

Mirror Mirror on the Wall...How to Get the Best Skin of Them All

A Guide to the Ultimate Makeover by Paula Jackson

Growing older plagued Snow White's stepmother and if one notion holds true...we're all aging. Although it's a natural process, there are several steps to help ward off evil wrinkles and maintain skin's youthful glow. Surprisingly, achieving this "Ultimate Makeover" has more to do with healthy skin than with makeup.

It's essential to find an easy skin care regimen and to use products designed for your skin type; normal, dry, oily, or combination. Using products within the same skin care line complement each other and yield the best results. A daily regimen consists of one product for each of the following steps: Cleanse, exfoliate, tone, moisturize and sunscreen.

Cleanse morning and night with a facial cleanser. This may be in the form of a liquid, lotion or a facial cleansing bar. Using a small amount of cleanser, mix with warm water. Apply to skin using your fingertips in a gentle circular motion. Rinsing skin with hot or cold water will cause broken capillaries. Lukewarm water's the most effective for rinsing the skin. Body bar soaps contain harsh ingredients for skin. Binders hold the soap together and clog the pores causing irritation or breakouts. Lye's also a drying ingredient in most body soaps and strips the skin of moisture.

Every three weeks skin cells on the epidermis (top layer) slough off, making way for new cells to come to the skin's surface. Aging slows this process considerably, hence the importance of an exfoliant. Depending on your skin type, an exfoliant may be used daily or once or twice per week. A mild, fine granular exfoliant is best. Place a small amount of the grains in the palm of your hand. Add warm water, forming a paste and apply **gently** with your fingertips in a circular motion. Rinse thoroughly. The results are immediate--bright glowing skin. Exfoliation also prepares the skin for the next product. Removing dead skin cells allows toner, moisturizer and night treatments complete absorption. Uniform skin supplies an even canvas for make-up.

Toners remove makeup and cleanser residue and restore the skin to its normal ph of 4.5-5.5. This slightly acidic ph safeguards the skin from bacteria. The skin replaces this protective ph mantle in four hours. However, a toner restores this mantle immediately and prepares the skin for moisturizer to work more effectively.

Moisturizers provide a barrier between the skin and the environment by sealing in moisture and shielding skin from pollution. Applying a heavier moisturizer in the winter months counteracts the lack of moisture in the air. Even oily/acneic skin needs the protection and benefits of an oil free moisturizer. They also create a sleek base for makeup application.

Sun exposure influences up to 90% of how our skin ages (a.k.a. photo aging). Sun damage is cumulative and irreversible Eighty-five percent of photo aging damage occurs before the age of eighteen. The photo aging process progresses with continued sun exposure.

Ultraviolet rays impact the skin differently. UVA or "aging rays", create brown spots, wrinkling, sagging and bagging. Collagen and elastin fibers form a network supporting the body's epidermis and muscle structure. Water and other fluids in the body keep them pliable and elastic. When these fibers are damaged through abuses to our skin (excessive sun exposure and dehydration), they collapse and crumble. This collapse along with extreme facial gestures, leads to the formation of wrinkles.

Large doses of UVB or "burning rays" can alter or destroy protective melanin resulting in cancer. Although, UVB rays contribute to the synthesis of vitamin D within the body, only eight minutes of sun a day is needed. This exposure can happen while driving or running errands and does not require hours of sun baking.

Protective clothing or an umbrella will not completely shield your skin. A full spectrum sunscreen (to filter UVA and UVB) with an SPF (Sun Protection Factor) of at least 20, should be applied everyday, even during the winter months. Sunblock containing zinc oxide defends against UVC rays (light refracted by the

atmosphere). Also check the expiration on the bottle and try to avoid sun exposure during peak hours of 10 am-3 pm. Faithful use of a sunscreen is a MUST if you're in pursuit of the "Ultimate Makeover."

Night Treatments/Nourishing Creams This is a "booster" for a skin care routine but certainly not a MUST. Night treatments work when normal tissue repair occurs. Depending on the skin type, they're heavier in consistency and concentrated with emollients and active ingredients. A skin care specialist can suggest the best night treatment product for your skin type.

Professional Salon Treatments

Licensed skin care therapists/estheticians specialize in beautifying and preserving the health of skin. Salon skin treatments reduce stress, provide nourishment and advanced therapy. These advanced treatments work in conjunction with home care and provide exceptional results. Only a licensed professional has the knowledge to perform these treatments safely. These anti-aging treatments run the gamut in form. They range from professional strength exfoliants, masks, enzymes (for summer), glycolic acid (for winter), alpha hydroxy acids, concentrated vitamin ampules, light therapy and microdermabrasion. Most are given in a series for maximum effectiveness.

Lifestyle

Eating Smart You are what you eat and it shows. A healthy diet regulates hydration, oil production and cell function. Blood and lymph nourish and repair the skin, hair and nails. Systemic problems or vitamin deficiencies are evident in the appearance of the hair, skin and nails.

Water is vitally important for the skin. Water eliminates toxins and maintains cell health. Thirst is not a reliable indicator of your need for water. Our thirst mechanism diminishes with age. Nutritionists recommend 6 to 8 eight-ounce glasses of water daily. However, water intake varies depending on body weight, physical activity and caffeine consumption.

This formula will help determine how much water you need: Take your body weight and divide by 2. Divide this number by 8. This number approximates how many eight ounce glasses you need. For every eight ounce glasses of caffeine consumed (coffee, tea, sodas), add an additional 32 ounces of water.

Protein builds and repairs muscles, red blood cells, hair, tissues and synthesizes hormones. High quality protein sources include lean cuts of red meat, fish, chicken, tofu, dried beans and other legumes. Milk, yogurt, and cheese are great sources of protein. Yogurt with active cultures acidophilus and bifidus supply the skin with good bacteria to defend against bad bacteria.

Carbohydrates supply short-term energy. Whole-grain foods are healthier than refined carbs. Whole-grains are digested slowly and carry many of the vitamins and minerals our bodies need. Carb sources include brown rice, oatmeal, whole-grain breads, fruits and vegetables.

Fats provide concentrated calories to the body. While they are necessary, virtually all nutritionists advise maintaining (or reducing) the amount of fat consumed. A low or no fat diet is unhealthy for your skin. Fat comes in two forms: good and bad. Good fat sources include nuts, seeds, salmon, olive oil and avocados. Bad fats are saturated, butter, red meat, processed foods and hydrogenated oils.

Crash diets and severe restriction of calories takes its toll on the skin. Extreme calorie restriction causes muscle loss, reduced skin firmness and dry, dull hair. Diets less than 1200 calories are low in necessary nutrients for healthy skin. The better nourished your body is on the inside, reflects on the outside.

Vitamins

Vitamins A, C and P are found in fruits and vegetables. Vitamin A repairs cells and improves the skin's elasticity. Food sources include most red/orange vegetables. Vitamin C speeds up healing and promotes collagen production in the skin. Vitamin C food sources include most fruits. Vitamin P, found in the white skin of citrus fruit between the fruit and the rind, strengthens blood vessel walls.

Vitamin D promotes rapid healing of the skin and bone support. Food sources are egg yolks, fortified milk, chicken liver, cod, swordfish, stripped bass and tuna.

Vitamin E repairs tissues internally and externally. When used with vitamin A, it defends the skin against the sun's rays. Richest sources of Vitamin E include cold pressed vegetable oils, nuts and sunflower seeds.

Smoking and Alcohol

Smoking prematurely ages the skin by 10-20 years. Nicotine restricts blood vessels and reduces blood flowing to the skin. This depletes the skin of oxygen, essential nutrients and vitamins C and A.

Excessive alcohol intake overdilates the blood vessels causing weakened capillary walls. Heavy alcohol consumption bursts capillary walls, resulting in flushed skin.

Attaining a "Snow White complexion" requires discipline, care and the proper skin regimen. Lustrous skin supplies a uniform canvas for makeup artists to work their magic. Besides, who doesn't want to be the fairest of them all?

Paula Jackson has over twenty years experience in the beauty industry. This former Estée Lauder account executive's a licensed esthetician, makeup artist, and certified in reconstructive/corrective makeup. Paula is sole owner and operator of Esthétique Salon www.myesthetique.com/tg.html (978) 465-1887. She is a proud member and supporter of TCNE and IFGE.