



From Nutrition to Masks, Here's How to Get Clear Skin the Right Way

Smooth skin is totally achievable — it just takes a little work

How to get clear, brighter skin is the age-old beauty question — and for a lot of us, it always seems like we're fighting a losing battle. Sure, we can buy all those fancy creams and toners that are constantly being hocked on Instagram now, but do any of them actual do what they say? Well, yes, there are probably a select few products on the market that are helpful, but most of them are a waste of **money**. Getting glowy skin that isn't plagued with pimples and sun damage is all about sticking to a routine, keeping things clean, and treating your body right.

These expert tips are the surefire way to get you on the road to smooth **skin**.

1. Less is more

According to board-certified **dermatologist** Dr. Jessica Krant — who is also founder of Art of Dermatology on 5th Avenue and an assistant clinical professor of **dermatology** at SUNY Downstate Medical Center in New York City — the first step to smoother skin is to basically stop doing everything you're already doing.

"Remember that sometimes less is more," says Dr. Krant. "With all the constant marketing of anti-aging products and systems now, sometimes we think the more we do, the younger we'll get. Sadly, sometimes that can work against you. Too many anti-aging products or procedures can actually make the skin more irritated, red, and flaky and produce the appearance of more fine lines due to deep dryness and microscopic **swelling**. So first, stop everything."

2. Wash less

You may think the key to smooth skin is a super **clean** face, but that's not true. In fact, too much washing will probably do more damage than good.

"It's important to gently remove makeup and actual dirt from the skin, but it's a bit of a myth that we have to scrub ourselves squeaky clean two or three times daily," advises Krant. "Sometimes overwashing can produce the same over-dryness and irritation that anti-aging products can create. When we wash too much and strip away the skin's natural, healthy, moisturizing oils, we create redness and flakiness, and the skin actually gets a counterproductive signal to start producing more oil to keep itself protected. This is how we can end up both dry and oily at the same time. Reduce the amount of cleansing and let the skin relax."

One more thing — when you do **cleanse**, NYC dermatologist and host of DermTV.com Dr. Neal Schultz says, "Make sure you use a toner after your cleanser to synergize with your cleanser in removing clogging dirt, debris, oil and **dead skin cells** and to remove cleanser that your **water** rinse didn't remove."

And Dr. Schultz is one to trust, being that he's creator of BeautyRx by Dr. Schultz.

3. Don't squeeze

We know it's tempting to squeeze and pick at any zits that happen to show up on your face, but don't.

"Manage **acne** gently, with help from your dermatologist, not your fingertips," says Dr. Krant. "Anything you pick and and try to solve yourself will only last much longer and risk being permanently scarred. The right dermatologist can help you with an easy, ongoing preventive regimen that will help more."

4. Exfoliate (but not too much)

If you really want **smooth** skin, get rid of the dead, flaky skin on the surface. "It's a myth that exfoliation can dry or thin the skin," says healthy skin **care** expert and Skin Authority CEO Celeste Hilling. "Regular exfoliation speeds up the cell turnover process, allowing the body to produce moisture-bearing properties like hyaluronic acid. Exfoliation also helps to plump the skin by churning up elastin and collagen production."

Hilling recommends using a natural resurfacing agent such as glycolic acid to gently dissolve dead surface **skin cells** so they can be replaced with new, plump ones.

Dr. Schultz agrees, saying, "Yes, exfoliating is important, but it must be with a glycolic exfoliant gentle enough to be able to use daily (yet still effective!) because the dulling dead **cells** re-accumulate each day."

5. Clean your brushes

How often do you clean your makeup brushes? Probably not often enough. Dirt, grime and oils left in the brushes can cause breakouts, leaving your skin far from smooth. Fortunately, it's easy enough to clean them yourself using a simple bar of soap.

Note: Steer away from scented **body** soaps and go for a natural soap like those offered by South of France Natural Body Care to remove the gunk without leaving anything behind.

6. Eat clean

Turns out that your mother was right — you really are what you eat, and your skin may be a perfect reflection of your inner **health**. According to **Dr. Michelle Yagoda**, NYC facial plastic surgeon, aesthetic integrative beauty expert and co-creator of BeautyScoop, "Foods rich in lean

proteins and omega-3 fatty acids are especially effective at delivering smoother skin. They aid the skin in retaining moisture and fortify the skin's natural moisture barrier."

Dr. Yagoda says a diet with ample beauty super foods can enhance skin texture, hydration, firmness and smoothness. She suggests a diet of foods rich in lean protein (salmon, tofu, soy, sardines), Omega-3 fatty acids (almonds, salmon, sardines, walnuts, flax seed), antioxidants for rapid skin repair like vitamins A, C and E (carrots, sweet potatoes, butternut squash, berries), and minerals like magnesium and zinc, which facilitate hyaluronic acid production to provide unsurpassed skin hydration (soy, kale, carrots, pumpkin seeds, whole grains).

If you're looking for the easy version of a healthy diet for glowing skin, at the very least, try Joanna Vargas' favorite clear skin tip. Vargas, celebrity facialist and founder of Joanna Vargas Salon and Skincare Collection, says, "Drink a green juice every day. It will be a great replacement to your afternoon coffee, and it will literally transform your skin in a matter of days. It helps oxygenate the skin and stimulates lymphatic drainage, so it's de-puffing too!"