

A guide to skincare

regdude

Table of Contents

- Introduction
- Skin type
- Cause of skin type
- Skin requirements
- Acid mantle
- Skincare routine
- Skincare product ingredients
- Patch testing
- Skincare budget
- Face cleansers
- Toners
- Exfoliators
- Serums
- Moisturizers
- Oils
- Sunscreens
- Face masks
- Acne
- Acne triggers
- Fungal acne
- Severe skin issues
- Scars
- Wrinkles
- Minor skin issues
- Eye care
- Lip care
- Body care
- Hair removal
- Diet
- Exercise
- Final thoughts

Introduction

This guide should give a general idea of importance of skincare and many considerations you should take into account. The main goal of skincare is to improve the appearance of your skin and skin health in general, but the journey to this goal is always tricky and usually requires a “trial and error” approach.

Should you do skincare? - Yes! As we age, our skin becomes less elastic; skin cell turnover slows down and minor or even major skin bruises and scars takes a longer time to heal; skin becomes more saggy; more wrinkles appear; skin issues might appear seemingly out of nowhere. Skincare is not just for women, all men should take care of their skin, because everyone wants to look younger for longer. It is better to start caring

about your skin at a younger age since you will have a better chance to prevent many skin issues (including aging), but it is very important to understand how to take care of your skin properly to prevent unwanted side effects.

Will this guide tell everything about skincare? - No. Skincare is an incredibly broad topic and there is a lot of information regarding skincare and a lot of research is still being done for new skincare techniques. This guide will give you a general idea of how to develop a skincare routine, but your own further research might be required.

I don't need skincare! - OK, I will wait here, see you soon.

Skin type

Before you start developing your own skincare routine, you should figure out your skin type. There are 4 widely used skin types: - Dry skin - Normal skin - Combination skin - Oily skin

To determine your own skin type, you can find many tests that determines your skin type or you can visit a dermatologist. Below you can find a quick test that is sufficient for most cases: - wash your face - pat your face dry - do not apply anything on your face - avoid activity for 30 minutes - examine your face

Dry skin: Skin feels tight, especially when you smile, skin patches might have already appeared.

Normal skin: Skin does not feel tight, there is none or very small amount of shine due to oil around your T-zone (the nose + under-eye area)

Combination skin: There is quite visible oil on your T-zone, but not so much on other areas on your face

Oily skin: Face is shiny due to oil, your T-zone is very oily and there is a noticeable amount of shine all over your face.

Note: For some it might be hard to determine the skin type using the test above, search for different type of test in case there is doubt. You can visit a dermatologist to take this test for you with great accuracy.

Cause of skin type

Your skin has a self-defense mechanism to protect itself from harsh environments. This is done by producing sebum on top of your skin, which is an oily/waxy matter that creates a protective layer for your skin. There are multiple functions of sebum, but for sake of simplicity we will only cover two of them: to protect your skin from bacteria; to prevent your skin from drying out. Your skin requires moisture to function properly. When skin has enough moisture, it can produce enough sebum, it looks plump, it looks radiant. Harsh environment as low humidity, strong wind, low temperatures, direct sun and many other factors can change the amount of moisture in your skin.

- When skin is too dry, skin might start to create patches and start shedding. If skin is dry for a longer time of period, then your skin might start to develop wrinkles, especially on your forehead and eyes.
- When skin is too oily, too much sebum has been produced, excess sebum might start clogging your pores thereby causing one type of acne, skin might look tired and always shiny.
- When skin is normal or combination, then sebum is produced in sufficient amounts and in general does not need sebum regulation, but moisturizing is still required.

none: Your skin might tend to produce more sebum if it becomes dry, but this can be unrelated to dehydrated skin. Such skin issue might exist even for oily skin types and in general it means your skin lacks moisture. Cause of dehydrated skin can be complex or it might simply indicate you need to drink more water.

The skin type can change over time, this is very common in teen years where skin usually becomes oily due to hormonal changes in your body and then adapts to new hormone levels and might change your even your skin type. Sometimes skin type does not change, sometimes your diet and exercises can change your skin type, sometimes even your skincare products can change your skin type.

IMPORTANT: Skin type is not a disease, it is something you need to be aware of when selecting skincare products!

Skin requirements

There can be many different requirements for your skin that might be independent from your skin type, below you can find only a few requirements that are most common: - non-comedogenic - sensitive - oil-free - allergen-free - anti-aging - none

non-comedogenic: Your skin is made of pores that are used to draw in moisture from air, these pores can be clogged by many different chemicals. When a substance is trapped in a pore, it can develop as acne (pimple), usually these are oil-like substances, but not always. Non-comedogenic means that there is a low risk for pores to get clogged due to the ingredients in the product. All ingredients have a comedogenic rating starting from 0-5, where 0 means that an ingredient has a very low risk to clog pores, 5 means it is very likely to clog pores.

Note: A zero on comedogenic scale does not mean that an ingredient will not clog pores, it means that the risk is very low, but still might happen.

sensitive: Your skin might be sensitive to harsh chemicals and becomes irritated when comes in contact with them. Many products will label them for sensitive skin, this usually indicates that a product is safe to use on sensitive skin.

fragrance-free: Fragrance is considered to be irritating, but fragrance-free products might not always be sensitive products. Some people cannot stand a strong smell that a product has, this is especially true for eye creams since fragrance can sting your eyes. Fragrance-free products does not mean that product does not have a smell, it only means there is no added fragrance.

oil-free: Most oils are comedogenic, but some people cannot use any type of oil on their skin or they start to develop a special type of acne. Products that are labeled as oil-free and do not contain any oils, usually these products are designed for oily skin types.

allergen-free: Some people can have an allergic reaction to a chemical in a product. It is actually not very common for a product to have stated that a product is allergen-free, but this can be determined after checking the ingredients.

anti-aging: Some people need products that contain special ingredients that combat signs of aging, although many ingredients have anti-aging properties and many products that are good to combat aged skin do not have a special label that it is anti-aging, there are products that have such a label and usually have multiple ingredients and higher concentrations.

Fungal acne safe: There is a special skin condition that is very annoying and very hard to cure because none of the products will specifically state that they are fungal acne safe. This case is going to be discussed separately later.

none: Some people can just put basically anything on there skin and they are just fine. They do not realize how lucky are they.

Acid mantle

The acid mantle (sometimes called the skin barrier) is your sebum, this is your protective layer on top of your skin. One function of your acid mantle is to lock in moisture in your skin, but another function is to protect your skin from bacteria and other chemicals. This defense mechanism works by dissolving chemicals by coming in contact with your acid mantle. From chemistry lessons you might be familiar that a solution might be neutral, acidic or basic. Your skin is supposed to be slightly acidic, many scientists agree that your skin should have pH level somewhere around 5.5, but many soap is basic (pH > 7), also water is neutral (pH = 7). By using water and soap you are changing your skin's pH level.

If you start using too much soap on your skin, you can destroy your acid mantle and it can take months for your acid mantle to stabilize. When your acid mantle is damaged, your skin is prone to acne and also becomes much more sensitive and irritated. For this reason it is important to use proper products on your skin, this is especially true for face and body washes. In general, it is highly recommended to use soap-free products, especially for face washes.

IMPORTANT: Do not allow your acid mantle to get damaged, it takes a long time to fix your acid mantle and fixing it might require different skincare products. During this period your skin might reject any skincare products and therefore worsening your current skin condition.

There are many products that label themselves as “pH balanced” or “pH adapted” or “pH5.5”, these products should not damage your acid mantle when used since they are specially designed to prevent damage. If a product does not state this, then it can be anything, but you might be able to find details about the pH value for a product by searching online or asking the manufacturer (not retailer). Some products might have a specific pH value stated, while your skin’s pH level can vary from 4.5 to 5.5 in ideal conditions, not all products should have such values. Some skincare products are specially designed for a specific purpose, for example, some chemical exfoliators usually have acids in it to dissolve your dead skin cells, but some of these acids are only effective when pH level of a solution is under pH 4.

Some people have a very fragile acid mantle and therefore require special products. There are products that are designed to strengthen the acid mantle and there are products designed to preserve your acid mantle. To create as least damage as possible you should look for a product that contains ingredients that improve your acid mantle and also is adapted to human’s skin pH level, or mix products in your skincare routine to do both separately.

Skincare routine

There are many routines available, each step has a purpose and uses specific types of products. Here is a very basic skincare routine that is an essential for everyone: - Wash your face - Exfoliate when needed (more details later) - Moisturize - Apply sunscreen (only during day) There may exist a more advanced skincare routine: - Wash your face - Exfoliate when needed (more details later) - Apply toner - Apply serum - Moisturize - Apply sunscreen (only during day)

IMPORTANT: Always try to keep your skincare routine as simple as possible, avoid unneeded steps, rather find better products that suit your needs.

Wash your face: The purpose of washing your face is to remove any dirt, remove some excess sebum. You should always use special face wash, avoid using products that are not designed for face (shampoo, body wash, hand soap, other). Some people report that washing with regular water works fine for them, but this might not work well for most people.

Exfoliate: The purpose of exfoliation is to remove dead skin cells to allow new skin cells to grow faster. This is crucial since dead skin cells can clog your pores, dead skin cells also can make your face less supple and not radiant. It is important to never over-exfoliate by exfoliating too often, usually once or twice a week is enough.

Moisturize: The purpose of moisturizing is to add more moisture to your skin and lock it in as much as possible. A good moisturizer can make the biggest difference in your results, there are multiple types of moisturizers and used for different kinds of skin types and for different requirements.

Sunscreen: The purpose of sunscreen is to protect your skin from the damaging properties that the Sun has. The light that reaches Earth has two types of ultraviolet light (UVA and UVB), this light is very damaging for your skin, it can cause premature aging and skin cancer. It is very important to always wear sunscreen, even when it is cloudy outside, UVA/UVB rays can penetrate through clouds. Every single spot you don’t cover with sunscreen is prone to sun damage.

Toner: The purpose of toner is add additional care to your skin. The main idea is that because water is more alkaline (pH>7), then washing your face can make your skin’s pH level to be off, a toner is supposed

to balance it back to more acidic level. There are a wide range of toners and different properties, some have exfoliating properties, some have hydrating properties, some have anti-bacterial properties, some have sebum-regulating properties and many other properties. Some are skeptical of using a toner since they believe that a toner is not needed and can be replaced with better other products.

Serum: The purpose of serum is to target specific skin issues, they are usually highly concentrated and will be much more effective than a moisturizer, but they are usually meant for a specific case, this means you should know exactly what issue you want to target before using a serum. The properties for a serum can range from anti-bacterial to texture improving, everything in between and a mix of multiple properties. There should be a serum for every skin need.

Face mask: This is not mentioned in a skincare routine since it depends too much on the product, some masks can be used daily (though this will get very expensive), some can be used as a substitute for exfoliation, some masks provide a high dose of an ingredient (even higher than a serum), some masks have anti-bacterial properties, but usually a face mask can be used twice a week.

IMPORTANT: Always check the instructions on the product's label to make sure you are using properly. If a product does not have special instruction, then general usage applies to this product. If a product has instructions that differ from a general usage, then you must follow these instructions to avoid unwanted side effects.

You should do your skincare routine twice a day - in the morning and in the evening. Some people find that they require an extra refresh for their face in the middle of a day. Here is an example how could a midday routine look like: - Wash face with very mild cleanser - Apply a hydrating toner (optional) - Apply moisturizer - Apply sunscreen

Note: Splashing your face with water without something to lock in the water can result in a more dry skin in just a few minutes. Splashing water is a good way to add hydration to your skin, but you still need a moisturizer that can retain the moisture. In fact, most moisturizers are much more effective when you add them to damp (but not wet) skin.

There is also a special note about people who workout, especially for high intensity workouts. As you start to sweat, your pores enlarge and you become more prone to acne since dirt can clog pores more easily. To avoid this as much as possible, it is highly recommended to develop a very simple pre-workout and post-workout routine. The routine should be very simple, similar to a midday routine, but it is recommended to use a light moisturizer lotion instead of a heavy cream and a special sweat resistant sunscreen is required for your pre-workout routine (in case working outdoors).

Skincare product ingredients

There are too many possible ingredients to cover them all, but here we are going to list some very common ingredients, why are some of them bad, why some may be good and so on. At the end of this chapter there is a tip how to quickly check how good a product is by its ingredients.

Alcohol: Alcohol has anti-bacterial properties, it is also used as preservative to make sure ingredients in a product do not degrade, but many alcohols have a very bad side effect - they strip your acid mantle, irritate your skin and make your skin dry. Not all alcohols are bad in skincare products, but many of them should be avoided, for example, denatured alcohol or isopropyl alcohol. Some alcohols are actually beneficial for your skin, for example, fatty alcohols. A very common alcohol is phenoxyethanol, which is considered somewhat safe and is widely used as preservative.

Parabens: Parabens are used as preservatives, they have a bad reputation since they can impact your hormone receptors in your body (specifically receptors that get triggered from estrogen) and may increase the risk of breast cancer. Some people might be allergic to some parabens. Parabens can be recognized in ingredients list by their name, for example, propylparaben. There are conflicting studies regarding the harmful effects of parabens, but you may want to avoid such products to be safe.

Soap: Soap is considered as very irritating for your skin and should be avoided at all cost. Soap strips your acid mantle and makes your skin too dry. Finding soap in ingredients list might be tricky since it can be in many sophisticated forms, but a good way to know that a product is soap-free is to either check if the label says so or if the pH level of a product is lower than 7.

SLS: Sodium lauryl sulphate has a broad use case starting from cleaning properties and ending with adding foaming effect. There are some conflicting studies that say SLS is too irritating for skin and also can dry out your skin, but at the same time many ingredients can get rejected by your skin.

Petrolatum: Petrolatum is widely used in many creams, by itself it is non-hydrating, but does lock in skin's moisture, but it has a very bad reputation since there are many badly refined petrolatum products available. A high quality petrolatum is considered safe and even non-comedogenic, though many people do not want to use it since it is made from crude oil.

Fragrance: In a skincare product fragrance can be literally anything that has a smell. It can be irritating, it can be comedogenic, it can be allergic, but it can be listed simply as fragrance. There are very few products that do not contain fragrance. What you can check is to make sure a product does not have a too strong smell, other than that it is just trial-and-error.

Chamomile: An extract of this flower can often be found in many products since it has anti-inflammatory, anti-bacterial properties, helps acne, can brighten your skin, stimulate skin healing and can brighten your skin.

Aloe vera: Aloe barbadensis is a widely used ingredient since it has many beneficial properties. It contains Vitamin A, B, C, E and can target multiple skin issues at the same time, a high quality aloe vera gel is considered as non-comedogenic, has anti-bacterial, healing, calming, hydrating and other properties. It is also worth noting that it is a natural astringent, which means it can absorb excess oil and dirt from your skin. Even though it has vitamin E and vitamin C, it is considered to be safe for acne-prone, sensitive skin and all skin types, though it might not be a perfect moisturizer for all skin types and might require extra moisturizing.

Vitamin A: Many skincare products that are labeled as anti-aging contain retinol (a form of vitamin A), it greatly increases the skin turnover rate and can speed up skin healing process and can also reduce the appearance of fine lines on your skin. It can leave your skin quite dry and irritating and therefore a good moisturizer is required.

Vitamin B3: Niacinamide is widely used because of its anti-inflammatory, lightening and other properties. It has a crucial property to help building a ceramide barrier for your skin's acid mantle. Many praise this ingredient since it can make dark spots on your skin less visible.

Panthenol: Provitamin B5 is very common because of its healing properties, it can help heal wounds and acne faster. It is also used in high doses in hair conditioners since it can make your hair softer, but in high doses panthenol can cause you acne on your face, shoulders, chest and back.

Collagen: This protein is found all over our bodies, but its production can slow down as we age. Scientists think collagen is responsible for elastic, smooth and supple skin, it is considered as a building block for your skin. Some products contain either collagen itself or some ingredients that can stimulate the production of collagen.

Vitamin C: Ascorbic acid is added to many anti-aging products since it promotes the production of collagen, has anti-oxidant properties (fights off free radicals and allows your skin to heal itself) and can reduce the appearance of dark spots. Vitamin C is very irritating and many people are not able to use it on their skin. Skin can be very sensitive to sun if applied topically.

Vitamin E: Tocopherol is the most common anti-oxidant and is used to lock in skin's moisture as well as to help your skin heal and even out the skin's color. In high doses (more than 2%) it is considered as comedogenic.

Hyaluronic acid: This molecule is highly known for its ability to hold high amounts of moisture. This is the most common hydrator in skincare products that can deliver required moisture, reduce fine lines, speed

up the skin's healing process. Hyaluronic acid (HA) should be considered as an essential because of its properties. There are low-molecular (LMW) and high-molecular weight (HMW) HA, it might be hard to determine the exact type unless it is specified, but usually products with a significantly higher price will have the low-molecular weight hyaluronic acid. It can make a difference for different skin types, a dry skin will benefit from LMW because it can penetrate the skin deeper, but high-molecular weight hyaluronic acid will sit on top the skin and is less comedogenic (suitable for oily and acne prone skin types).

Pyroglutamic acid: PCA is a compound found naturally in your body, it functions very similarly to hyaluronic acid, but it sits far from the skin, this makes it very suitable for acne prone skin, but it can create a mirror-like shine for the skin, which can be desired for some people.

Salicylic acid: One type of beta-hydroxy acid (BHA), is very commonly used in products that target to fight acne and is meant for oily skin because of its ability to dissolve dead skin cells, it is considered as a gentle yet effective chemical exfoliator for you skin. It is used to fight blackheads and whiteheads on your skin. Salicylic acid can dry out your skin and might not be very suitable for dry skin types, it is also irritating for some people.

Lactic acid: Found in milk, this is a type of alpha-hydroxy acid (AHA) and is used as pH adjuster or a chemical exfoliant. It is considered to be more gentle than salicylic acid, but still can cause irritation. Many people simply assume that salicylic acid is used to unclog your pores (deeper exfoliation) while lactic acid (and other AHAs) exfoliate only the top layer of your skin. Can reduce fine lines and discoloration.

Glycolic acid: Another type of AHA, used as chemical exfoliator and is considered as stronger than lactic acid, has the same properties as lactic acid.

Caffeine: Multiple studies have gotten different results, but some claim that caffeine can uplift the appearance of your skin, some claim that they reduce puffy eyes in one specific condition and can help cellulite a bit, but this ingredient can be found in many products either way.

Q10: The Coenzyme-Q10 is found naturally in your body as an anti-oxidant, but as we age the levels of Q10 decline. It is believed that Q10 is responsible for skin regeneration and reduce the speed of skin aging. Products with Q10 usually are labeled as anti-aging.

Silicones: Used to make skincare products more slippery and achieve a desired texture, most popular is dimethicone. There are very conflicting reports from dermatologists and regular people. While dermatologists report that silicones, specifically dimethicone, is safe, is non-comedogenic and non-allergic, meanwhile some people report silicones are causing them acne. It is believed that acne in such cases is caused by the moisturizer itself and not silicones, but studies are not conclusive.

Glycerin: This is a very common humectant in skincare products, this means that it draws moisture into itself (from air and skin), therefore making skin smoother, softer and with less wrinkles.

Menthol: Creates a cooling effect (but does not actually cool down your skin), but studies have reported that this is caused by your skin becoming sensitized. It also has some pain-relief, anti-bacterial and anti-fungal properties. Menthol is found in many products even though it can cause skin to become too dry.

Phthalates: It is used to make skincare products more soft and achieve a certain texture and used as preservatives, but it has been indirectly linked to cancer. It is still widely available in a wide range of products.

Resveratrol: An anti-oxidant found in grapes and red wine. It has gained popularity as the supplement of youth, though research suggests that it must be taken in very high doses in order to have a noticeable effect, meanwhile not a lot of studies have been conducted, but this anti-oxidant is becoming very popular.

Ceramides: These chemicals are found naturally in your skin's sebum, they are used to create the protective layer on top of your skin known as the acid mantle. People who have damaged their acid mantle might benefit greatly by using this ingredient in their skincare routine.

Urea: While this is a component of urine, urea is produced synthetically for skincare products. It can act as a very mild exfoliator, but in many cases it is used as an ingredient that improves the absorption of other

ingredients.

Omega fatty acids: Three types of omega fatty acids can be found in some skincare products. While these fatty acids are very important in your diet, research has shown that they have benefits when used topically. Since they are essential building blocks for your skin, they can help you even out the skin's surface, they also seem to have hydrating and protective properties.

Oils: There are just too many possible oils that can be added to skincare products, each oil has different properties, some are more powerful, some are more irritating, some are comedogenic. Usually oils are listed as extracts of a certain plant. There might be an oil for every skin need, but using oils in skincare might be tricky for some people.

Soy: It can be found in many products because of its skin brightening, collagen boosting, anti-oxidant and other properties. Soy can be allergic to some people and has shown to trigger acne.

Squalene: Found in your acid mantle, is considered to be non-comedogenic. With age the production of squalene seems to decline and your skin might become prone to drying out. Its anti-aging, anti-oxidating and ability to lock in moisture has again a lot of attention in recent years and is considered as a safe oil to use on all skin types (this oil is one of those rare oils that can be used on fungal acne prone skin).

Water: With no surprise, you will most likely see aqua as one of the first ingredients. Almost everything is made from water.

TIP: Ingredients are listed in a descending order starting from the largest ingredient by weight. This means that the first listed ingredients are in much larger quantities than the last ingredient. This might be useful sometimes to figure out whether a product has strong active ingredients or not.

Note: Most skincare products are not specifically designed for men or women, some products do add a special label, but this does not mean that products cannot be used by all genders. The main difference between men's and women's skin is that men's skin is a bit thicker, therefore men can tolerate stronger exfoliations, but also require higher concentration of a specific ingredient to be effective.

IMPORTANT: Many people praise organic skincare products since they are fully natural, but be warned that purity of a product has nothing to do with them being natural. Many organic skincare products have a very strong fragrance and can be very irritating. If you are trying to use organic products, then make sure they are finely processed to make sure that they are pure.

TIP: It is very hard to keep up with the newest trends and studies, therefore it is highly suggested to read products review online and check the product against an online skincare analyzer. There are multiple websites available for checking the ingredients list for a product to make sure a product is suitable for you and how does a product back up their claims for certain properties.

Patch testing

In most cases it is next to impossible to predict if a product will negatively react to your skin. For this reason it is important to do a patch test to make sure you do not get an allergic reaction. This is on a separate chapter since it is important and can save a lot of headaches and other issues. A basic patch test is to take a small amount of product and rubbing on a spot on the area where you are intending to use it. For example, if you get a face cream, you might want to put a small amount of the cream under your ear area. In case you get a bad reaction, the damage will not be large and you can avoid the product before it has caused any major issues.

It might sound like an obvious thing to do, but most people do not do this and as a result get skin full of acne, irritated skin, allergic reaction, burning sensation and so on. Each time you get a new product, you should perform a patch test. Luckily many cosmetics stores allow you to test a product before you buy it, this is very useful since you can learn if a product is not suitable for you even before you spend money on it.

Skincare budget

Skincare can get very expensive if you start just randomly using products and do not take your time to understand what exactly your skin needs. After this guide you should have a general idea how to test out multiple products and find one that suits you best, but during this period there can be unpredictable expenses. A general rule is always to keep your skincare routine as simple as possible, therefore it should be quite inexpensive as well, but here we will discuss why some products are more expensive and what to do when you are on a tight budget.

Ingredients: In theory the main influencer of a product's price should be its ingredients since it might be very difficult to obtain some of the ingredients, it might have high logistics cost and so on. There are some very rare that can significantly increase the product's price.

Quality: Some products have a higher price since they are more refined, this might mean that a lot of byproduct has been produced and only a small portion is actually used in a product since it satisfied the quality standards of a product.

Manufacturing process: Sometimes a product goes through a complex process that involves sophisticated technology that requires a high operating cost, sometimes this process involves a lot of manual labor that can have a huge impact on the price, especially for organic and cruelty free products.

R&D: When a product is being sold, a company calculates the suggested price to make sure a product does not generate a loss for the company's budget, this means that a product can represent how much R&D has been put into a product in order to develop this product. This is very well noticeable on Korean beauty (k-beauty) products since such companies spend huge amounts of money to develop more effective products in new ways.

Brand: There is no doubt, a name of a product will have an increase the price, but you must make sure if this due to marketing (in worst case this is through social media influencers) or is it because of the brand's good reputation (usually not through marketing at all).

Origin: Some products have a high price since they are imported. There are many good skincare brands that might not be available in your country and getting them to your location might cost much more than the product itself.

Below you can find some guidelines to design your skincare budget:

I am poor - Do not worry, it might take time, but you should be able to find products that match your needs, a good skincare budget might cost about 20\$ per month or lower depending where you live and what you need.

I am very poor - Ok, find a way to squeeze a moisturizer and a sunscreen into your budget (in worst case, find a moisturizer with SPF rating as high as possible), you can replace a face wash with lukewarm water twice a day (do not over-wash your face by washing it much) and a good moisturizer might replace the need for exfoliation, though you can remove gently dead skin cells when you skin is wet by gently, gently rubbing your cleaned fingers against your skin (not using your nails).

You don't understand, I'm poor - There are some DIY sunscreens and moisturizers that you can make at home from some household items, but please, be very careful and make sure you use as pure products as possible. There is a huge risk using such products on your skin. DIY products is not for most people, you might have a bad reaction to such products.

I'm rich, I'll buy everything most expensive - It might not be such a bad idea, but you must still make sure that this product is meant for your skin type and suits your skin needs. Some more exotic ingredients are very expensive and some report to have very good results by using them, especially k-beauty products, though there might be no reviews about such product because of the low interest. You should make sure that a price for a product is not just because of a recent social trend. More exotic skincare products tend to hide their ingredients and some exotic ingredients might not have a lot of details available, which can make using these products more risky.

I want the most bang for the buck - In general, the best option is to see a dermatologist, they can also be found online, the dermatologist should determine your skin type and should also notice any underlying skin issues. This information might be priceless for some, but note that dermatologist might not detect an issue right away and you still might need to switch multiple routines to understand how your skin reacts to different products, though under a dermatologist's supervision, it should be much more effective to determine any issues that you may have. A dermatologist might recommend to use a product that the dermatologist itself is somehow related to from a business perspective, it might not be such a bad thing as it might sound, but should be something to consider. With your knowledge about your skin you should be able to find proper products by doing a lot of searching online, there are some brands that are extremely cheap and simple and you should keep an eye on drugstore brands selling moisturizers and sunscreens online, they are usually a good deal. In general, it is cheaper to get a serum for your skin need and a general purpose moisturizer rather than getting a specific moisturizer.

Face cleansers

There are multiple ways to cleanse your face, but each method might not be suitable for all skin types and might not meet the requirements for all skins. Some methods are better to be used at certain times of a day than others.

Water: A surprisingly amount of people report that gently washing their face with just plain lukewarm water replaces their whole face cleanser lineup, this is most likely to be suitable for normal skin type, but might be too drying for dry skin type and not sufficient for combination or oily skin type.

Micellar water: A very popular mild cleanser consists of small amounts of oil suspended in water and attracts dirt, oil and makeup, micellar water is a popular choice for dry and sensitive skin since it is usually very mild, but a micellar water for every skin type should exist.

Gel cleansers: Has a gel-like consistency, can be very effective removing dirt, excess sebum and even unclog pores. These cleansers can have AHA or BHA added to them to make them as mild chemical exfoliators that helps to combat acne. Usually such cleansers are good for oily and combination skin type.

Cream cleansers: Has a cream-like consistency, can have similar effects as gel cleansers, but they are more designed for sensitive and dry skin types since they are made to strip less your skin's sebum. Foam cleansers: Creates a foam on to of your skin and pull dirt and excess sebum from your skin. They are very effective, but can be very harsh on your skin and strip too much sebum from your skin. Usually foam cleansers are suitable for oily and combination skin type.

Oil cleansers: It might sound a bad idea to add more oil to oily skin, but a proper oil cleanser for your skin type can remove the dirt from your skin and don't strip any excess sebum from your skin. This type of cleanser is a popular option for all skin types as an evening cleanser.

Clay cleansers: These are designed to strip as much sebum as possible, but also removed a lot of dirt and even toxins. Such cleansers are usually only suitable for oily skin types.

Bar cleansers: They look like a bar soap, but they are designed for washing your face, but sadly some can still contain some amounts of soap, some do not contain any soap at all and has replaced it with a more sensitive chemicals.

Mechanical cleansers: Recently some attention has gained special facial sponges that attract dirt and brushes that remove dirt, there are other options as well, there should be an option of such cleansers for each skin type.

Note: Finding a good cleanser that works best for you might take time, make sure you are not over-washing your face, otherwise you can remove too much of your skin's sebum and you can end up with sensitive and acne-prone skin.

Each type of cleanser is not strictly for a certain skin type, but it is a general guideline. Most products will have listed that it is meant for a certain skin type and can even be meant for all skin types, but you should

be aware that some cleanser types can be more effective than other for certain skin types.

You should use a cleanser for at least a month to be sure whether a product has improved your complexion or has made it worse, this is due a period called “purging”, in which your skin might be in overdrive and shedding dead skin cells a lot faster than before, this period usually takes 1 to 4 weeks. If your skin has a very bad reaction to the new product, then either try to periodically introduce the new product to your skin or simply switch to a different product.

Note: Water temperature can play a role in the effectiveness of washing your skin. Hot water is more capable of removing dirt, oil and bacteria from your skin, but it can be irritating and make your skin too dry. Cold water is less likely to make your skin too dry, but it is also less likely to remove dirt and bacteria.

Toners

Toners are used as an addition to your cleansing process after you have washed your face, but it can also be used as addition to your moisturizing process or to give an additional improvements to your skin’s complexion. It is also used to balance your skin’s pH level that can improve the tolerance to harsh environments. Many think that toners are optional and can be replaced by other products in order to make your skincare routine simpler. Below you can find some possible types of toners that you can use for each skin type (but there are a lot more for each skin need).

Oily skin: Might require a toner with salicylic acid or a toner with sebum regulating properties.

Combination skin: Might require gentle exfoliation, AHA would be the best option for that therefore a toner with lactic or glycolic acid might be a good option.

Normal skin: Toner might not be required at all, but additional hydration and removing excess dirt might be something your skin requires. Hyaluronic acid toner is a good option.

Dry skin: Extra hydration might be required, something with glycerin might be a good option. Aged skin: Might require ingredients that combat aging signs, such as hyaluronic acid and Q10. Sensitive skin: Might require something with aloe vera to sooth the skin since it might be irritated from washing or other irritating process.

Note: Many toners have very harsh alcohols in it. When using toners with a lot of alcohol, it might seem that face is cleaned, but it is very likely that face is over-cleansed and might be irritated, this is especially true for toners that are designed for oily skin type. Avoid toners with alcohols at all costs.

Note: There are different kinds of toners and they have different types of usage instructions. Check the label to make sure you are using it properly. Some can be used twice a day, some can only be used once per day.

Exfoliators

Exfoliation is very important and it becomes much more important as we age. Young people might not need any skin exfoliation because their current skin turnover rate is sufficient and skin is hydrated enough for dead skin cells to just come off by themselves, but this changes with age. Without proper skin cell turnover our skin becomes dull, tired looking, with fine lines, wrinkles and possibly with acne. We can divide exfoliators in three major categories:

Chemical exfoliators: These types of exfoliators use chemicals (such as AHAs or BHAs, or combination of both) to dissolve dead skin cells. They can cause skin irritation, but active ingredients can be in low concentrations to make an exfoliator more suitable for sensitive skin. Most popular chemical exfoliators are salicylic acid, glycolic acid and lactic acid.

Mechanical exfoliators: Usually called as scrubs, these can come in form of liquids with small particles, as sponges, as brushes and probably in other forms as well. If you need to do circular motions in order for exfoliation to work, then it is a mechanical exfoliator. All mechanical exfoliators are considered to more irritating than chemical exfoliators since many scrub their own skin too hard.

Enzyme exfoliators: These are similar to chemical exfoliators, but instead of acids they use enzymes to break down dead skin cells. They can be even less irritating than chemical exfoliators and yet be effective, while maybe not as effective as chemical exfoliators. Enzymes might trigger an allergic reaction.

Note: It is recommended to use chemical exfoliators instead of mechanical since chemical exfoliators are not as harsh on your skin. Even though it may sound more scary to put acids on your skin, they do not dissolve your fresh skin cells, but there is a chance that you have a very sensitive skin, for this reason it is recommended to do a patch test first.

Exfoliation in general is an irritated process, during it your dead skin cells are removed, but also part of your acid mantle is removed. Exfoliation can leave your skin dry, for this reason it is important to never over-exfoliate. It is recommended to exfoliate once to three times per week and not more. If you need to exfoliate more than 3 times a week, then you might need to reconsider your current skincare routine. The best option is to test out exfoliation once per week and then gradually move up to two times per week, if needed.

Usual signs of over-exfoliation is red and irritated skin, pain when using other skincare products and skin is more prone to acne. This happens usually because of damaged skin barrier and your skin does not have a protection from harsh environments throughout the day. Skin can become more sensitive to products you use on your skin and even small amounts of bacteria can cause acne. When over-exfoliation is made, you should stop exfoliating for some time until irritation has gone away and only then gradually start exfoliating again.

Note: When your skin barrier is damaged, you should start using skincare products that can help rebuilding your skin barrier. Most popular option is to use products that contain ceramides. Make sure you are not rubbing or using too much exfoliator, you should be quite gentle when using these products.

There is an option to do daily exfoliation, but this might be too harsh for most people. In case you opt for daily exfoliation, make sure it is designed for such use and you might still benefit from taking a break after a few days. Note: There is some popularity among facial brushes. They are used to cleanse and exfoliate your face. There are brushes for each skin type, but they can still be irritating for some people. When using these brushes, you need to make sure the brushes are cleaned properly so bacteria does not grow on them.

Some people adapt a routine that involves a face sauna. This is a device that blows some-what hot steam into your face for about 10 minutes. The idea is to open your pores and soften your skin cells so it is easier to remove dead skin cells as well as cleaning out pores. The downside is that this process is quite irritating and might strip your skin's acid mantle, this is the main reason why face saunas are avoided by some people. Face saunas are used before exfoliation.

Note: Some chemical exfoliators are only efficient when they have a certain pH level range, but some products that have an exfoliating property might irritate your skin. Acids are measured using the acid dissociation constant (pKa) and skin irritation can happen rapidly when pKa is lower than 4. To determine a chemical peel strength you should know the pH level and the pKa level of the product. If pH and pKa matches, then this means that 50% of acid is in active form and 50% of acid is available in basic form. For safety reasons cosmetic saloons that use chemical peels have regulations on the pH level of their chemical peel they can use on people, they can use pH adjusters to lower or increase the pH level, they can also use pH buffers to achieve similar results, but changing the pH level impacts the strength of the chemical peel. For example, salicylic acid needs pH less than 2, vitamin C less than 3, TCA less than -1, glycolic acid less than 2 in order for the acid to have 100% free acid value (most effective). Sadly most products will not specify their pH level and therefore to determine the strength of a chemical peel would require measuring the pH level using various methods and special equipment.

It is possible to use sulfur ointment to treat acne, but it can also be used as an exfoliator since it sheds off dead skin cells. This type of exfoliation is not very common since it has a very nasty (smelly) side effect. If you can tolerate the smell, then this might be worth trying since it is highly effective against fungal acne as well as many other acne types. Another downside of this exfoliator is that it can be very drying, not very suitable for dry skin types. To use it, you simply put on a thin layer of ointment on cleaned skin on desired areas (can be used on body and face), but make sure you do not use high concentration ointment (10% is

suitable for face and body, 30% should not be used on face), leave the ointment on for 10-30 minutes and then wash it off. You should build tolerance gradually, start with using it a few times a week and move up to using it every day, if needed. Sulfur ointment should not be used together with other exfoliators since it can cause too much irritation.

Serums

Serums are usually highly concentrated ingredients that are designed to target a skin issue in the most effective way. There is a huge amount of possible serums out there, but most of them are used before you put on your moisturizer. Below you can find some popular serum options.

Hyaluronic acid: Usually adds a much more efficient hydration for your skin.

Vitamin C: Used to make dark spots on face less visible, but can be very irritating, also used to combat signs of aging.

Retinol: Used to minimize the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles, works as an exfoliant. Can make skin very dry when used without hydrating serums or moisturizers.

AHA/BHA: Used as exfoliants, usually should be used as face masks, but depends on the concentration, this should be specified on the label. Some of these serums require to be washed off after a certain amount of time (usually 10 minutes), but some can be left under a moisturizer.

Vitamin E: Used as anti-aging ingredient and can reduce fine lines and wrinkles, but can be comedogenic when used in high concentrations. Also is used to even out skin tone.

Peptides: Used to repair skin damage and as collagen booster.

Extracts and oils: There is a huge choice when it comes to oils, each oil has its benefits and can be used to treat many skin conditions.

Note: There is no exact instructions on how to use a serum, but in general you should have a damp skin (you can pat a little amount of water to make it damp, but not wet), apply your serum, wait a bit (usually up to 30 seconds until the serum is absorbed) and then apply your moisturizer. Some serums have specific instructions and they might not need a moisturizer, but they are usually categorized as face masks. Serum might have instructions to use only once per day, maybe even once per week, you should follow such instructions.

Moisturizers

Arguably the biggest difference in your skin complexion can be made by a good moisturizer, but it comes in different shapes, forms and textures. A moisturizer can have different ingredients and they all can serve a different purpose, below are 3 very common types of ingredients that are found in a moisturizer.

Humectant: These ingredients attract moisture from all directions. It is important to understand that humectants do not draw moisture just from air, but also from your skin. By drawing moisture from your skin, the moisture can sit on the top layer of your skin and make it hydrated, but this moisture can easily evaporate. Humectants usually encourage your skin's cell turnover, this means they can help your skin to look fresh. Some common humectants are glycerin, hyaluronic acid, allantoin, aloe vera.

Emollient: These ingredients are used as skin softeners since of their property to create a thin layer of film on top of your skin and filling gaps between skin cells that create a smooth feeling. Many emollients have humectant properties, but they also have the ability to lock in some moisture, which a pure humectant will not be able to do. Some common emollients are silicone, squalene, aloe vera.

Occlusives: Generally considered as thicker emollients, they create a thicker layer of material on top of your skin, they are usually oil-based since oils are usually the most effective way to lock in moisture. People with acne-prone skin prefer to avoid occlusives since they are known to have high risk of clogging pores, but

people with dry skin type prefer them since they are very effective. Some common occlusives are petroleum jelly, jojoba oil, olive oil.

Note: Some ingredients are better in their own category than others, this means that some occlusives might be better at locking in moisture than other occlusives. Some humectants can good emollients, but some emollients can be not very efficient humectants. There can be a lot of variation between ingredients, but you should simply be aware of their properties.

Each type of ingredient has its own benefits and some are more efficient at a certain task, but usually a moisturizer will combine two or even all of these ingredients. In some cases finding a good moisturizer that is a good humectant and a good occlusive might be hard and even then their efficiency is going to be limited. For this reason many people have developed a routine that layers moisturizers, for example, a light water-based moisturizer goes on first and an oil-based moisturizer goes on top, giving a small amount of time between each application for a product to soak in a bit.

Note: When layering products, make sure you order them by their thickness. You should start with water-based moisturizers, followed by light emollient-like moisturizer and ended with a heavy oil-based moisturizer. IMPORTANT: Even though some oils have a zero on comedogenic scale, this does not mean it is safe to use for acne-prone skin, especially for oily skin. Such skin tend to get clogged pores from the excess material that might have built up on skin. Oils should be avoided at all cost for people that have a tendency to fungal acne.

Moisturizers should be applied on top of a damp skin. The most efficient way is to do your skincare routine after a shower while your skin is still damp (but not wet). When you skin is damp, it acts like a sponge and absorbs skincare product's ingredients better and increases the efficiency. This way you will also make sure you are locking in as much moisture as possible.

You should also make sure you are not overusing a moisturizer. Your skin can become dependent too much on external moisturizers if you use too much of them since your skin might adapt to new moisture levels and start producing less sebum, which might sound as a good thing in case of an oily skin type, but you should remember that your sebum also functions as a defense system against bacteria, without a sebum you have weakened your natural skin barrier. It can be tricky to figure out how much exactly of a moisturizer you need, but you should always start by applying only a very thin layer of moisturizer and then adjust if the moisturizer does not feel too heavy. A thick layer of cream might increase the risk of clogged pores.

Many people are using multiple moisturizers in their skincare routine, one for mornings and one for evenings. In the morning you should use a lighter moisturizer since moving between different environments and activities throughout the day can make your skin more prone to acne, but during night the chance is lower and you can benefit from the thicker film on top of your skin that can do a better job locking in moisture. Some people are fine using the same moisturizer for both times a day.

Note: During workout exercises your skin enlarges your pores to draw more moisture from the air. This process can result in clogged pores since dirt can get trapped into your pores. To minimize the risk, you should clean your face before working out and adding a lightweight moisturizer. By using a moisturizer before working out you can minimize the irritation of your skin during workouts. TIP: Most products are more effective when you massage them into your skin. You should massage your skincare products in a circular motion going upwards (avoid pulling your skin downwards). By doing this you minimize the risk of making your skin saggy over time.

Oils

Oils are used in so many skincare products and they are so many and they have so many different properties that they deserve their own section. Oils can benefit almost everyone and for this reason many lotions, creams, cleansers, toners, masks and other skincare products add oils to them. Most oils can be used as an additional step in your moisturizing routine as an occlusive, but some people like to use some oils as serums. Below you can find some of the most common oils.

Note: Many like to use a term “very hydrating oil”, which is incorrect. Oils themselves are not hydrating, they work only as an occlusive and lock-in the moisture. For this reason it is important to use oils on a damp skin, otherwise you might even be making your skin more dry since your skin is not able to draw moisture from the air because it is blocked by an oil. Layering a humectant and an oil can give very noticeable results.

Coconut oil: Thick oil, very comedogenic, has a lot of vitamin E, contains fatty acids, is antibacterial, is anti fungal. Should not be used for oily and acne-prone skin. Has gained a lot of bad reputation because of high contents of lauric acid.

Argan oil: Light oil, non-comedogenic, contains vitamin E, fatty acids, is antibacterial, has anti-oxidants. Creates a mirror-like shine for your skin. Has sebum controlling properties. Can be used for any skin type, including oily skin.

Jajoba oil: Often called as a wax since its consistency reminds a lot wax, the thickness is very similar to skin’s sebum. Can help fight against some types of acne. It is non-comedogenic and can be used for all skin types.

Almond oil: Contains fatty acids, can help evening out the skin tone, can be allergic to some people, is somewhat comedogenic.

Squalene oil: Found in skin’s sebum (in a different form), has anti-aging properties, has anti-oxidant properties. This oil has gained popularity since it can be used on acne-prone skin and all skin types can benefit from using it. This is one of few oils that can be used on fungal acne-prone skin.

Shea butter: Found in many skincare products and pure shea butter is non-comedogenic. Has anti-inflammatory properties, but has mixed research about clogging pores and helping fungal acne.

Caprylic acid oil: Made from coconut oil, but is non-comedogenic, is light, has antibacterial and anti fungal properties. This is a very special oil for fungal acne since it does not feed the growth of fungal acne and can even help to inhibit fungal acne.

Note: Many products contain essential oils. While they might have an impressive benefits list, they are usually strong in fragrance, this means people with sensitive skin might have a bad skin reaction, while others can enjoy the smell and the health benefits. Oils consist of fatty acids and two types have gained popularity - linoleic and oleic acid. These two acids might be more familiar as Omega-6 and Omega-9 fatty acids. While there are some moisturizers that have added Omega-3/6/9 fatty acids, some oils stand out because of the amount of these two specific fatty acids.

Oils that are high with linoleic acids tend to be less comedogenic and some are even non-comedogenic. Such oils might be suitable for acne-prone skin, but non-comedogenic does not mean that an oil will not break you out, it means that the risk is low since there is a low chance of the oil to clog your pores. Research has found that acne-prone skin’s sebum tends to have noticeably less linoleic acids and this might be contributing to clogged pores. Some popular oils that are high in linoleic acids are argan oil, grape seed oil, safflower oil, sweet almond oil, hemp seed oil, rosehip seed oil and others, but note that many of these oils are also high in oleic acid.

Oils that are high with oleic acids tend to be more comedogenic and might not be suitable for acne-prone and oily skin types. Oils with a lot of oleic acids are recommended for dry skin types. Some popular oleic acid oils are olive oil, avocado oil, shea butter, coconut oil, jojoba oil. Some of these oils have antibacterial properties and can help to fight acne, but can be also quite comedogenic.

There are oils that have significant higher levels of linoleic acid and usually the ratio between linoleic and oleic acid is used to determine if an oil might be suitable for a certain skin type. Some oils that have a high linoleic/oleic acid ratio (much more linoleic acid) are rosehip oil, safflower oil, grapeseed oil, hemp seed oil and others.

Sunscreens

Sunscreens protect your skin from the sun. The rays that reach Earth are quite damaging for your skin, for this reason you should put a sunscreen to every body part that can be exposed to direct sunlight. You should be wearing sunscreen all around the year, even winter and even on cloudy days. Some people take it to the extremes and wear sunscreen even if day stay indoors, but have a window that has sun shining through. Below you can find information about two sunscreen types.

Mineral sunscreen: Creates a physical layer of protection from UVA/UVB rays on top of your skin, usually you don't have to wait for them to be effective. They usually create very noticeable white cast, which might be a major issue for darker skin color. Usually made from zinc dioxide and/or titanium dioxide.

Chemical sunscreen: Absorbed into your skin and created a protective layer deeper in your skin. Some chemical sunscreens do not have protection from UVA rays. Most chemical sunscreens are comedogenic. You need to wait about 20 minutes for chemical sunscreens to be effective. Many physical sunscreens are combination of chemical sunscreens too.

TIP: Many sunscreen will leave a visible cast, but tinted sunscreens exist that might be a good option for some people. These sunscreens simply have a color that somewhat matches a skin color.

Note: There are some studies done on chemical sunscreens that some of them might contain ingredients that can become toxic when used multiple times a day. Some people swear that only mineral sunscreens work and chemical sunscreens should be avoided.

Sunscreens and other products will have specified Sun Protection Factor (SPF). This is a measure of how much UVB rays will be blocked (and not UVA). The higher the SPF rating, the better, but while SPF15 would block about 93% of UVB rays, only 98% would be blocked by SPF50. Some moisturizers and cosmetics have some type of sunscreen added to them, but their effectiveness has mixed opinions. Sunscreen can also work as a protection from wind to a certain degree.

IMPORTANT: Without any sun protection your skin can develop signs of premature aging, can start to develop wrinkles at an early age and you can even develop skin cancer. You should always have at least protection of SPF30 or higher on your skin. Make sure you apply generous amounts of sunscreen since they are only effective when sufficient amount is used and make sure all exposed parts of your body is having sunscreen, most popular place people miss is their ears.

Sunscreens can come in different forms as well, they can be in a cream, lotion, spray, gel, powder and other forms. While spray sunscreens might be very convenient way to add protection to your skin, it is believed that spray type sunscreens are not as effective as cream type sunscreens.

Many sunscreens will contain vitamin E as protection from UVA rays, but it is also used because of its anti-oxidant properties. When your skin is subjected to harsh environments, it can come in contact with free radicals, which might start a reaction with chemicals on your skin and cause damage. For this reason an anti-oxidant is used to minimize the effect of free radicals, many brands market UVA/UVB sunscreens with vitamin E as triple protection.

When looking for a sunscreen, you should find one that has water resistance. When you exercise outside, for example, when running you also need sunscreen, but you should look for a lightweight, probably with lotion-like consistency, sunscreen that is water-resistant and sweat-resistant. You might want to look for non-comedogenic sunscreens for exercise since you have enlarged pores during exercises and you have an increased risk of clogging pores.

Some products come with SPF rating, for example, moisturizers, serums, concealers, foundation and other products can have a SPF rating, but it is usually low and should not be used as a replacement for sunscreen. In fact, the method of measuring SPF depends on the country where the product has been developed, this means that you should pay more attention to actual contents of the product to make sure it actually has a UVA and UVB filter.

Note: Tanning is bad for your skin, the darkening effect you get on your skin is a defensive reaction to protect your skin from UVA/UVB rays. While staying in the sun has benefits for your vitamin D levels, it

can cause your premature aging for your skin, skin drying out and even skin cancer. You might get a tanned skin effect with your diet and using skin bronzers.

Face masks

Many people find face masks as an extra special step to their skincare routine, but they are not essential. They can bring a very noticeable effect, though the same effect might be achievable using moisturizers, exfoliators and serums. There should be a mask that targets your specific skin concern, for example, a hydrating mask, healing mask, soothing mask and so on. Based on their ingredients you should be able to figure out how exactly the mask can help with your skin complexion, the main difference from serums is (sometimes) face masks have even higher doses of specific ingredients.

Note: Usually masks are meant to be used only up to 2 times per week since they usually are very potent, but there are also daily masks that can be used every day, though these masks are usually meant to be used only once per day. Always check the instructions for your product to make sure you are not overusing the product.

The usage of each mask might depend on their type, below you can find some common types of masks. **Cream masks:** They have a cream like consistency, they usually have hydrating, healing, skin tone evening and other properties. Usually they should be washed off, but some can be left on. Most commonly you need to wear these masks for 10 minutes and wash them off, unless specified otherwise.

Sheet masks: They are sheets that are soaked in various ingredients. Usually they should be kept on for 10 minutes and then removed and residue washed off, unless specified otherwise. **Gel masks:** Can have the same effects as cream masks, but are usually lightweight. Some of these masks can be kept on without washing them off.

Clay masks: These masks are usually used by oily skin types since they are very effective for removing excess sebum. They are usually kept on for 10 minutes and washed off. They can make a mess everywhere.

Peel-off masks: They usually market themselves as pore cleaning masks by creating a sticky layer on top of your skin that hardens over time. The idea is that dirt and oil sticks to this layer and when you peel the layer off, you pull out all the dirt and oils from your pores. The effectiveness of these masks seems to have mixed opinions. They can be quite irritating for sensitive skin types. Peel-off masks usually are a variant of charcoal masks.

Charcoal masks: Cleansing masks, they can pull out dirt and oils from your skin. They are usually used for acne-prone skin since it can kill a specific type of bacteria that might be causing acne. Should not be used more than 2 times a week. They can make a mess everywhere.

Sleeping masks: These are very similar to gel masks and cream masks, but they are meant to be kept on the whole night. These masks can be hydrating, but can also be exfoliating as well.

Eye masks: These are usually small sheet masks that go under your eyes as patches, they can give an extra hydration or calm your eye skin. These might be useful to get a quick fix for tired looking eyes, but the effect is short-term.

Note: Face masks can be comedogenic as any other skincare product, they can also contain irritating ingredients and can cause allergic reaction. Always make sure the product is suitable for your skin type.

Acne

This is going to be your biggest enemy throughout your life, you most probably have encountered it already and already know how annoying it is. There are some bad news - you will have acne, but you can minimize their effects and reduce the amount of acne. The truth is that everyone gets acne from time to time and the way to fight acne is to treat it properly.

Before you read any further, here is a major tip: Do NOT squeeze, touch, pop, puncture, suck, push, pull, hit or any other forms of physical contact, leave it alone. By touching it, you are making it worse. Depending on the acne type you should treat it with proper care.

While there many times of acne, this guide will cover only a few notes about most common acne forms. There are some severe cases possible and such cases require a dermatologist.

Blackheads: These are easy to recognize since they are small holes in your skin with a dark spot in the middle. They are open comedones, this means that there are trapped particles (oils and dead skin cells) and this might indicate that your skin does not have enough hydrating and/or skin cell turnover. They are very common on your nose area. You should not try to pick them out using physical objects or fingers. There seem to be some kind of pore vacuums in the market and their efficiency is highly debatable. You should improve your exfoliation and moisturizing process, but note that blackheads are comedones, this might indicate that some of your skincare products might be clogging your pores.

Whiteheads: They are usually small closed comedones, they usually appear as white bumps on your skin, but not as much redness around it. Such case of acne can be treated by improving your skincare routine (cleansing, exfoliation, moisturizing), closed comedones usually appear when you are using comedogenic products and/or dead skin cells get trapped into your pores. Whiteheads are not inflammatory, but by squeezing them you increase of getting bacteria in them and create infection, which is much harder to treat. Papules/Pustules: Papules are red bumps on your skin that start in deeper layers of skin than whiteheads, but when papules accumulate pus they are called pustules. You should never squeeze pustules since you increase the risk of infecting more parts of your skin. Treatment options exist, but it depends on the severity. On very mild cases you might be able to treat the area with topical products containing salicylic acid, benzoyl peroxide, retinoids and other. The main idea is to make the pustule dry out that would kill the bacteria, unclog pores and at the same time increase your skin turnover rate in that specific area.

Hormonal acne: Even though this type of acne is mix of other acne types, its causes by hormonal change. This is a very common acne type for teens since they are having sudden hormone spikes. Such acne can appear on older people, some have reported acne increase when started doing workout exercises, this can be linked to increased testosterone levels. Over the counter medication is always not efficient enough to treat hormonal acne, you should visit a dermatologist that can prescribe more efficient products. Squeezing such acne can leave you with scars for rest of your life, for this reason it is highly recommended to visit a dermatologist to prevent skin damage.

Fungal acne: A very tricky to identify acne, because it may appear as other forms of acne, but is caused by yeast bacteria. What makes it type of acne special is that yeast feeds on dead skin cells and oils. This means that products that contain oil might be making your acne worse. Fungal acne can be really annoying since most products you can buy contain oil, but also your skin's sebum contains oil. Treating fungal acne involves developing a very specific skincare routine, may even include diet changes. This is a very broad topic and you should refer to the fungal acne section for details.

IMPORTANT: Depending on the severity of acne, you might be able to cure it on your own using skincare products you can be in a drugstore without prescription, but severe acne cases should NOT be treated by yourself, you need to visit a dermatologist to get proper medication, because no product available to buy without a prescription is going to be efficient enough to prevent scars and to cure your skin concern. Minor acne bumps should be treated with simple products, but moderate and severe acne should be treated by a professional.

Note: None of methods you will find that you can do yourself to treat acne is going to be instant, it takes multiple days for acne to become invisible. In some cases you can even remove the redness of acne in one day, if you are careful and treat it properly. For actual instant fix you may need to visit a dermatologist on the same day to discuss possible solutions.

TIP: Acne is going to surprise you at some point, try to always keep acne spot treatment options around you so you can treat it properly as soon as possible and reduce the temptation to squeeze acne. Most simple forms of acne spot treatments will include salicylic acid with panthenol, but many other products may exist.

Acne triggers

Preventing acne is a life style that you may need to develop around your current life. There are some many possible acne factors that preventing acne fully is impossible, below you can find some things that can trigger acne, though they are not definite. Skincare products: In so many cases acne is caused by a product you are using topically. Finding the cause might take some times, you should read the ingredients list, find possible candidates and remove them from your skincare routine one-by-one.

Makeup: This should be no surprise, makeup can cause acne. Some ingredients in makeup can even create an allergic reaction, but most commonly makeup is comedogenic. Not all type of makeup will cause you acne, but most commonly foundation, fillers and concealers will be the ones to blame. You might be able to replace your foundation with tinted sunscreen and add eyeliners, highlighters, blushes, other on top of the sunscreen. In other cases, make sure that your makeup (especially foundation, fillers and concealers) are non-comedogenic. Most makeup is going to trigger fungal acne, for more details refer to the fungal acne section.

Touching your face: You touch everything with your fingers, then you touch your face and transfer bacteria to your skin. Avoid touching your face at all costs.

Diet: This is a controversial topic, dermatologists keep denying diet's impact on acne, but too many people report their success by changing their diets. Commonly dairy, highly processed foods, meat, sugars, chocolate (even dark), high fat foods and many more are seemingly acne triggers, though evidence is limited.

Your pillowcase: During night you might drool, leave some oils from your face on your pillow case and rub hair against it. This can create a good feeding ground for bacteria, consider changing pillow cases at least twice a week. You might want to opt for an anti-bacterial pillow case such as silk pillow cases that might bring some other skin benefits as well.

Your bed sheets: Similar to your pillowcase bacteria can start growing and other dirt might start to build up. Since bed sheets are rubbing against your skin all night long, there is a chance for acne to develop, this is very common for hot weather that can make you sweat during night. You should change your bed sheets at least once per week, you might want to look for anti-bacterial bed sheets such as ones made from silk.

Your sweat: If you sweat a lot and wear tight clothes, you have a significant chance of clogging pores or infecting your skin with bacteria. While sweating is a crucial process that prevents you from overheating, you might want to change your environment and clothing to prevent excess sweating. You might want to use some antiperspirant to reduce sweating.

Hormones: You can trigger hormonal activity by diet, by exercise, aging and many other factors. Avoid activities that might trigger hormone spikes, one example is heavy lifting that might trigger testosterone production even for women. Note that stress can cause hormonal changes and can indirectly be causing acne. Make sure you are getting enough sleep.

Bad hygiene: Bacteria is a common cause of acne. If you do not wash properly your skin, you allow different kinds of bacteria to grow on your skin. If you are fighting acne and have a reason to think it is caused by hygiene, then opt for dermaseptic body/face wash that is designed to combat bacteria. This is a common issue for gym goers.

Your hair: It contains many oils and dirt that is gathered around all day. If your hair is touching your face and shoulders all the time, then it might be causing you acne. Washing hair properly is important, but if that does not help, then try making a new haircut that does not allow hair to rub against your skin.

Your hair conditioner: Many hair conditioners use excessive amounts of panthenol to make your hair softer, but this amount can trigger acne. Conditioners may contain oils, esters and other ingredients that might cause acne too. Try using different conditioners and wash face and upper body after you washed your hair. Your shampoo might be also the one to blame.

You over-washed/exfoliated: If you strip too much of your acid mantle, your skin gets prone to many bacteria in your environment. You must make sure you are not overdoing this process, figuring out that acne

is caused by excessive skincare can be tricky, but you can always add ceramides to your skincare routine to look for improvements.

Fragrance: Like mentioned before, fragrance can be anything and it can be causing acne or skin irritation. You might want to look for deodorants that are designed for sensitive skin and maybe even stop using any fragrance because a healthy body should not smell bad.

Your laundry detergent/conditioner: When you wash your clothes, it is possible to have some residue (including fragrance) on top of your clothes. By wearing clothes, the fabric might be rubbing against your skin and clogging your pores. Look for detergents that are designed for sensitive skin, maybe even fragrance free, also make sure you are using the right temperature so your detergent is effective at that temperature.

Your tobacco: The vast amount of chemicals in tobacco can disrupt many natural process in your body, consider quitting smoking and enjoy the added benefits to your skin.

Not enough water: Many people have reported that drinking more water reduced the frequency of acne, although there is a lack of scientific evidence for this, many people are drinking not enough water.

Bad shower water: Some homes have a bad quality of water in their showers. If you suspect your water is contaminated, you should install a water filter. You can find even in-line or even shower heads that come with a water filter.

Too hot/long showers: If you shower for too long or in too hot water, your natural skin oils get stripped and you can become prone to acne and skin can become dry. You should minimize the time you are in a shower (10 minutes is too long) and consider using cold water to shower. While there are many benefits of using cold water in shower, it can reduce the efficiency of removing dirt and bacteria from skin and you might require longer showers that can also disrupt your skin. Some reports claim that people are able to shower in lukewarm showers for a very short periods of time and not even use a body wash. Too frequent showering can also strip your skin's sebum, most people don't need to shower more than once per day.

Long and harsh baths: Hot water will strip your skin's sebum, but hot water can irritate your skin and make it sensitive. Many people like to take scented baths that might have essential oils in them that are known to clog pores. When you are in hot water, your pores are enlarged and you are more likely to get a comedone in your pores. Baths should not last very long, about 10-15 minutes.

Your sponge/loofah: In moist environments bacteria is able to grow, your loofah and other sponges in your bath room is a great place for them to grow. When you use such a device to wash your skin, you are removing some dead skin cells and bacteria can feed on it. If you leave your loofah or sponge in a moist place and leave them wet, then bacteria will grow and will come in contact with your skin the next time you use it. While even those anti-bacterial loofahs do not back up their claims, you might need to change your loofahs every 2-4 weeks or at least disinfect them now and then.

Your towels: They are a feeding ground to bacteria similar to a sponge. Make sure you change towels once or twice a week. Bad air: If your air is polluted, your skin might react to it and start breaking out. Consider using air purifiers in your home or at least place some plants that have air purifying properties. Some plants release oxygen at night that is suitable even for use in bedroom.

High humidity: During summer you might sweat more, but because of higher humidity and temperature your skin can be more moist as well. These conditions might seem good for your skin, it is also good for a certain bacteria that is known to cause acne. Your partner: Your skin might have adapted to your hygiene routine, but whenever you come in contact with another person's bacteria, you might develop acne. This might indicate that your skin barrier is either damage or you must convince your partner to improve their skincare routine.

No good reason at all: Yes, it just happens. The best thing you can do is to prepare for it.

Fungal acne

There is one type of acne that deserves special attention, reason being that it is hard to diagnose and can cause a lot of frustration since it may seem that “everything causes acne” and “nothing works”. Fungal acne is different from other types of acne since it is an infection with fungi around the hair follicles and there are many strains of fungi that can be found on skin. Below you can find some of symptoms of fungal acne:

- Small clusters of whiteheads
- Most commonly bumps on face, shoulders, chest and back
- Itching

As you can see, the symptoms are not very descriptive, this is the main reason most people do not recognize it and yet it might look like different acne types. For this reason it is highly recommended to see a dermatologist, they can easily identify fungal acne using a microscope, but no clear diagnose method can be used at home.

In perfect conditions you are supposed to have a balance of bacteria and fungi on your skin that protects your skin, but in some cases this balance can be disrupted and you can end up with fungal acne. There are many conditions and reasons that can inhibit the growth of fungal acne and treating it yourself requires extensive knowledge of skincare products, their ingredients, their effects and how they react with each other, this guide will not cover all possible combinations, but this guide will give you useful tips and guidelines how to approach treating fungal acne, though extended individual research is still recommended. Below you can find some conditions that can trigger fungal acne's growth.

Oils: Almost all oils will trigger fungal acne. Yes, this means that almost all skincare products will trigger fungal acne since most products contain oils. Avoid oils at all cost, fungal acne is able to feed itself when oils are present. There are currently only 3 known oils that are safe - caprylic acid oil, capric acid oil, squalane oil, though you must be careful not to use even these oils with products that contain amino acids and vitamins. Mineral oil can sometimes be used, some strains of fungal acne cannot feed on this oil.

Ceramides: Some ceramides directly inhibit the growth of fungal acne and some of them accelerate the growth in presence of oils, only 1 type of ceramide is safe for fungal acne, but it is not very likely to find a product with just one type of ceramide.

Amino acids and vitamins: Arginine, Vitamin B1, Vitamin B6, allantoin and many other ingredients can accelerate the growth of fungal acne, but they also allow fungal acne to use safe oils for their feeding process. Remember that your skin's sebum already contains some oils.

Warm climate: Fungal acne is able to grow in warm climates (>32C) and some ingredients can help the growth in humid climate (Lactic acid is one of them). It is less likely for fungal acne to grow in cold environments.

pH level: If your skin's pH level is disrupted (>pH5.5), then it is possible for fungal acne to grow.

Many more: The list is extremely long and you will not be able to remember all of possible ingredients that trigger fungal acne. You should always use ingredients checker to examine if they have fungal acne triggers.

To cure fungal acne you need to have a very well developed skincare routine, with proper hydration, with proper exfoliation, with very well picked products, below you can find some ingredients that can actually kill fungal acne to some extent.

MCT oil: Caprylic acid oil is a type of MCT oil, it is safe for fungal acne (unless you add amino acids or vitamins), but it has anti-fungal properties, this oil should be used to cure fungal acne. There is a second MCT oil called “capric acid oil”, it can be used as well, but it does not seem to have the same anti-fungal properties. Make sure you buy 100% pure oil, these oils are made from coconut oil and it can contain lauric acid, which is unsafe for fungal acne, only use the purest MCT oil possible.

Salicylic acid: This BHA is quite harsh on the skin for some people, but it is also capable of killing fungi by removing dead skin cells, that can feed fungal acne.

Green tea extract: Some research suggest that products with green tea extract can help killing fungal acne.

Sulphur: Research shows that it can cure a wide range of skin issues, including fungal acne. It has a very unpleasant side effect of smell.

Anti dandruff shampoo: The same fungi, that is causing you dandruff, might be causing acne on your face and body. These shampoos contain ingredients that specifically target fungi, one example is zinc pyrithione, but there are other compounds too. You can use such shampoo on your face but note that most these shampoos will contain other ingredients that are not safe for fungal acne. These shampoos are very drying on the skin. You can find guides online how to use these shampoos for fungal acne, make sure you moisturize properly afterwards.

One of the largest issues with fungal acne is that none of the moisturizers seem to be hydrating enough. This can be a major issue since you can develop a lot of dead skin cells without proper moisturizing, which again will result in growth of fungal acne. You should pay special attention that your moisturizer does contain humectants like glycerin, hyaluronic acid, PCA, aloe vera, you can also look for silicones that work as an emollient and top off your moisturizer with caprylic acid oil.

You will have a very hard time finding fungal acne safe products, almost all products contain at least one fungal acne trigger, but there are some very rare products that are safe. Some people have done a very good job and compiled a list of fungal acne safe products, but note that these lists may contain some unsafe products too, you should always recheck the ingredients yourself. Make sure you recheck the ingredients on the products too since many companies like to change the ingredients without changing the product name or packaging.

Finding a suitable product will mean that EVERY product must be examined (cleanser, toner, moisturizer, shampoo, body wash, sunscreen, EVERYTHING), but remembering each ingredient is going to be impossible. For this reason you should use “fungal acne ingredients checker” to make sure there are no fungal acne triggers and pay a special attention to ingredients that accelerate the growth of fungal acne since those ingredients can cause issues when mixed with other products.

Gut bacteria can play a role not just with acne, but skin hydration and other skin concerns. Consider adding fermented products to your diet or take probiotics as supplements. When looking for suitable supplements, look for specific bacteria strains, below you can find some strains and their use case.

Acne: *Bacillus coagulans*, *Bifidobacterium bifidum*, *Bifidobacterium lactis*, *Enterococcus faecalis*, *Lactobacillus acidophilus*, *Lactobacillus bulgaricus*, *Lactobacillus casei*, *Lactobacillus paracasei*, *Lactobacillus plantarum*, *Streptococcus salivarius*

Hydration and sensitivity: *Bifidobacterium longum*, *Lactobacillus casei*, *Lactobacillus fermentum*, *Lactobacillus paracasei*, *Streptococcus thermophilus*

Anti-aging: *Bifidobacterium breve*, *Lactobacillus johnsonii*, *Lactobacillus plantarum*, *Lactobacillus rhamnosus*

Radiant skin: *Lactobacillus acidophilus*, *Saccharomyces cerevisiae*

Note: Fungal acne is very hard to kill, don't try to find a single product that will cure you from fungal acne, it is a multi-step process that requires changes to your skincare routine and diet.

Severe skin issues

This guide will not cover treatment options for most severe cases since it requires a specialist and requires very specific products, that may need a prescription. To prevent anybody from mistreating a serious issue, this guide will not mention treatments for them and should avoid any advice found on the Internet about them. If you recognize some of these skin issues, you should visit a dermatologist, it might be a very mild case and treatment is simple, but such cases should be treated as soon as possible.

Eczema: Very itchy skin, very scaly and dry skin, a lot of redness.

Contact dermatitis: Very itchy red skin whenever coming in contact with a chemical that causes an allergic reaction. Identifying the source and proper care is crucial to prevent it in future. Common cause for many people is allergic reaction to latex.

Rosacea: Redness usually around your face, visible blood vessels. After a while swelling can appear.

Hives: Appear as red bumps, but they might go away on their own. If red bumps are visible more than a month, then you should visit a doctor.

Note: As you can see, many of these skin conditions have similar symptoms, for this reason it is needed to visit a specialist that can properly recognize them.

Scars

Scars can really bother some people due their visibility. While scars are permanent, there are treatment options that exist and some even can be done from your home. Scars can be caused by acne, a wound, a surgery or other factors. Treatment options exist, some scars fade away on their own, some might need some special care, some might need surgery. Below you can find some things to try to reduce appearance of scars.

Moisturizer: As simple as it sounds, a good moisturizer will hydrate your skin. Hydrated skin is able to heal itself properly and can even prevent minor scars in long-term. You should be using a moisturizer all over your body, not just your face.

Vitamin C serums: Vitamin C is known for its ability to brighten your skin. Your skin contains a chemical melanin that is responsible for absorbing UV light, but it is produced in larger quantities when a wound is healing. This process can make a scar much darker than the rest of the skin. Vitamin C is known to interfere in production of melanin, this can be useful to brighten your skin, but since serums are usually higher concentration of an ingredient, then vitamin C serums can be effective to some extent treating minor scars. Vitamin C also plays a role in collagen production, this can help reduce minor dents in your skin.

Vitamin E serums: Studies have shown that vitamin E plays no role in reducing scar appearance, but it has shown some effectiveness when reducing hyper-pigmentation. You might benefit by using vitamin C+E serum for most effectiveness.

Silicones: Since they work as emollient, they create a thin protective layer on top of your skin and locks in moisture. This property is very useful since such a layer can protect a wound from further damage and allow it to heal itself.

Retinol: This ingredient acts as efficient exfoliator. It removes dead skin cells and allows new skin cells to grow by increasing the skin cell turnover rate. Retinol can leave your skin very dry, make sure you moisturize it afterwards.

BHAs: Most popular BHA (salicylic acid) works as an exfoliator and has the same benefits as retinol. AHAs such as lactic acid might not be efficient enough to reach the deeper layers of your skin to do any effect on your scars.

Note: Many companies try to sell remedies for scars for very high prices, but the true effectiveness of those products are disappointing. Some ingredients can help with the appearance of scars, but it is very limited. Most products will work only on the very top layer of skin, this means that it can improve only very shallow scars.

While acids and vitamins can improve your scar concerns, their ability is very limited. There is two options you can still preform at your home, although they sound scary and painful, well, they are, but people report them to be much, much more effective.

Derma-rolling: This is procedure where you create tiny and shallow wounds on top of your skin that triggers skin healing process. This is done by rolling a device that has tiny needles on top of it, this is not a very pleasant process since it is a bit painful, but the pain is tolerable and most people get used to it after a few times using it. Derma-rollers can in different lengths so you can target specific needs. Derma-rolling can not only reduce scars, but it can also make skin more firm, less wrinkles, treat large pores, even reduce puffiness. When starting derma-rolling, you should first select the shortest needle length and gradually move up to longer ones as your skin adapts to it.

Note: You can use pain relieving serums on the skin in case the pain from derma-roller is intolerable. You should not be experiencing severe pain from this procedure, there will be slight pain and some people can experience higher levels of pain since their skin could be more sensitive than others, but in general, it should not hurt too much.

Derma-pen: Although it is highly recommended to do this procedure at a specialist's office, but some might still chose to do it at home. This is very similar process to derma-rolling, but instead it creates even smaller punctures in your skin, but the length can be adjusted. This procedure might be more suitable for face skin since it can cover much smaller areas at once. These devices can cost much more than simple derma-rollers and they come with very complex instructions.

IMPORTANT: Derma-rolling and micro-needling creates small wounds, you can expect bleeding, but you **MUST** be aware of possible infections. This procedure is supposed to be performed by a specialist or under supervision. When not done by specialist, it is quite common to see cases of swollen skin, rosacea, severe infection and foreign body granuloma. Make sure you understand the risks and how to prevent them in case you are preforming such procedures on your own.

Microdermabrasion: Works similarly to mechanical exfoliators, but removed skin cells from deeper levels. When done at a professional's office, this can be an effective way to reduce fine lines and minor scars. Kits you can buy for home use can be a lot less effective and not differ much from mechanical scrubs.

IMPORTANT: Always talk to your dermatologist if you should preform any of these invasive procedures on your skin since you might have a skin condition that can cause a severe side effect.

TIP: If you decide to do derma-rolling, micro-needling or microdermabrasion yourself, then your skin will become irritated and very sensitive. Many people put on aloe vera gel after the procedure to calm their skin and speed up the healing process.

Light therapy: There seems to be some evidence that by subjecting your skin to specific light you can trigger a process in your skin. For example, some evidence show that by shining red light you can stimulate collagen production and healing process. Blue light might help to fight specific type of bacteria that is linked to one specific type of acne. While light therapy at an office might be very costly, you can these masks for home use, though there is limited research in this field. There are light therapy sticks that are convenient to carry around whenever you feel you might need extra care for your skin.

Note: Many of us suffer from acne scars that were caused from our teen years, these scars can be small, but can be very deep. All products (including BHAs and microneedling) you can use without prescription work only to some extent, in general these procedures will only remove shallow scars and it is assumed that these procedures will only regenerate a very small layer of skin every month, this means to see some results using over-the-counter products it may take years. A much better option is to see a dermatologist, there are much more potent solutions to get rid of scars, but you require prescription. Do **NOT** try to find prescription drugs online without a prescription, these drugs usually are knockoffs and have undesirable side effects.

Wrinkles

As you age, you will start to notice more and more wrinkles on your skin. You might develop them sooner than others, it might be related to genetics or it might be related to your skincare routine. As we age our skin becomes drier, less elastic, thinner and damaged, these factors can cause wrinkles to appear sooner, but there some things you can do.

Moisturize: You must keep your skin properly moisturized all day long to effectively prevent wrinkles. Find the best possible moisturizer that works for your skin. Make sure you are not over-washing or over-exfoliating your face, you need your skin's sebum to protect you from loss of moisture throughout the day.

Exfoliate: When dead skin cells start to build up on your skin, they can prevent your fresh skin cells to receive moisture from the environment and your moisturizer. As your skin gets drier, it is more likely to develop more wrinkles. Make sure you exfoliate properly, you might not need to use BHA type chemical exfoliators since they are meant more to unclog your pores, but you can opt for AHA type chemical exfoliators

to fix wrinkles, they tend to be a lot more sensitive. For more intense wrinkle-fighting options you should check retinoids.

Specific skincare products: Some products have a special label that says anti-aging, these products contain special ingredients that may contribute to reversing signs of mature skin. Such ingredients as hyaluronic acid, collagen, vitamin C, vitamin E, Q10, ceramides, fatty acids and others can improve the appearance of aging skin, but make sure the product's anti-aging claims are backed up by its ingredients.

Sunscreen: Use sunscreen to prevent more damage to the skin. Sunscreen is just too important for our skin, you must use it. **Diet:** This should not come as a surprise, but this can greatly impact the overall appearance of your skin. Make sure you have a healthy diet. This is discussed in more details.

Exercise: Along with proper diet, your body can have a proper metabolism that can also improve your overall look and feel. This is discussed in more details.

No alcohol: Drinking alcohol might be a crucial part of many peoples' lives, but it dehydrated our bodies and interferes with vitamin A levels in your body, this can significantly impact skin turnover rate and proper moisturizing process. **Alcohol Quit smoking:** Research has shown that tobacco can impact the levels of collagen and elastic, the main components of elastic skin. If your skin becomes less elastic, it can start developing wrinkles. Quitting smoking will not reverse the damaged caused for your skin, you still need to take proper care for your skin.

Light therapy: Because of limited evidence that red light therapy actually does boost collagen production levels, it is hard to recommend trying light therapy, but at a point where wrinkles have developed you might want to try everything possible. **Micro-needling:** Using derma-rollers or derma-pens creates tiny wounds on your skin, but by doing this your skin gets triggered to start healing process and alongside collagen is generated. While this procedure is somewhat painful and can take multiple months or years to see results, this procedure might be the most effective option to actually combat signs of aging. Along with serums that are needled into your skin's deeper levels, you can see a major difference just from few sessions.

Massaging: Very popular massage device is a jade roller that stimulates the skin by rolling motions, there seem to be a lot of reports that claim good results, evidence by research is still limited. There are also special devices that can be used to massage your skin and some even come with light therapy. There are some reports from people that face yoga can improve your mature skin.

Avoid repetitive facial expressions: When you make a facial expression, you contract your muscles and skin must adjust to these muscles. While making different expressions is not going to cause any noticeable effect, but making the same expression many times for prolonged periods of time can have cause wrinkles, one example is squinting (you should wear sunglasses at a sunny day either way).

Sleeping: When you sleep on your side, your skin gets pulled downwards due to gravity. Over time sleeping on your side might increase the appearance of wrinkles. Consider sleeping on your back, though snoring might be an issue for some people.

Staying fit: Before you read this further, a reminder must be made - DO NOT STARVE! Many people will misinterpret the results of this type of study. By restricting your calorie intake you might add a few years to your life span, this seems to be related to a defense mechanism that triggers process that preserves our body cells when food is restricted, there is some evidence that limiting calorie intake decreases chance of certain diseases, but this does not mean you should start starving. What the study suggests, in-taking about 15% less calories might give a few years to your life span, but you must remember that you need crucial nutrients either way to be healthy. High intensity cardio seems to trigger similar process in your body, by combining these activities you might be able to slow down your aging by a small margin. Again, DO NOT STARVE, and make sure you have a balanced diet!

Probiotics: There seem to be some evidence that probiotics can help with skin hydration and acne. You will need to do your own research to find supplements that contain strains of probiotics that improve skin hydration (there are many), you similarly find ones that help with your acne too.

Note: While healing acne might take up two few weeks or just days, reducing signs of wrinkles can take years.

For this reason it is highly recommended to develop a good skincare routine at a younger age so wrinkles have less chance to appear.

Ultrasound therapy: Research suggest that ultrasound therapy boosts significantly collagen production, which can make the skin appear more supple and smooth. Usually this procedure is done professionally, though some devices that can be used at home might give similar results, but will require many months of usage.

Minor skin issues

There are some skin issues that are not serious, but can still be quite annoying. Below you can find some common skin concerns and tips on how to deal with them.

Keratosis pilaris: Also called chicken skin. It is a harmless skin issue that usually creates dry, rough, bumpy patches on your skin, very common for women around buttocks, thighs, upper arms and cheeks. Resembles red goosebumps on your skin. It is caused by hair protein (keratin) buildup around hair follicles. There seem to be no cure for it, but you can make it less apparent by proper exfoliation and moisturizing. You can somewhat prevent keratosis pilaris by preforming (semi)permanent hair removal, this can help since IPL and electrolysis destroy the hair follicles.

Razor bumps: This is a very common skin issue for those who shave, similar bumps appear to those who epilate hair. They appear as small red bumps on your skin around hair follicles. This happens when hair starts growing and cannot properly penetrate your skin, they can also result in ingrown hair. To prevent them, you should adapt a proper exfoliation process, proper moisturizing and maybe even use a more sensitive razor or maybe even chose a different hair removal method. These bumps can go away on their own if you do not scratch or try to squeeze them.

Under-eye circles: You may have noticed dark circles under your eyes, the cause of these circles might lack of hydration, lack of sleep, lack of vitamins, lack of nutrients in general, but it could a sign of aging as well. The bad news is that it might be genetic, but you can still try to improve the appearance. The dark circles appear because your skin under the eye area can become thinner and blood vessels and tissue becomes more visible. While many eye creams claim they can fix this, their effectiveness is very debatable and can only a small number of people can benefit from them, for example, caffeine does “wake-up” your eyes, but it can only help in very specific cases. More effective way is to add extra layer of skin by using eye creams with retinoids since they increase the skin turnover rate. You may also benefit from creams with hyaluronic acid, though efficiency is very limited. Some people do not get too concerned with this issue and simply start using eye creams that act as fillers. Another thing that seems to be very popular and can be a lot more effective is massaging the area, the most popular way to do this is with a jade roller, they can improve the blood circulation your eye area. Although there is no direct evidence that jade rollers and other massagers to really work, many find them soothing.

Puffy eyes: Many start noticing as we age puffy eyes, this can be due the same reasons as under-eye circles, very commonly this is due lack of hydration in your body, but very common it is due genetics. Your body starts to store more water if you do not get enough water, so drinking more water might be an easy fix along with proper rest and diet. Massaging your eye area with a jade roller or similar massager might give you some results by encouraging lymphatic drainage, though there is lack of evidence that jade rollers are efficient for achieving that. Some evidence exists that ultrasound therapy can reduce the appearance of puffy eyes (and undereye circles).

Dull skin: A healthy skin is glowing, radiant, but dull skin is something that seems to lack those properties. This usually indicates that your skin cells do not have a proper turnover rate and you might fix this issue by just proper exfoliation.

Enlarged pores: This is a common issue for oily skin, but sadly a permanent fix does not exist. Pores get enlarged whenever your skin feels it needs more moisture so it enlarges its pores to gather more moisture from the environment, but sadly this effect can cause you clogged pores. While there is no permanent fix for this skin issue, you can minimize the frequency of enlarged pores by properly exfoliating and moisturizing.

Eye care

Eyes are probably the most sensitive area on your face. While most principles still apply to your eye area, there are some things to take into consideration. The main difference is that you are not supposed to wash your eye area with face washes, you should not be putting on face masks or serums on them, you should not be putting your face cream on your eye area. You should only use skincare products that are specifically designed for eye area.

Note: There are mixed opinions whether one should be using eye creams at all, or not. Many eye creams will have very bold claims, you should at least make sure that some of those claims can be backed up. Most ingredients you will find in face creams will have similar effects on your eye area. Since eye creams are more expensive, many opt even skipping eye cream usage, though some people might benefit of using eye creams.

Only use eye products on eye area: These products are specially designed for eye area, they are usually more sensitive and don't contain harsh chemicals, they are also usually more refined and are purer. Using different types of products on your eye area might result in irritated skin and acne.

Massage your eye creams: You should not be rubbing your eyes, this motion can cause sagging skin over time, avoid pulling skin downwards as well. You should be gently massaging in your eye cream or gently applying it on your eye area. Many eye creams instruct you to gently pat the eye area, this is meant to increase the blood circulation in that area.

Don't put eye cream too close to your eyes: If eye cream gets into your eyes, they can sting and cause irritation in your eyes. To avoid this, try not to put eye cream too close to the start of your eyelids, the cream will still be working if you skip a small area. Bad eye creams can sting your eyes: Because of the added fragrance or other chemicals that an eye cream might have, you can experience a stinging sensation in your eyes. If such thing happens, avoid using that product. Many contact lens wearers look for eye creams that are ophthalmologically tested.

Eye area can be acne-prone: Just like your face, your eye area can develop acne. This is very common when using comedogenic eye creams or products that can irritate your skin. If you have doubts about your eye area, then look for non-comedogenic eye creams. Eye area needs sun protection: Many sunscreens are far from suitable for using on eye area, most commonly they can irritate your skin and sting your eyes. There are special sunscreens designed to be used around your eye area, but you should be wearing sunglasses in sunny days that will give you some sun protection for your eyes as well.

Eye area does not like cleansing/exfoliating: Cleansing and exfoliating is way too harsh for your eye area, just splash some water on it, but some people like to use micellar water to remove eye make up.

Growing your eyelashes/eyebrows: Some people report that putting some oils on your eye lashes/brows (very small amounts) can make your eyelashes/eyebrows thicker, this can happen to some extent since oil will create supportive conditions for hair growth, but the effect is very limited. There are much powerful options, you can use serums with prostaglandin (specially designed to eyelash/eyebrow growth), but this is a prescription drug. Luckily there are serums with prostaglandin analogues (bimatoprost, isopropyl cloprostate and many more). You can use these serums as direction in instructions to make your eyelashes and eyebrows thicker and longer.

Eye serums: There are specially designed serums for your eye area, they are usually called concentrates and they act the same way as serums - they deliver a high dose of an ingredient. These serums are used before applying an eye cream.

TIP: Eye creams are special since they are formulated for very sensitive skin. You can use your face moisturizer as an eye cream, but you need to make sure it is designed for very sensitive skin and does not sting your eyes. Sadly most moisturizers are not suitable for the eye area.

Lip care

Lips are generally quite simple to care for, similarly to other skin around your body it needs moisture, many people use lip balms to fix this issue, but there seem to be some pitfalls when using lip balms. Below you can find a list of ingredients that have some evidence of making your lips even drier. - Vitamin E oil (can cause skin irritation for some people) - Castor oil (can be allergic) - Propolis (found in beeswax) - Lanolin (can cause skin irritation for some people) - Fragrance (can cause skin irritation) - SPF (some types can cause dryness)

When lips lack moisture, they become dry and can get chapped. To fix this you need to provide your lips moisture and to lock it in. Similarly to other skin parts on your body, you should be locking moisture in using occlusives or emollients. You can soak your lips with water to make them moist and then apply a lip balm that does not cause your lips dry.

While there are many ingredients you should avoid, there aren't a lot that are recommended. Many people report that lanolin works very well while others get irritated lips. Many people are using natural oils on their lips, such as shea butter, jojoba oil, almond oil, coconut oil and others. A very popular lip balm ingredient seems to be petrolatum, this occlusive might work for most people.

Note: There seem to be some tips to use your face or body moisturizer as lip balms. While it may seem fine, you need to make sure that all the ingredients in your moisturizer are edible. Similar precaution should be taken when applying a face sunscreen to your lips. Lips can benefit from exfoliation too, you can remove dead skin cells from your lips to make them smooth and supple. There are sugar scrubs that you apply and rub on your lips until the sugar bits dissolve. There are chemical lip exfoliants that use acids to dissolve dead skin cells similar to other chemical exfoliators. Such lip exfoliators are usually used twice a week, but some can be used more often. Another way is to simply use your toothbrush, you can gently scrub your lips with your toothbrush to remove dead skin cells. Make sure you moisturize your lips afterwards.

Note: Many lipsticks contain ingredients that may be drying out your lips. Finding lipsticks that are not drying out your lips might be tricky and might involve a lot of trial-and-error. Similarly you should try multiple lip balms to find one that has a suitable sun protection.

Getting plump naturally red lips might not be possible for most, but many people like to rub beetroot juice into their lips to make them appear more red. This is a temporary color that will fade in a day or less, but frequent reapplying might give you red lips without a lipstick.

Body care

Body skin is also prone to many possible skin issues that a face might have, for this reason you should take proper care. While most principles from facial care apply to body care as well, there still are some specific things you should be aware of when developing a body skincare routine.

Skin type: It is normal to have an oily face skin, but a dry body skin. Make sure you chose products for your skin type and make sure you properly determine your skin type for that body area.

Moisturize: Many think that you can skip moisturizing for your body, but just like your face, your body skin also needs hydration and it lacks more of it as we get older. Oily body skin is not so common, but you should still chose a moisturizer that suits your skin type.

Moisturize when your skin is damp: The best time to apply a moisturizer is right after you shower and your skin is still damp, but not wet. If you apply your moisturizer when your skin is damp, then your skin will absorb the ingredients in that moisturizer more efficiently and also you will be locking in more moisture in your skin.

Do not rub your towel on your skin: Rubbing towels to remove excess water after a shower can be very harsh for your skin, for this reason you should develop a "patting" pattern where you pat towel on your skin rather than rubbing your towel. Even better, don't use towels, let your skin absorb more moisture by letting the excess water stay on your skin until it is absorbed by your skin.

Exfoliate: Your body skin needs exfoliation just like your face, this a common mistake for those who are doing any kind of hair removal. If your body has dead skin cells, they can clog your pores, make your skin dry, make your skin bumpy, not radiant, not supple and less elastic. Develop an exfoliation routine, this can be done using physical or chemical exfoliators. While your body skin is not as sensitive as your face skin, you could go for a physical exfoliator, but it is still recommended to use chemical exfoliators for most skins. Body washes with AHA or BHA type exfoliators are popular option to use. Usually it is recommended to exfoliate your body skin up to two times a week, but body washes that contain chemical exfoliators can be used more often, though can be very drying if used frequently.

Note: It is very common to develop acne around your chest, back and shoulders area. This can be tricky to combat, but the most common solution is to use a body wash for acne-prone skin that contains BHA (most commonly salicylic acid), but a AHA based body wash might work for some as well. Remember that exfoliation is a very drying process and you need to moisturize afterwards.

Body wash: Soap can be very irritating for your skin, it can strip too much skin's sebum and you can make your skin too dry and prone to acne. It is recommended to look for body washes that do not contain soap, such body washes can be found as dermaseptic soap. Make sure you chose a body wash that does not contain other harsh chemicals, such as fragrance.

Note: For very dry body skin there are oil-based body washes that strip the least possible skin sebum. If your skin is prone to acne, then oil-based body washes might not be a good option. You should always make sure you are not washing for too long or in too hot water.

Body oils: If your skin type can tolerate using body oils, you can have amazing results. Different oils might have different effects, some oils are heavy and take a long time to absorb, some are light and quickly absorb. Some are sticky, some are not so sticky, but all oils are great occlusives and also contain many effective ingredients that might benefit your skin to a large extent. Oils can be very comedogenic even for body skin.

Especially dry areas: Around your body you might find some areas that are especially dry, commonly these are your elbows, your knees and your feet. These areas might require you to put a larger amount of moisturizer to make sure they are moisturized enough.

Note: In more severe cases your heel skin might start to crack due to extreme dryness. There are special creams that are designed for cracked heels, but you should never try to cut the excess dead skin off your heels, it should be removed using exfoliators and then properly moisturized.

TIP: You can exfoliate your feet as same as you exfoliate your body skin, but there exist feet masks that are either exfoliating, hydrating or both. You can consider wearing them up to two times per week to have smooth feet. You can also make an exfoliating feet bath so you can soak your feet. You can also use a pumic stone to remove small amount of dead skin cells from your feet (mostly meant only for heels).

Sponges/loofahs: They are not needed if you have developed a proper exfoliating routine. You can easily rub your body wash using your hands. Sponges and loofahs are a feeding ground for bacteria that might cause you acne. Look for a silicone brush to reduce the growth of bacteria, though you will still need to wash it on regular basis.

Hot long baths: Sitting in bath for a longer period of time can strip your skin's sebum and irritate your skin. Hot bath can increase the intensity of both of these side effects. Baths can be relaxing, but can make skin sensitized for some people. Avoid using bubble bath with soap. Always moisturize after using a bath and consider drinking more water before and after bath since during bath you are sweating.

TIP: For many people a milk bath is a simple way to both exfoliate and nourish your skin. A popular recipe involves adding 2 cups of liquid or powder milk to about 37°C bath water, add 1 cup of dead sea salts and 1 cup of Epsom salts. Essential oils might clog your pores in hot water. You can use cow, goat or sheep milk, the latter is considered to be most nourishing. Soak in bath water 10-15minutes and then wash off residue using a mild body wash.

Your back: The skin on your back is thicker and is less sensitive, but it can require extra exfoliation. You can use a back brush to exfoliate the skin on your back, but you can also add an extra amount of chemical

exfoliator on your back for greater exfoliation effect.

Intimate area: Exfoliation can be done on your intimate area, though this area is highly sensitive, you might want to only use chemical exfoliators in this area. You should be very careful when using harsh soap on your intimate area, it can disrupt the skin barrier and make unpleasant such as dryness, irritation and intense smell. Women might want to look for specially designed intimate wash that usually is with a lower pH level than other body washes. Men should make sure to wash the area under the foreskin.

Sunscreen: Every bit of skin needs to be covered with sunscreen to protect your skin from UVA/UVB rays even on cloudy days, your body is no exception, though you might not need to cover all your body since you are probably wearing clothes outdoors, but all exposed body parts need sunscreen. If you have acne-prone skin, then you should look for sunscreen that is non-comedogenic and maybe even opt for a sunscreen lotion rather than sunscreen cream.

Body bronzers: Sun is not very safe for your skin, but if you still want to have tanned skin, you can look for body skin bronzers. They are considered to be safe if used properly.

Hair removal

Many people like to have smooth and hairless skin, but this is quite hard to achieve. While it may seem quite straight forward to remove body hair using various methods, there are some major pitfalls in each hair removal method.

Many people do not bother much with hair removal and chose to trim their body hair. This is probably the safest way to remove hair, it has basically no risks (cutting your skin in some areas might be a risk though), it does not itch as some other popular methods and less likely to develop irritation. This is also the recommended way to remove hair in your intimate area. In terms of skincare, trimming hair is the way how your skin wants hair removal to be.

Most popular way to remove body hair is by shaving. The most common mistake is to shave an unexfoliated skin. When you have a layer of dead skin cells and you shave, you are partly removing dead skin cells, but also only partly removing hair. As a result you do not get a smooth shave result. Before removing body hair (especially for the first time) you should make sure you have developed a proper body skincare routine with moisturizer and exfoliants. Some people have found that you can get the smoothest shave when you exfoliate right before shaving and then exfoliate the day after. Physical exfoliants might be too harsh for most peoples' skin, especially when shaving after using physical scrubs, for this reason chemical exfoliants might be very suitable.

TIP: You should only shave when your body hair is soaked. Many like to take a 10 minute shower to soften their body hair and then shave, but you can also take a bath that will also work as a way to loosen up dead skin cells, but this is nowhere near as efficient as using proper exfoliants. A simple way to exfoliate, loosen up skin cells and soften your body hair is by simply taking a milk bath for 10-15 minutes. You can find recipes online for various types of milk baths, but make sure none of the ingredients are known to clog pores if you are acne-prone.

Note: If you haven't shaved your hair for a long time, then you should trim your hair first. Leave a small length of hair, the hair length depends on hair removal method. You can shave probably the shortest hair length on your hair trimmer, but waxing, epilating and some other methods require longer hair.

Many people are shocked when their body skin has vast amounts of red bumps all over their body on the next day after shaving. The most common cause of this is due lack of exfoliation and when body hair starts to grow, it can be unable to penetrate the skin and cause skin issues, most commonly you can get ingrown hair. While these bumps will go away probably after a few days, scratching them can make them a lot worse. To avoid these red bumps you should make sure your skin is healthy (elastic, firm, hydrated, radiant and so on). Many people like to exfoliate on the next day as well since it removes any excess dead skin cells, this minimizes the chances of getting ingrown hairs since the body hair is more likely to penetrate a soft and supple skin that does not have any dead skin cells. **Note:** Exfoliation is always a very irritating

process. Most people can tolerate mild exfoliation two days in a row, but some people might get sensitized skin. Experiment with multiple routines to figure out your best routine.

The second common mistake is to not moisturize. You are supposed to moisturize after each time you have exfoliated your skin, this means that you are supposed to exfoliate after you have shaved. Your skin may develop razor burns if you do not have a proper moisturizing routine for your skin. Without moisturizing, your skin may itch, become dry and inflamed, you should make sure you moisturize your skin properly, otherwise any hair removal method will result in a disaster for most people sooner or later. Shaving will probably irritate your skin, but you should do anything to minimize the severity of the irritation, many people like to apply aloe vera gel to calm your skin after shaving, but note that pure aloe vera is more a humectant than an emollient, your skin might need a more efficient emollient or occlusive to lock in the moisture in your skin. The word “moisturize” is found here so often because it is really that important.

IMPORTANT: Even with a perfect skincare routine you might experience razor bumps and inflamed skin. Do not get tempted to squeeze, scratch, push, pull or any other action on your skin. This will only damage your skin, you should rather apply an acne spot treatment instead and let the skin heal itself. Do not attempt to pick out ingrown hair using tweezers or other objects, this will most likely result in an infection.

When shaving it is important to use a sharp razor blade, do not use dull blades, in fact it is recommended to use disposable razor blades so you each time have a sharp one. By using a dull blade you increase the chance of ingrown hair. Based on how sensitive your skin is, you might want to use a razor blade with 1 blades (safety razor), 2 blades, 3 blades or 5 blades, the most sensitive being a razor with just one blade. If you develop razor bumps or have a burning sensation, then you might want to use a razor blade with less blades.

You have the option to choose whether to shave in hair growth direction or against it. The benefit of shaving against hair growth direction is to have the smoothest result, but can be very irritating for most people. Shaving in the hair growth direction is less irritating and less likely to develop razor bumps and ingrown hair. Some people have developed a routine to shave in hair growth direction first and then go against hair growth direction once, but this can be very irritating for most people. Note: Hair does not grow downwards in all areas and hair does not grow in the same direction for all people in same places. Hair can grow upwards, downwards, sideways and even be mixed. Before removing hair, check the hair growth direction in all areas you want to shave. Pay a special attention to your back of the thighs and buttocks area.

Always use shaving cream when shaving, make sure you are using a shaving cream that is suitable for your skin type. Many shaving creams contain menthol that is supposed to remove the burning sensation, but can be very irritating for some people. There are shaving creams and gels that are suitable for sensitive skin, without fragrance and even with aloe vera. Note: It might be tempting to evaluate your shaving results by touching your skin, but try to resist this urge. It might be pleasant to feel your smooth skin, but by touching just shaved, epilated or waxed skin you increase the chances to get an infection. This is especially important for epilating and waxing.

Some people might like to epilate body hair. While it may seem that epilating is safer than shaving, but it is not always the case. Epilating works by pulling hair out of your skin, but this leaves your skin with tiny wounds. There is a significant chance you can get an infection and develop acne. To minimize the risks, it is recommended to put something anti-bacterial and soothing right after epilating. Epilating has the same risk to develop red bumps on your skin when hair starts to grow back. Waxing is very similar to epilating and same risks exist too.

While shaving/epilating/waxing will give you the smoothest results, some people do not need such results and can get satisfactory results using depilating creams. These creams dissolve your hair follicles at the surface of your skin. The benefits of this hair removal method is that it is going to be less likely to get red bumps, though small risk still exists. The major risk is for people with allergic reactions, these creams (sometimes in powder form) contain allergens and can cause serious skin damage, even depilation creams that are designed for sensitive skin might cause an allergic reaction. Always do a patch test before using depilation creams. There are special depilation creams meant to be used for intimate areas.

There are other options when it comes to hair removal, for example, laser hair removal, electrolysis, IPL

and others. While some of these methods are safe for skin, many such procedures should be performed by a specialist and advise the best method for you, the risks should be stated clear as well since some of these methods have a risk of permanent scarring.

IPL is becoming very popular since it can be performed at home, note that it works only for a very limited set of hair color and skin color, it is not capable of removing white hairs. IPL is NOT permanent, it can take up to an year for your hair to grow back. Only permanent hair removal method (and it does not have a perfect success rate either) is electrolysis, but this is a very painful and dangerous method, it involves place a needle inside your skin's hair follicle and electrocuting it, which is painful and takes a lot of time since you need to target each individual hair. Some stores sell some kind of devices that market themselves as electrolysis procedure at home, but most of them simply do not work at all. Devices that do work are very hard to operate (imaging placing a needle in a very small hole and you get a scar if you miss) and cost even thousands of dollars. IPL is a lot safer, but a lot less effective, though IPL devices in a professional's office are much more powerful and you can get much better results than you can using generic IPL device.

Diet

In some cases diet can be the one to blame for your skin concerns. Skin is a complex organ that requires vast amounts and vast variety of vitamins and minerals to sustain itself. Below you can find common vitamins that are crucial to healthy skin:

Vitamin E: When taken orally through supplements or diet it is delivered to your skin using your skin's sebum. Will act as a strong anti-oxidant and can help even out your skin tone.

Biotin: Also known as vitamin B7 does not directly improve your skin's health, but it linked to proper metabolism that is crucial for healthy skin. There might not be any benefits from using more biotin than the recommended daily allowance (RDA).

Niacin: Also known as vitamin B3 acts as anti-oxidant, has benefits to protect your skin cells from sun damage. **Riboflavin:** Also known as vitamin B2, is involved in many vitamin and mineral absorption process. Important for eye, muscle, nerve system and skin health.

Vitamin B12: Sometimes considered as the animal vitamin since it is only found in foods made from animals. Too much vitamin B12 is linked to acne, but lack of it can contribute to megaloblastic anemia that makes people weak and tired. This is a common vitamin that vegans and vegetarians lack and might have increases appearance of dark under-eye circles as well as serious health issues.

Vitamin A: One of the most popular forms are retinols, they promote skin cell production, play a role in skin cell turnover and play a role in keeping the skin firm. Another form is beta-carotenate, which is linked to give your skin a slight tanned color and is used in tanning pills.

Vitamin C: Is responsible for collagen formation, a potent anti-oxidant that helps to protect your skin from sun damage. It might not be so efficient as when applied topically, but is still crucial in your body functions.

Zinc: Plays a role in your immune system that also control the inflammatory responses, this means that it can help to minimize the occurrence of acne. Because of its anti-inflammatory properties, it is a crucial part in your wound healing process.

Iron: Required for B group vitamin absorption, but also has a significant role in transporting oxygen using blood. Many vegetarians and vegan lack iron and start to develop dark under-eye circles may start to appear.

Panthenol: Also known as vitamin B5, has emollient properties and can help to build your skin barrier. **Omega 3 fatty acids:** An essential nutrient that many people lack because of their diet. It has anti-inflammatory properties and can reduce the appearance of wrinkles.

Hyaluronic acid: Found naturally in many foods, plays a role in skin moisturizing and reducing the appearance of fine lines even when taken orally.

Collagen: Protein that is found mostly in meat, but plays a very crucial role in skin, bone and muscle tissues. Proper intake can reduce fine lines and improve skin's elasticity.

Vitamin D: Your body form vitamin D from sun, but many people do not get enough sun exposure. Vitamin D supports proper cellular growth, has anti-aging properties and can even help treating more serious skin conditions.

Q10: Coenzyme Q10 is known to combat signs of aging, it is found in many foods, but also can be taken as supplements.

Resveratrol: An anti-oxidant found in small quantities in many foods, but has been linked to anti-aging properties and making skin more firm. Supplements exist, but their efficiency at low doses and from foods is controversial.

Other vitamins and minerals: A healthy looking skin is a sign of healthy body, each vitamin and mineral plays a role in your body, make sure you have a balanced diet.

Probiotics: Research suggest that your gut bacteria plays crucial role in skin hydration, pH levels, skin glow, bacteria and fungal fighting. You can find supplements with specific strains of bacteria and target your skin concerns.

IMPORTANT: Supplements cannot replace a proper diet, you need to gain most of the nutrients using food and not supplements. Supplements are meant to fix specific diet issues and not to be used as replacement to food. Proper diet is crucial not just to skin, but your overall physical and mental health. This guide sadly will not cover details how to develop a proper diet, but will only contain some guidelines to achieve one. If you are not sure how to develop your own diet, then you should visit a dietitian.

Note: Some vitamins are water-soluble, which means they will be absorbed with the presence of water. Some vitamins are fat-soluble, this means you need intake some amounts of fat for these vitamins to be absorbed properly. This is a common issue when eating salads, look for ways to add small amounts of oil to your salads to increase absorption.

Healthy diet is crucial, but there are some foods that seem to be triggering acne at a much higher rates. While some people might be able to eat anything and not develop acne, some people might be sensitive to the following foods.

Cow's milk: Low fat, skim-milk, organic and other kind of cow's milk is known to cause acne to many people. For this reason many people choose to use plant-based milks such as almond milk. This does not seem to apply to foods such as milkshakes, cheese, yogurt or similar processed dairy products. Whey protein powders are well known to cause acne.

High fat foods: Greasy foods seem to trigger acne for some people, avoid over-greased foods whenever possible. Note: Fat is an essential nutrient, do not cut it out of your diet completely, but many people are eating too much fat. Check your diet whether you should not cut some fat out of your diet.

High glycemolc index (GI) foods: Your body breaks down carbohydrates to gather energy from them. Some foods break down much easier and can rapidly increase your blood sugar levels. This spike in blood sugar levels can contribute to cause acne for some people. Eating low GI foods can be a good option to lower the chances of acne and being fit.

Note: Foods such as white flour pasta, bread, sodas, white rice, potatoes, cereal are well known high GI foods, but the list is much longer than this.

Highly processed foods: Similar to high GI foods they can spike your blood sugar levels. Avoid eating such foods, opt for fresh food instead. The GI of a certain food is also impacted by how it is processed, for example, mashed potatoes will have much high GI than boiled potato. Instant foods tend to have higher GI.

Junk food: They are high calorie, low nutrient, high fat, high GI, highly processed foods. All things that can contribute to acne. Avoid junk food not just to avoid acne, but to improve your overall health. Whenever you want a snack, look for nuts or vegetables. Low fiber foods: Having a fiber rich diet is good for your gut

health, but some studies seem to show benefits for your skin as well. This might be related to the fact that high-fiber foods can control your blood sugar levels.

Juices: Fresh or preserved juices are processed foods that have high amounts of sugar and low on fiber. While eating fresh apples might be fine because it is not a processed food, has a lot of fiber, but the amount of fructose that is a sugar will not spike your blood sugar.

Note: Many products tend to advertise that they have no glucose, but they have a huge amount of fructose. While it may seem that fruit sugar is better, this is not the case. Added sugar is an added sugar and that should be avoided.

Chocolate: There seems to be a direct link between chocolate and acne, even dark chocolate. Avoid chocolates if you have a suspicion your acne is caused by chocolate.

High Omega-6 foods: Most foods (but not all) contain a significant more amount of Omega-6 fatty acids than Omega-3 fatty acids. This can trigger acne for some people. Such foods as poultry, eggs, nuts, seeds, fast food are high in Omega-6 fatty acids. Many western countries tend to have way too high Omega-6 diets because of their consumption of red meat.

Note: While Omega-6 is an essential nutrient, the ratio between Omega-3 and Omega-6 fatty acids seem to be linked to acne, not the absolute amount of Omega-6 fatty acids. The Ideal ratio is supposedly 1:3 (Omega-3:Omega6). While the best source of Omega-3 fatty acids is seafood, many people choose to take Omega-3 supplements such as cod liver oil or krill oil and this can balance out the fatty acid ratio. Some research suggests that krill oil is absorbed better by your body.

Meat: Some meat may contain added hormones for animals to grow faster and bigger. Sadly these hormones can trigger hormonal acne. Try using meats that were not grown using hormones.

Soy: Products such as soy milk, tofu and others seem to be linked to hormonal acne. Avoid such products if you have a suspicion your acne is caused from soy products.

Nuts: Most nuts are good for your health, though some nuts may cause you allergic reaction. You should avoid such nuts for obvious reasons, but there are some nuts such as walnuts that have a low Omega-3:Omega-6 ratio and you might want to choose different nuts.

TIP: Many times it can be a mystery to find the cause of frequent acne, but if you have a suspicion it is caused by your diet, then you should write down the foods you eat each day and observe when acne appears the most. You might be able to find specific foods and quickly replace them with alternatives.

IMPORTANT: To many it may seem a good idea to practice keto diet (low carb, high protein) since they are sensitive to blood sugar levels, but unless you are diabetic and are under a doctor's supervision, you should not practice keto diet as it is very dangerous, can cause major health issues and even be lethal. Keto diet is a bad diet to be used for weight loss, it only works for short-term and many people to more damage to their bodies than by eating unhealthy, such diet should only be preformed by diabetic people or when your doctor has specifically said so.

Exercise

By exercising, you are improving your health in general, this also can impact your skin's health in a good way. By promoting healthy blood circulation, you are increasing the oxygen flow and flow for other chemicals that are crucial for your skin's health. This guide will not cover the benefits of exercise, how important it is and how to develop a proper exercise routine since it is way out of the scope of this guide, but there is one aspect that needs to be taken into account for some skin conditions.

If you have an oil and/or acne-prone skin, then exercising might trigger acne. In many cases this is due your pores that can become enlarged during exercise, this increases the risk of dirt or oil clogging your pores. To minimize the risk, you should clean your face (and other body parts, such as chest, shoulders, back) and apply a light moisturizer. You should be using a mild face cleaner, for example, micellar water. Other skin

types also might require an extra care if you notice acne after workout or notice irritated, dry or other skin concern.

You should be wearing sunscreen during workout, especially if you are exercising outside, but you should be aware of the possible sun damage while indoors as well. While your regular sunscreen might work, you should look for a sunscreen that is not just water proof, but also sweat proof, try to look for non-comedogenic sunscreen as well since there is an increased risk of clogging pores when working out.

After your workout, you must clean your face, apply moisturizer and apply sunscreen. While a pre-workout routine should have a lighter moisturizer and sunscreen, you should use your regular moisturizer and sunscreen in your after-workout routine. Use also a very mild face cleaner to prevent over-washing your face.

Final thoughts

Skin care is complex, you are not supposed to know everything and do not expect others to know everything, not even this guide, always do your own research to confirm facts, use as many scientific resources as possible.

Do not jump into the first thing someone says online, every skin is different and while it might work well for a random person on the Internet, it might not work for you at all and can cause major issues. Always try to understand the reason why something might work for you.

You should not fully trust this guide either, it is supposed to guide into the possibilities that are available, but not a definite cure to your skin concerns.

Do not ditch your new routine just after few days, unless you have developed a severe condition. In normal cases, skin needs time to adapt to the new routine and you might experience several breakouts.

Some people have good experience with dermatologists and other are very skeptical of their services. If you are not satisfied with your dermatologist or have concerns with the results you are having, then you should switch dermatologists until you find someone that you believe in.

If you ask someone (including dermatologists) if a product is good and they reply in just few seconds by simply looking at the ingredients list, then you should have some concerns. It is more likely that this person is looking for a few ingredients they recognize and miss many irritating, allergic and unsuitable ingredients for your skin. There are hundreds of thousands if not millions of possible ingredients, nobody is able to recognize them all.

This guide does not cover any tips for skincare when using prescription medication. This is done on purpose to encourage you to ask these questions to your dermatologist. Do not take advice from random people when using special medication for your skin, you can easily cause more damage.