

SUMMER SCHOOL

Does your skin routine pass the test? Study our rules for more radiant skin and you'll be top of the class for years to come
Words and production Helen Clemson Photographs Malcolm Dare

Lesson plan

1 GOOD HYGIENE = GOOD SKIN

It might seem basic, but this rule is really the foundation of a beautiful skin. And good hygiene means double cleansing – once to remove your make-up, then another cleanse to clean your skin. 'If you don't remove bacteria and dirt they can lead to a dull complexion, rough skin texture, clogged pores, blemishes or worse,' says Dr Tom Mammone, executive director of biological research and development worldwide for Clinique.

2 DON'T SKIP YOUR ROUTINE

'Whether you wear a lot of make-up, just a little or none at all, it's important to have a good daily skin-care routine,' says Dr Mammone. 'Caring for your skin leads to proper cell turnover and maintaining a healthy skin-barrier function.' Your homework? Cleansing, exfoliating and moisturizing twice a day.

3 MAINTAIN THE BALANCE

Cleansing and exfoliating are not the same thing. A scrub performs a mechanical exfoliation of the skin, but that doesn't mean that the more you scrub, the cleaner your skin will be. 'Cleansing removes oil as well as surface bacteria, while exfoliating unclogs pores,' explains

Dr Mammone. 'They are both essential, but remember, they are like a workout for skin, so make sure you replace the moisture you have removed.' A good moisturizer designed for your skin type will balance your skin's natural lipids again.

4 ACNE ISN'T JUST A TEEN DRAMA

Experts don't really know why many adult women battle with acne, although factors such as stress, diet and hormones in food could be the culprits. 'Some women will continue to suffer well into their thirties, forties and beyond,' says local aesthetic medical practitioner and anti-ageing expert Dr Alec Nikolic. 'Your face and upper neck are the most commonly affected areas, but your chest, back and shoulders may suffer too.' You might need to treat spots medically as well as considering lifestyle changes.

5 DON'T SUNTAN YOUR SPOTS

You'll probably regret doing so, as inflammation of the skin can result in hyperpigmentation when exposed to the sun. If you do suffer from breakouts, make sure your routine includes sun protection. 'Only use oil-free topical products (including make-up and sun protection), avoid granular scrubs and brushes, and don't pick at blemishes,' warns Dr Nikolic. 'Gently wash your face twice a day in warm water, avoid the sun and cover up with an SPF 30 or higher that contains zinc oxide and/or titanium dioxide.'

6 PREVENTION IS BETTER THAN CURE

'If you don't have any lines yet, the best products for you are ones that are focused on preventing their formation, and sun damage is still the leading cause of what we see as skin ageing,' says Dr Mammone. What else can you do? 'Have a good daily skin-care routine. Avoid excess alcohol, tobacco and caffeine and eat a balanced diet to provide you with the essential nutrition that you need to keep your body healthy.'

7 GET TO GRIPS WITH THE BEST AGE FIGHTERS

'It's important to look for products that offer emollient (softening and smoothing) moisturization, particularly for application at night,' says Dr Mammone. 'Find gentle products suited to your skin type. I'd caution against a quick-fix peel - it's possible to achieve the same results through gentle daily exfoliation. Finally, products that contain peptides and retinol can help diminish the appearance of wrinkles and provide lifting benefits.'

8 PROPER HYDRATION CAN MAKE YOU LOOK YOUNGER

Properly moisturized skin can mean a younger-looking complexion too. 'The continuous loss of water content from the skin through evaporation on the surface leads to dehydration,' explains Dr Nikolic. 'Moisturizers delay and prevent the loss of humidity and help minimize the appearance of fine wrinkles.'

9 IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO COVER UP

Even if you have been a sun worshipper in the past, going cold turkey now can make a difference. 'The constant use of sun protection can help to create a noticeable turnaround in photoageing, helping to give skin a younger-looking appearance. You may see a great improvement if you stop exposure altogether, or with proper UV protection,' says Dr Nikolic.



10 PIGMENTATION ISN'T ONLY FROM THE SUN

Pigmentation, or discolouring of the skin, is caused by sun exposure: it's a reaction that occurs because of oestrogen, a hormone that exists naturally in your body. You take in extra oestrogen if you are on certain types of contraceptive pills and oestrogen levels also increase during pregnancy or if you are taking hormone replacement therapy - which is why these are prime times for marks to appear on the skin. Avoiding the sun and protecting it from exposure will help prevent pigmentation from forming, but if you're losing the fight, consult your doctor about the possibility of changing your medication. ■

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Homework:

1 Nivea Visage Gentle Cleansing Cream Wash, R50.

2 Chanel Précision Sublimage Essential Regenerating Cream Texture Universelle, R3 200.

3 Lancôme Absolue Nuit Advanced Night Recovery and Replenishing Concentrate, R1 450.

4 Nivea Visage Shine Control Moisturising Day Cream, R70.

5 L'Oréal Paris Even Perfect Zooming Mark Corrector, R110.

6 Estée Lauder Re-Nutriv Ultimate Youth Eye Creme, R1 100.

7 Sisley Phyto-Blanc White Tensor Immediate Lift, R2 500, available at selected Woolworths stores.

8 Guerlain Issima Midnight Secret Late Night Recovery Treatment, R1 215.

9 Dermalogica AGE Smart Multivitamin Thermofooliant, R625.

