



Better information, Better health

30 days to your most gorgeous skin

by Dr. John Thomson · September 16, 2015

These tips will reveal the clarity and radiance you were meant to have and lock down the best beautifying habits.

1. Wash your face twice a day, but only twice.

“It’s my goal to turn morning water splashes into cleanser users,” says Nandi Wagner, a lead aesthetician for the Bliss SoHO spa in New York City. “Your skin does its repair work at night, and the old cells rise to the surface. You need a gentle cleanser to loosen those cells and wash them away.”

2. Sweat, of course.

If you’re reading this website, you know the importance of exercise for your health and well-being. The skin benefits are like a free gift with purchase. “Getting your heart pumping increases the delivery of oxygen and other crucial nutrients to the skin cells, helping them function at peak efficiency,” says David E. Bank, M.D., a dermatologist in Mount Kisco, New York, and a Shape advisory board member.

3. Give your face a workout, too.

“Why not do tone-ups for the 57 muscles of your face?” says Michelle Yagoda, M.D., a facial plastic surgeon in New York City.

“Facial exercise takes commitment, but only a few minutes a day.”

4. Shield your shoulders.

Shoulders get direct sun exposure when you go out for a run. “Switch from a tank top to a T-shirt when you exercise outside,” says Sonya Dakar, the owner of the eponymous skin clinic in Beverly Hills. “That little bit of extra material will go a long way toward protecting your skin.” Look for techie, poly- ester fabrics and workout tees labeled “UPF 50+” (UPF is like the SPF rating, but for clothing).

5. Drink even more water.

Almost half of Americans aren't drinking even four 8-ounce glasses of water a day, according to a study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "Double your water intake and in about two months you'll see it reflected in your skin," Wagner says. Although water doesn't work the way, say, a body butter does, it will keep your skin's protective barrier intact, making topical moisturizers more effective.

6. Wear sunscreen all the time.

Not one expert we spoke to neglected to make this recommendation—and yet, a new study in the *Journal of the American Academy of Dermatology* found that only 43 percent of women regularly apply sunscreen to their face. Forgive us while we get up on this soapbox, but sunscreen is the number-one way to prevent wrinkles, brown spots, broken capillaries, sagging, and skin cancer. Choose a sunscreen or a moisturizer with SPF 30 or higher that feels great on your skin so you'll enjoy wearing it. One that does: Scalisi Skincare Anti-Aging Moisturizer SPF 30.

7. Wear sunglasses every day...unless it's raining.

"They'll protect your delicate under-eye skin from the sun," Dakar says. "Also, they stop you from squinting, so you stave off crow's-feet." Our model is sporting Oakley Hold On shades.

8. And don't forget your lips.

Squamous cell carcinomas of the lip have a higher rate of metastasis than similar cancers on other sun-exposed body parts. Protect your mouth with sunscreen and an emollient ingredient like petrolatum to prevent chapping. Try Carmex Lip Balm Click Stick with SPF 15.

9. Schedule a skin check.

And while we're on the cheery subject of skin cancer, all forms of the disease, including melanomas, are nearly 100 percent curable if caught early. Once a month, check your skin from head to toe looking for anything new or different. Once a year, see a dermatologist for a screening. Hey, why not schedule that appointment now? Find a derm in your area at aad.org.

10. Get your beauty sleep.

"Stop bingeing on Netflix, put your phone away, and just go to bed," Wagner says. "The more you sleep, the more time your skin has to repair." Make eight hours a goal but settle for no fewer than six.

11. Have a secret weapon.

And for those times when you're late to bed and early to rise, give your skin an extra boost to make up for the repair time it's missing. Wagner's "sleep in a bottle" is Bliss Triple Oxygen Instant Energizing Mask, which invigorates skin with a blast of oxygen that makes cells work more efficiently.

12. Moisturize your whole body.

"I've done it every day for as long as I can remember," says Amy Wechsler, M.D., a

dermatologist in New York City. In addition to strengthening your skin's barrier, which keeps bacteria and viruses out of our bodies, a daily lotion makes your skin feel super soft. Apply it right after you shower to lock in moisture. Our pick: Vaseline Intensive Care Advanced Repair Lotion.

13. Sleep in a mask.

We don't mean the silky kind that Audrey Hepburn wore in *Breakfast at Tiffany's*; these are hydrating masks that you apply over your night cream to "seal in all of your treatment products and take your results to the next level," Dakar says. We love Laneige Water Sleeping Mask, which has an orange-flower, rose, and sandalwood sleep-inducing scent.

14. Exfoliate weekly.

"Regular exfoliation improves cell turnover and reveals fresh skin," Dr. Bank says, "but scouring your skin with a scratchy scrub isn't going to make it smoother, just more irritated." Try a scrub with rounded beads, or a chemical exfoliant such as glycolic acid.

15. And sometimes really exfoliate.

"My patients tell me they get so many compliments on their skin after a microdermabrasion treatment," Dr. Wechsler says. The in-office sandblasting (with microcrystals or diamond-encrusted wands) goes deeper than a regular exfoliant, removing surface dark spots and stimulating deeper cell renewal. For a home version with nearly pro results, try the PMD Personal Microderm.

16. Load up on antioxidants.

Adding the free radical fighters to your routine will help enhance your skin's ability to combat UV rays, pollution, and other environmental factors. To make sure your supply is adequate, it's best to both apply anti-o's and consume them. Look for products with topical antioxidants like vitamins A, C, and E, and "eat three antioxidant-laden foods each day, like tomatoes, berries, and dark green veggies," says Ranella Hirsch, M.D., a dermatologist in Boston.

17. Eat your omegas.

Choose foods with omega-3 fatty acids: "They strengthen the membrane of skin cells, improving barrier function and reducing environmental damage," Dr. Bank says. Salmon, tuna, olive oil, flaxseed oil, and nuts are all good sources.

18. Stop the spots.

"Environmental damage leading to hyperpigmentation can occur anywhere," says Howard Murad, M.D., a dermatologist and the founder of the skin-care company Murad, "even while driving in the car on a cloudy day or sitting in your office near the heater." Yikes! Hydroquinone (HQ) is the most effective home remedy, but dark-skinned women may find that it makes spots even more noticeable. A non-HQ option to try: Burt's Bees Brightening Dark Spot Corrector with daisy extract. Our HQ pick: Murad Rapid Age Spot and Pigment Lightening Serum.

19. Go big with eye cream.

"Eye area skin is thinner, has fewer oil glands, and shows puffiness more quickly than the rest of your face," Dakar says, so eye creams are milder and more firming than regular facial moisturizers. "Apply eye cream to the area covered by Jackie O-style sunglasses." Try Sonya Dakar Eyposuction.

20. Baby your skin when it's sensitive.

"At some point, everyone experiences sensitive skin," Dr. Wechsler says. "Either you're born with it or you have it temporarily" due to an outside stressor, such as sun exposure or the overuse of aggressive skin-care products. For this reason, Dr. Wechsler, who is the consulting dermatologist for Chanel, helped create La Solution 10 De Chanel (\$80, chanel.com), a fragrance-free moisturizer featuring white tea and nine other soothing ingredients. It's a product everyone should have in her tool kit.

21. Find a time-saver.

We love a high-quality quickie. Slash seconds with an in-shower body lotion. Smooth it on while you're still in the shower, then rinse it off (like a conditioner for your bod). Towel off and get dressed—the lotion has already sunk in. Try Eucerin In-Shower Moisturizer with skin-softening panthenol.

22. Spread the love.

"Whatever you're already using on your face antiagers, sunscreen, and so on—apply it to your chest, neck, and hands, too," Dr. Hirsch says. "It's very little effort for a big return."

23. Have sex three times a week.

"One study showed that older couples who have more frequent sex look approximately seven years younger than their age-matched counterparts," Dr. Wechsler reports. Research suggests that sex releases human growth hormone, a contributor to more elastic skin, and endorphins, which help you sleep better.

24. Use a retinoid.

This was another must from all the derms we spoke to, and they all preferred the prescription-strength vitamin A derivative known as tretinoin. "There's nothing stronger in the antiaging world," Dr. Wechsler says. The nonprescription version, known as retinol, isn't quite as powerful, but it's still the strongest antiager you can buy over the counter. Our pick: Avon Anew Clinical Pro Line Eraser.

25. Do this two-minute face massage.

"Using your nighttime moisturizer, massage your face and neck along the length of the muscle, making circular motions, Dr. Yagoda says. "You'll increase blood circulation, counteract gravity, and eliminate toxins."

26. Book a laser treatment.

Intimidated by the idea? Then try an entry-level laser, like Clear + Brilliant (\$300 to \$500 per

treatment), which evens out skin tone and reduces the appearance of wrinkles and pores while leaving the top layer of your skin intact. “You can do it and go right back to work,” says Dr. Wechsler, who recommends three, once-a-month treatments for long-term results.

27. Prevent moisture loss.

“As we age, our skin starts to lose moisture,” says Naomi Whittel, a certified nutritional consultant and the founder of Reserveage Nutrition in Boca Raton, Florida. “Ceramides are the mortar that holds our cells together on the outer layer of our skin, creating that moisture barrier.” Whittel recommends a ceramide supplement like ResVitale Collagen HydraPlump with ceramides.

28. Go pro . . . biotic.

Another skin barrier builder? Probiotics, the good bacteria that protect you from the harmful kind. They can be taken orally, but topical application gets them straight to your skin. Find them in Elizabeth Arden Superstart Skin Renewal Booster.

29. Try a face oil.

“The secret to an instant glow is face oil,” Dakar says. “It will nourish your skin and give it a healthy shine.” We’ve fallen for Pure Beauty Oil Pure Marula Face Oil, which is rich in omega-3 fatty acids.

30. Ditch a bad habit.

If you’re still smoking, stop, for lord’s sake. Cigarettes constrict blood vessels, slowing your circulation and depriving your skin of oxygen and nutrients. Frequenting tanning salons is also a huge no-no. And picking at pimples. We know we sound like your mom, but really, just quit it.