



Can Sleeping on a Silk Pillowcase Really Promote Wrinkle-Free Skin?

By Wendy Gould March 19, 2018

Thinking of investing in a silk pillowcase for your skin's sake? Before you hit "purchase," let's break down this trend and see if it's worth the hype.

When a product promises to make our skin look and feel better not just today or tomorrow—but in the long run—you better believe that our interest is piqued. The problem, though, is that there are *a lot* of overhyped gadgets out there, and it's sometimes difficult to tell fact from advertising fiction. Silk pillowcases that promise fewer wrinkles are one of the products where it seems too good to be true, so we hit up some experts for the DL.

The claim:

Numerous brands sell silk pillowcases in the name of improved "beauty sleep." Slip, Illuminage (theirs is infused with copper oxide), GingerChi, and Spasilk are a few examples.

These brands claim that standard cotton or polyester pillowcases aren't very gentle on your skin, whereas silk allows your skin to glide fluidly without tugging, stretching, or scratching. They also claim that silk pillowcases prevent those awful sleep creases that fade after you get up, but can ultimately lead to less firm, more wrinkle-prone skin.

Another claim is that cotton is an absorptive material and therefore sucks moisture from your skin whereas silk helps your skin *retain* moisture. Also, silk apparently lets your skin breathe more, is hypo-allergenic, and is resistant to dust-mites for a healthier, more zen-ful beauty sleep.

The reality:

The above makes it sound like cotton and polyester are the enemy and that we'd better replace every single one of our pillowcases with a silk version before it's too late. But just how realistic are these claims? And is there any science to back them up? **According to Michelle Yagoda, a facial plastic surgeon based in NYC, the answer is no.**

“So I searched the medical literature and cannot find any scientific studies that establish a causal relationship between ‘sleeping on cotton sheets’ and ‘the creation of permanent wrinkles,’” she says. “There is no science that proves that cotton is any worse than any other fabric. Sleep position—on your back—matters more than pillow case material in terms of bedtime wrinkle-marks.”

That said, she did say there were a number of patents that have been awarded for innovative pillow designs in terms of pillow shape and pillowcase fabric.

“All of those claim to minimize the wrinkles formed from sleeping on one’s face,” she said. “Claims say that because one sleeps eight hours a day—and because sleep wrinkles can be formed by pressure and contact—that over time it may be likely that it will take longer for these wrinkles to go away.”

Ultimately, though, she believes that silk, while perhaps more comfortable, is not a miracle anti-aging tool and *certainly* not a replacement for your current skin care regimen. Your best bet for minimizing wrinkles over the long run (in terms of your sleep habits), is to lie on your back versus your face to reduce contact and pressure. Interestingly, there are “positioning pillows” that make doing so more comfortable, and Yagoda recommends using them.

Anna Lam is the founder of GingerChi, which sells a silk pillowcase. Though she essentially agrees with Yagoda—saying, “there’s no real evidence to prove silk pillowcase has anti-aging benefits and is only anecdotal”—Lam still thinks a silk pillowcase is the way to go *based on those anecdotes*.

“Lying on a pillow for a number of hours creates pressure on skin and hair. The smooth surface and softness of silk alleviates this by creating a smooth comfortable surface,” she says. “Sleeping on a silk pillowcase [also] feels luxurious. It’s soft, cool, and smooth to the touch. If anything, these qualities alone help promote a good night sleep, which in itself helps with anti-aging.”

The bottom line:

When in doubt, we recommend consulting the evidence and your instincts. What we know for certain is that wrinkles are caused by sun exposure, dehydration, stress and lack of rest, and aging, in general. If a silk pillowcase helps you sleep better—and if you feel like your skin’s more hydrated and shows fewer sleep marks after a night on silk versus cotton—then invest in the silk! However, don’t consider silk pillowcases a substitute for your skin care regimen or a cure for existing and future wrinkles.