

## 4- BASIC STEPS OF FACIAL SKIN CARE ROUTINE

### ROUTINE

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### Basic skin care routine

The more you love your skin the better it will look!

The first step for a young looking skin is following a daily skin care routine. Such a commitment does not have to be complicated or time-consuming. Nevertheless, it is the perfect groundwork for more advanced skin care treatments.

### The steps

A typical skin care routine includes the following basic steps:

- ✓ Washing/cleansing ,
- ✓ toning (optional depending on skin type),
- ✓ moisturizing
- ✓ treating skin with specific products
- ✓ and sun protection

For most people, it is optimal to follow the routine twice daily.

Some experts feel that exfoliation should also be part of a basic routine. However, daily exfoliation may be excessive. Once or twice a week is usually enough. People with fast natural epidermal turnover may need less or none at all.

### Adjust routine to your skin type

You should determine your skin type before you settle on a routine. As time goes by, you adjust your routine if your skin type changes. You should keep in mind that your skin type may change with the season, diet and age.

In particular, the skin tends to be oilier in the summer and drier in the winter. Menopause often brings about a change from oily or normal to dry skin. Conversely, a shift from a low-fat to a richer in fats diet (essential fatty acids, in particular) may turn dry skin to normal.

For maximum skin care benefits, the basic routine is usually insufficient, especially for people over thirty.

Skin pigmentation affects the level of sun protection you effectively need.

While sun damages any skin, harm is far less in dark-skinned people. Fair skinned people need to be particularly meticulous about sun protection, choosing a well-balanced sunscreen and applying it frequently and consistently.

Protection from ultraviolet light (both UVA and UVB) is critical for any skin care routine. A good UVA+UVB sunscreen should be applied on top of your moisturizer or other treatments as a final step

Adding a well-selected product or two with wisely chosen, scientifically proven active ingredients can further improve your results. The benefits of advanced skin care products partly depend on whether you properly integrate them with your basic routine.

If you apply products to the skin that has not been cleansed, the penetration of active ingredients is reduced.

If you cleanse, moisturize and then apply advanced products, the penetration of active ingredients may still be reduced because the moisturizer has occluded some the entryways.

The best time to apply active products is right after you washed/cleansed, rinsed and slightly patted your skin with a towel, i.e. when your skin is clean, warm and still slightly moist.

Since many of the active products have moisturizing ingredients, you can usually forego a separate moisturizer whenever you apply such a product.

### Cleansing

Proper cleansing also clears the way for the penetration of active ingredients you may want to apply afterwards. Cleansing may be beneficial or damaging, depending on how you do it.

Here is the key steps and recommendations to follow:

- ✓ Gently run cleanser all over your face with your fingertips for about 20-25 seconds
- ✓ Splash running warm water in your face several times to rinse off the cleanser until there is no more residue on your skin. Do not direct the stream of water onto your face.
- ✓ Take a clean towel and gently pat your face. Make sure it remains moist.
- ✓ Apply a moisturizer or an active skin care product of choice onto clean, moist skin. Massage product into your face by gently tapping with your fingers until it is absorbed. No pulling or tugging.

Selecting the right cleanser depends on your skin type. But whatever your skin type may be, avoid cleansers with harsh detergents (such as sodium lauryl sulfate and its analogs), soap and alcohol (except perhaps for extremely oily skin).

### Toning

Toning is often touted as an essential step in a skin care routine. **It is not.**

The only exception is very oily skin.

Most toners contain alcohol and/or witch hazel. Both are drying and irritating, especially if you have dry or sensitive skin.

If you still feel you need a toner, use a soothing toner free of alcohol or witch hazel, such as alcohol-free toner with Chamomile.

You do not want to strip every last molecule of oil from your skin.

Only grime, makeup and excess oil on the surface needs to be removed.

The underlying thin coat of fresh sebum is best left undisturbed. Toners, especially alcohol-based ones, tend to strip everything off, leaving the skin dry and/or irritated.

Some experts argue that toners help close pores and tighten cell gaps after cleansing, thus reducing the penetration of impurities and environmental contaminants into the skin. Whether this is true is debatable.

Preceding an active treatment with a toner that closes pores and tightens cell gaps may be counterproductive.

After the active product has absorbed into your skin, you can close pores simply by cooling your face. The cold constricts blood vessels and closes pores, producing a toning effect.

### Moisturizing

Contrary to popular belief and opinions of some experts, moisturizing is not a universal "must do" of basic skin care. Not everyone needs moisturizing. Moisturizing alone does not seem to have a major impact on the development (and prevention) of wrinkles and other signs of skin aging.

In fact, poorly selected and misused moisturizers may do more harm than good.

People with oily skin do not need to moisturize because the abundant sebum they produce has more than sufficient emollient and moisturizing effect.

People with normal skin do not necessarily need to moisturize since they too produce enough sebum and other natural emollients and humectants.

Under some circumstances (e.g. dry climate,...) people with normal skin may want to apply an oil-free moisturizer after cleansing to prevent the development of dry skin.

Moisturizing does benefit dry skin by improving the skin's barrier function, reducing irritation, sensitivity as well as creating a plusher look.

### Types of moisturizer

#### Emulsion based moisturizers

Water and oil do not dissolve in each other. When they are mixed together and shaken they form a fine mixture of oil droplets in water or vice versa.

Oil-in-water and water-in-oil emulsions may be useful for dry skin that produces too little sebum, which is particularly common in women during and after the menopause.

Moisturizers based on oil-in-water emulsions tend to be heavier but may be a good fit for some cases of particularly dry skin.

Oil-water emulsions tend to be more comedogenic than oil-free moisturizers and should not be used for normal or oily skin.

#### Occlusive moisturizers

The idea of an occlusive moisturizer is to cover the skin with a waterproof film through which water cannot evaporate or otherwise escape.

Occlusive ingredients may clog pores and produce other unwanted effects.

Occlusive moisturizers should be considered for dry skin unresponsive to moisturizers based on oil-water emulsions. This may happen when the primary cause of dryness is excessive water evaporation from the skin surface.

#### Oil-free moisturizers

Oil-free moisturizers are usually based on the so-called humectants, the substances that can trap and hold water.

If you have oily or normal skin and feel the need to moisturize, use an oil-free moisturizer.

#### Long-lasting moisturizers

In some cases of dry skin or in very dry environments, ordinary moisturizers just don't cut it.

They last for an hour or two and then your skin gets as dry as before.

Long-lasting moisturizers usually combine active principles from several types of moisturizers. A typical long-lasting moisturizer may contain several humectants and occlusive agents.

### Moisturizers as vehicles for active ingredients

These days most people use advanced skin care products with active ingredients aimed at preventing or reducing the signs of skin aging.

It is often redundant and counterproductive to apply both a moisturizer and an anti-aging product. Besides, most anti-aging products contain some moisturizing ingredients.

People with oily and normal skin can forego basic moisturizers and use anti-aging products only.

Dry skin sufferers may be able to do the same by picking an anti-aging product with a sufficiently moisturizing base.

In the remaining cases of severely dry skin, a moisturizer should be applied a few minutes after the anti-aging product (to allow active ingredients to absorb).

### Exfoliation

Exfoliation is a technique where the layer of mostly dead epidermal cells on the outer surface of the skin is removed to expose fresher mostly living cells.

Potential benefits of exfoliation include fresher, brighter looking skin, better penetration of active ingredients of skin care products and, for people with excessively oily skin, a varying degree of reduction in oil secretion.

Exfoliation reduces fine lines, but it generally does not improve significant wrinkles since its effects do not reach the dermis.

Routine exfoliation should not be confused with deep chemical peels, laser peels and other semi-invasive wrinkle treatments methods. The idea of such methods is not to strip the dead cells from the epidermis (as routine exfoliation does) but to create controlled trauma to the dermis, the deeper layer responsible for structural integrity of the skin.

Procedures like deep chemical peels are aggressive treatments to be done by trained professionals.

#### Is routine exfoliation beneficial ?

The benefits are not universal.

Epidermal cell turnover and the resulting natural exfoliation are more rapid at a young age. Therefore, young people generally do not benefit from exfoliation. Even some people in their 30-s and 40-s have naturally high cell turnover and may not benefit from routine exfoliation.

On the other hand, many people over thirty develop dull, lifeless looking skin because their stratum corneum becomes too thick. This group is likely to benefit from routine exfoliation.

Since exfoliation sometimes reduces the production of skin oil (sebum) people with excessively oily skin may benefit too, especially if they exfoliate with beta and/or alpha hydroxy acids.

On the other hand, exfoliation may cause further irritation in people with dry and/or sensitive skin, who should use mild exfoliants infrequently.

How often should you do it?

For most people who decide to exfoliate, once or twice a week is sufficient.

You should determine optimal frequency based on your skin type, strength of the exfoliants, and application technique .

Some exfoliation methods may have collateral benefits.

For example, alpha-hydroxy acids (especially glycolic and lactic) seem to have additional skin benefits, such as improvement of dermal matrix. Beta-hydroxy acids, such as salicylic acid, are particularly effective in reducing excess oil production and may be a good fit for oily, acne-prone skin.

### Applying advanced treatments

For maximum skin care benefits, the basic routine is usually insufficient, especially for people over thirty.

It is scientifically proven that adding one or two -wisely chosen- focused product, can further improve your results.

The benefits of advanced skin care partly depend on whether you properly integrate the right products to your basic routine. In particular, if you apply products on a not well cleansed skin, penetration of active ingredients is limited.

The best moment to apply active products is right after your skin is cleansed, rinsed and slightly patted with a towel.

Use short, firm strokes to apply skin care products (it is best to use the middle finger).

Do not stretch the skin.

Do not rub.

After application, gently tap the treated area with your fingers for half a minute.

### Basic rules for optimal skin care

**A number of basic practices are essential for optimal skin care at any age. Skipping them is likely to undermine the rest of your routine.**

**Make sure you protect your skin from avoidable damage, particularly sun damage.**

**Establish a sensible basic daily routine matching your skin type.**

**Then determine whether you need any age-specific step**

*"Beauty of whatever kind, in its supreme development, invariably excites the sensitive soul to tears."*  
Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849)