

Let's Face It - We All Want Beautiful Skin

By DEBRA YATES

Everyone starts out in life with baby skin that is flawless, smooth, and so soft. Don't we all wish we could go back and change some of our bad habits of too much sun, smoking, or neglect?

Healthy skin is something you need to work at. Fortunately, it's never too late to start with products and procedures that make a difference and that will improve our skin no matter what our age.

You may want to consider visiting a professional skin care specialist, an aesthetician at a plastic surgeon, or a dermatologist practice who can guide and educate you about the latest trends, what really works, and what doesn't. You'll be asked what you would like to improve and what specifically bothers you.

A full assessment and analysis of your skin should be conducted to

determine if your skin is dry, normal, or oily. Are you sensitive to certain products? Do you have any allergies? Your skin's laxity, fine lines, and wrinkles should be evaluated, and special issues such as acne, acne scarring, hyperpigmentation, rosacea, broken capillaries, and sun damage should be addressed.

Healthy skin starts with the products you are using at home. The four key elements of skin care are exfoliation, correction, stimulation, and protection.

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Exfoliating daily prevents the buildup of dull dead skin cells. Retin A and Retinols have been the gold standard in an anti-aging arsenal. Studies have shown that they stimulate the production of new cells and inhibit the body's natural enzyme that breaks down collagen. Collagen fibers are what give our face structure.

The most popular antioxidant is



Debra Yates, licensed aesthetician at Skin Rejuvenation & Laser Center at Plastic Surgery Center, Ltd. in Camp Hill, performs microdermabrasion on a client.

vitamin C. **Topical antioxidants** neutralize free radical environmental damage. Lifestyle practices such as sun tanning and smoking cause oxygen free-radical cells to form, which destroy the skin's support structure over time. Free radicals attack the skin, causing collagen breakdown, loss of elasticity, and uneven pigmentation. This process is commonly called photoaging, resulting in wrinkles, age spots, and the potential for skin cancer. Topical vitamin C reverses and prevents photoaging, stimulates collagen production, and its anti-

inflammatory aspect reduces redness.

By now there's not a person alive who doesn't know that too much time in the sun causes premature aging and skin cancer. You need a product that provides a broad spectrum of protection, meaning it includes ingredients that absorb or block both UVA and UVB rays. A physical block that uses zinc oxide or titanium dioxide to reflect or scatter UVB or UVA rays rather than letting them pass through the skin is a good recommendation.

There are various **chemical peels**

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Laser resurfacing technology can make a dramatic difference in color, tone, and texture, as indicated in these before and after photos.



that can be used as monthly treatments for patients to enhance the products they are using at home. Superficial peels or “lunchtime” peeling revitalizes the outer layers of skin for a smooth, rejuvenated appearance. There are several peeling agents, such as alpha hydroxyl acids (AHA)—one of the most popular being glycolic peels—to exfoliate and keep pores open and clean. Beta hydroxy acids (BHA)—the most common is salicylic acid—are used to treat acne because they reduce inflammation as well as blackheads and pimples. Trichloroacetic acid (TCA) is a deeper-peeling solution used to lighten acne scarring and even out the skin tone.

Microdermabrasion is a mechanical exfoliation that uses a device that emits tiny aluminum oxide crystals onto the skin’s surface to exfoliate, and then uses suction to remove the dead outer layer

of skin, giving the skin a very smooth, polished feel. This is a very effective treatment for persons who have rough-textured skin with enlarged pores, acne scarring, and pigmentation issues.

Laser and light-based treatments are another approach to skin rejuvenation. Intense Pulse Light (IPL) is the pulsing of visible light that improves facial redness and pigmentation as well as sun damage and aging. This treatment is also used to improve “flushing,” typical in persons with rosacea, which can be dramatically reduced.

The latest in laser resurfacing does not have significant downtime. It

treats fine lines, uneven texture, mild acne, and discoloration without using sedation and requires minimal post-treatment care. Also, the laser treatment creates thermal heating that generates new collagen growth.

Another popular laser treatment without any downtime is the “**laser facial**,” a fast, pulsating treatment to treat fine wrinkles, large pores, uneven skin texture, redness, and scars. A series of about six treatments should give very good results.

Many options to care for and treat damaged skin through new technology, devices, and advanced products are now available. Find a skin care regimen that is right for you.

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