located in Houston, Texas, Source Vitál is a natural product manufacturer. Based on a naturopathic approach, Source Vitál combines the highest quality seaweed, plant extracts, and pure essential oils to formulate extraordinary skin care, body care and aromatherapy products. Source Vitál products are hand-crafted in small batches to ensure freshness and effectiveness. This botanical-based line "feeds" your skin the nutritional elements it needs to reduce the visual signs of aging.

Learn more about Source Vitál at www.sourcevital.com and follow on social media @Source_Vital on Instagram, @SourceVital on Facebook.

ABOUT LIZ THOMPSON

Liz Thompson is an organic beauty expert who has been researching and writing on the subjects of natural beauty, health, and wellness for over 10 years. As a social media and content contributor, she specializes in sharing safe beauty products and her knowledge on healthy ingredients. Read more of Liz's work on her blog, Organic Beauty Source, and follow her @organicbeautysource on Instagram and Facebook, and @LizatOBS on Twitter.

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