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Simple Steps to a Healthy Complexion

What to do at every age for vibrant, beautiful skin.

As the years pass, your complexion changes—so your skin-care routine should change, too. To optimize the health and appearance of facial skin, I recommend daily use of one product from each of five basic categories. Within these categories, the specific products to choose depend on your age and skin type.

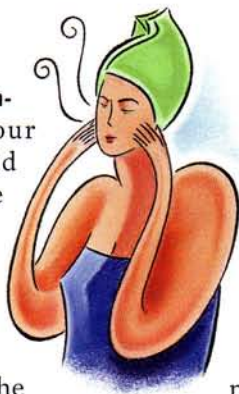
Cleansers dissolve and wash away dirt and oils, clearing pores to maximize skin's clarity. Never scrub with a washcloth—this can irritate skin. *To use:* Morning and evening, use fingertips to massage a small amount of cleanser over your face for about 15 seconds. Rinse thoroughly with warm water. Avoid using very hot water—it can dehydrate skin. Pat dry, switching to a clean towel every other day.

Toners (astringents) remove dirt, oils and cleanser left behind after cleansing. *To use:* Each morning after cleansing, dampen a cotton pad (tissues are too rough) with toner and gently wipe across the face, avoiding eyelids and lips.

Broad-spectrum sunscreens protect against both types of ultraviolet

Bottom Line/Women's Health interviewed Neal B. Schultz, MD, assistant clinical professor of dermatology at Mount Sinai School of Medicine, assistant adjunct physician at Lenox Hill Hospital and owner of Park Avenue Skin Care (www.parkavenueskincare.com), all in New York City.

He is coauthor of *It's Not Just About Wrinkles* (Stewart, Tabori & Chang).



rays (UVA and UVB). UVA rays shrink the collagen and elastin, proteins that comprise the skin's underlying structure, so skin sags. UVB rays damage the skin's outer layer. Daily use of sunscreen helps prevent sagging and also

guards against skin cancer. *To use:* Choose a product with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15. Apply liberally to the face and neck every morning before moisturizing (unless using a combination sunscreen/moisturizer). Allow 30 minutes for the sunscreen to activate before going outside.

Moisturizers soften and smooth skin, improving elasticity and reducing the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles. *To use:* Twice daily—in the morning at least five minutes after applying sunscreen and before putting on makeup, and again at night as the last step in your skin-care regimen—use fingertips to gently apply to the face and neck.

Exfoliating creams and gels remove flakes of dead cells from the skin's surface and from inside pores and stimulate the growth of healthy new skin cells. Regular use diminishes the visible signs of aging and sun damage. Active ingredients include glycolic acid (a water-soluble alpha hydroxy acid, or AHA) and the deeper-penetrating salicylic acid (an oil-soluble beta hydroxy acid, or BHA). Do not use abrasive granular scrubs—they are too harsh. *To use:* >

»» Each evening after toning but before moisturizing, apply a pea-sized dab of cream or three drops of gel to the entire face and smooth with fingertips until absorbed.

Facial skin type generally changes with age and is determined by the balance of oil and water in the skin. Oily skin has a normal amount of water, but too much oil. Dry skin has a normal amount of oil, but too little water. For a vibrant complexion, you need products that counteract such imbalances. Products suggested below are sold over the counter in drugstores, department stores and/or on-line.

IN YOUR 40s: COMBINATION SKIN

The dewy complexion of your youth is in transition, leaving you with combination skin—oily and perhaps pimple-prone on the T-zone (forehead, nose and chin) and dry on the cheeks and around the eyes. You want to remove excess oil without removing the water.

Cleanse with a product strong enough to dissolve oils that otherwise might remain trapped in pores and cause blemishes. Product labels may say “for oily skin” or “for combination skin.” *Try:* Neutrogena Deep Clean Facial Cleanser...Cetaphil Daily Facial Cleanser.

Tone with a product designed for adults, not with a super-drying toner intended for acne-prone teens. Appropriate products may be labeled “low alcohol” or “for adult skin.” *Try:* Olay Refreshing Toner...Lancôme Tonique Douceur.

Sunscreen should be labeled noncomedogenic (unlikely to clog pores and cause pimples). *Try:* Neutrogena UltraSheer

Dry-Touch Sunblock, SPF 30...Pre-Sun Ultra Sunscreen Gel, SPF 30.

Moisturize where skin is dry—probably just the cheeks and around the eyes. Use an oil-free, water-based noncomedogenic product. *Try:* Eucerin Extra Protective Moisture Lotion...Olay Original Active Hydrating Beauty Fluid. *To fight pimples:* After moisturizing, dab blemishes with Rezamid Acne Lotion.

Exfoliate using a product with 2% salicylic acid or 8% to 10% glycolic acid. *Try:* B. Kamins Chemist Bio-Maple Glycolic 8%...NeoStrata Oily Skin Solution AHA 8.

IN YOUR 50s: DRY SKIN

Dry skin is flaky and scaly...feels tight after cleansing...and may have a pinched appearance. During your 50s, shifting hormone levels may significantly reduce the natural oils produced by skin's sebaceous glands. An extra-dry complexion may signal a skin disorder, such as eczema, or an underactive thyroid gland. If dryness persists after two weeks of following the routine below, see a dermatologist.

Cleanse with a moisturizing product. *Try:* Aveeno Moisturizing Bar for Dry Skin...Pond's Deep Cleanser and Makeup Remover.

Tone with an alcohol-free freshener. *Try:* Prescriptives Immediate Glow for Normal/Drier Skin...Neutrogena Alcohol-Free Toner.

Sunscreen also should contain a moisturizer. *Try:* Kiehl's Sunscreen Creme...Vaseline Intensive Care Daily Skin Shield Protective Moisture Lotion, SPF 15.

Moisturize with a lighter product under makeup and a heavier one for nighttime. Be sure to apply around the eyes. *Daytime:* Clinique Moisture Surge Extra Thirsty Skin Relief...Olay Complete Plus Ultra Rich Day Cream. *Nighttime:* Nivea Visage Q10 Advanced Wrinkle Reducer Night Cream...Aveeno Positively Ageless Night Cream.

Exfoliate with a product designed

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for dry skin—stronger than the one you used in your 40s because now dead skin cells are shed more slowly. *Try:* Aqua Glycolic Face Cream, 10% glycolic compound...Neutrogena Healthy Skin Anti-Wrinkle Intensive Night Cream with AHAs and BHAs.

IN YOUR 60s, 70s & BEYOND: MATURE SKIN

Mature skin lacks oil and water. It may be dry all over, lusterless and rough. Mature skin that has had a lot of sun exposure may be leathery, wrinkled and spotted.

Cleanse with a product that gently washes away dirt and debris without drying skin. *Try:* Neutrogena Extra Gentle Cleanser...Eucerin Redness Relief Soothing Cleanser.

Tone with an alcohol-free product that is nonirritating. Appropriate products may be labeled “for sensitive skin” or “for dry skin.” *Try:* Neutrogena Alcohol-Free Toner...Kiehl’s Cucumber Herbal Alcohol-Free Toner.

Sunscreen formulated for mature, dry or sensitive skin is best. *Try:* Olay Complete All Day Moisture Lotion, SPF 15...Estée Lauder Day-Wear Plus Multi Protection Anti-Oxidant Creme, SPF 15.

Moisturize with a product that delivers a penetrating boost of hydration. *Daytime:* Clinique Dramatically Different Moisturizing Lotion...Estée Lauder Skin Perfecting Creme Firming Nourisher. *Nighttime:* Olay Complete Plus Ultra-Rich Night Firming Cream...Garnier Nutritioniste Ultra-Lift Anti-Wrinkle Firming Moisture Cream.

Exfoliate with a product specifically designed for mature skin. If necessary, your dermatologist can prescribe products with a higher concentration of active ingredients...but first try over-the-counter products. *Try:* Estée Lauder Diminish Anti-Wrinkle Retinol Treatment...Olay Regenerist Daily Regenerating Serum. ■