

Reader's
Digest

ALL-NATURAL

Wrinkle Cures

Proven Ways to Drop Years
From Your Appearance



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From Your Appearance

Reader's
RDigest

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Note to Readers: The information and advice in *All-Natural Wrinkle Cures* has been reviewed and approved by leading doctors, nutritionists, and makeup professionals, and all health claims are supported by peer-reviewed medical research. Nonetheless, this book should not be substituted for, or used to alter, medical therapy without your doctor's advice. For a specific health problem, consult your physician for guidance.

Contents

	Introduction	3
CHAPTER 1	Block the Sun	4
CHAPTER 2	Avoid the “Skin Wreckers”	8
CHAPTER 3	Edible Wrinkle Protection	11
CHAPTER 4	Drugstore Wrinkle Cures	15
CHAPTER 5	The Healthy-Skin Beauty Routine	19
CHAPTER 6	Today’s Best Makeup Techniques	25

INTRODUCTION

Blame gravity. The sun. The passing years. All those precious moments when you laughed, cried, kissed, furrowed your brow in concentration, or opened your mouth wide in wonder. Your skin tells the story of your life—replete with wrinkles and dry zones, age spots, and even, well, a little sagging.

Philosophically, that's good. It's natural. Your skin's imperfections speak of a life well lived. But when you look in the mirror, this well-traveled skin may not fit your image of yourself. You're full of life, energy, and plans. Mature skin? It's too soon.

That's where we come in. Sure, you could sign up for a radical change—perhaps even qualify for one of TV's new “reality” makeover shows, and spend months away from home being sliced, diced, face-lifted, and liposuctioned in a Cinderella-like, head-to-toe transformation.

Closer to home, you could spend thousands on a face-lift. Or have Botox injections to fill skin creases. Or visit a plastic surgeon for a shot of collagen or Restylane or Hylaform to restore more youthful contours. You'd pay about \$1,000 per treatment (cheap, compared with \$5,000 for the average face-lift),

and you'd need another dose in just a few months.

Or you could start right here, with noninvasive, healthy strategies that can prevent, reduce, or hide signs of aging. In these pages are natural, powerful anti-wrinkle remedies that won't strain your pocketbook or risk your health.

Here's a sneak preview. Inside, you'll:

- Find out why having *two* kinds of sunscreen is the first and most important step you can take toward a wrinkle-free life.
- Discover delicious foods and drinks that fight skin damage from the inside out—grilled salmon, mixed berries, and a cup of green tea.
- Learn how to choose the right drugstore wrinkle cream for your skin type—and find out which important product you must use along with it, or risk *more* wrinkles in the future.
- Discover beauty techniques that automatically draw the eye away from wrinkles.
- See why rapid weight loss is only going to make you look old, but a slow, sensible approach can be the fountain of youth.

1 Block the Sun

Through the years, the sun's powerful ultraviolet (UV) light damages protein fibers, deep in the skin. This breakdown means the skin cannot easily "snap back" into shape after it's stretched or pulled—by a smile, a frown, or pucker-ing up for a kiss. And so life etches itself on your face as laugh lines, frown lines, and furrows...in other words, wrinkles.

Gravity and other forces play roles in your skin's journey, too, but scientists now know that sunlight causes 90 percent of all visible signs of aging—making sun protection the most effective anti-wrinkle measure you can take at any age.

Luckily, you don't have to hide indoors. It's healthy to receive

some sun exposure, since your body needs a little in order to manufacture vitamin D, a mineral vital for calcium absorption and therefore for strong bones. But that requires just minutes a day. The bigger challenge is avoiding UV

rays that do damage at the skin's surface and deep within.

The sun gives off two types of rays. UVA rays penetrate deep beneath

the skin, weakening collagen fibers and causing wrinkles. Even short exposures can damage critically important collagen. UVB rays burn the skin's surface and, over the years, make the skin look leathery. The sun's rays also break down elastin fibers in the skin and lead to uneven pigmentation—a

Ninety percent of all visible signs of aging are the result of sun exposure.

blotchy look. UV exposure is more than a beauty problem: Cellular changes prompted by these rays set

It's important to guard your skin *whenever* you're outside, year-round. Here's how.

Most skin damage from the sun happens when you're outdoors briefly or as a result of exposure through the windows of a car, home, or office.

the stage for skin cancers, including potentially deadly melanoma. The sun also releases rogue oxygen molecules called free radicals, which wreak havoc on cell membranes and help create wrinkles.

A suntan is your skin's way of protecting itself from damaging UV rays, but don't think sun protection is only for trips to the beach and pool. About 80 percent of sun damage is believed to occur incidentally, when you're just walking around outdoors or driving in the car. In fact, dermatologists say they see more signs of sun damage on the left sides of the faces of women and men who drive frequently, a sign that rays that penetrate car windows on the commute to work or school shouldn't be taken lightly. If you sit near a window at the office, you get a dose of wrinkle-causing rays there, too.

Match your sunscreen to your skin type—and your plans for the day. Sunscreens contain two types of UV-blocking ingredients. First are the physical blockers, such as zinc oxide or titanium dioxide, that act like thousands of microscopic umbrellas over your skin and block UVA and UVB light from ever touching you. The second are chemical blockers, including avobenzone (Parsol 1789), homosalate, octisalate, octinoxate, and oxybenzone. Your best bet: Look for titanium dioxide, zinc oxide, or Parsol 1789 to be sure you get adequate UVA and UVB protection.

And all those special formulas at the drugstore—for everyone from people with sensitive skin to swimmers? They're not just gimmicks. Sunscreens for exercisers do stand up to sweat better, and those for

sensitive or acne-prone skin can protect you from a rash or breakout. It's worth spending a few extra minutes in the sunscreen aisle to find one that fits your needs.

Find the right SPF. The sun protection factor (SPF) listed on sunscreen labels indicates how long you can stay in the sun

without burning. For example, if you normally start to burn after 10 minutes, you could stay out in the sun 30 times longer—300 minutes—if you were wearing an SPF 30 sunscreen.

SPF choices range from 15 to 45 and beyond. Most dermatologists recommend SPF 15 for daily use when you won't be out in the sun, such as on a typical day at work, and SPF 30 or 45 for longer outdoor time.

Slather daily. Apply a sunscreen with an SPF of at least 15 before leaving the house. Choose a product with an SPF of 30 or 45 if you're planning to be outdoors for a while.

Resolve to wear sunscreen daily, rain or shine, in all seasons. Don't assume that fog, mist, or clouds will shade you: 80 percent of the sun's rays penetrate them. Also, don't think that spring, fall, and winter rays are safer: UV exposure in April, for example, equals that

Slather on the sunscreen every day: Rain, fog, and clouds don't block damaging UV rays.

in August. Also, while beach umbrellas and wide-brimmed

hats protect against direct exposure, they're not enough: 85 percent of rays bounce off sand, water, snow, and even concrete.

Apply generously. Dermatologists recommend using an ounce of sunscreen, about the amount that fits in a shot glass or half of a 1/4-cup kitchen measure, to cover your face, ears, and neck. Apply it 30 minutes before going outside to give your skin time to absorb it.

Don't neglect your lips. Slather on a lip balm that contains a sunblock.

Dress for the sun. If you're planning a walk, time in the garden, or

another outside activity, wear loose clothing that covers your arms and legs, such as a lightweight, long-sleeved shirt and lightweight pants.

Top it with a hat. A broad-brimmed hat shades your head and neck.

Invest in an SPF cover-up. Some clothing manufacturers now make outfits—pants, shirts, beach cover-ups, and more—with built-in sun protection. That's important: Research shows that regular clothing, especially lightweight stuff, doesn't stop the rays. Your first choice? Get a sun-stopping beach or pool cover-up.

Take the sunscreen with you. Reapply it as directed on the bottle, usually every 2 to 3 hours. Do it more often if you're swimming or sweating.

Tingling skin? Time to go in. If you feel tingling, or if you press a finger into your skin and it leaves a distinct, paler impression, you've been in the sun too long. Get indoors.

Play by the clock. The sun's UV rays are strongest between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. If possible, schedule outdoor work and play before or after those hours.

Skip the tanning salon. Tanning booths are no safer than the sun. In fact, 15 to 30 minutes on a tanning bed may be as dangerous as a full day in the sun.

Wear sunglasses that provide complete UV protection. Shades protect your eyes from UV radiation and can prevent the squinting that exacerbates crow's-feet and forehead wrinkles. Choose a pair labeled "100% UV protection" and be sure the lenses are big enough to prevent squinting. Check by trying them on, then looking at a bright light. If you squint, you need larger lenses.

2 Avoid the “Skin Wreckers”

Your skin is a squishy layer cake with a padding of fat at the bottom, a springy structural lining in the middle, and a layer of ever-changing “barrier cells” at the top.

As you age, cells in this top layer become thin, dry, and slower to heal. The middle layer loses its firmness, leading to wrinkles and sags as supportive elastin fibers wear out and less collagen—which gives skin its strength and suppleness—is produced. The fat layer shrinks, deepening wrinkles.

All of this happens naturally. You can speed the process with unhealthy habits—or slow it down, as you’ll see later, with healthy lifestyle choices. Beyond sun protection, these smart choices can prolong your skin’s natural beauty.

Stop Smoking

Like the beams and joists behind the walls in your home, collagen

fibers form the structural support for your skin. These fibers are constantly being renewed, but smoking impedes this process, leading to wrinkles and premature aging. Smoking is second only to the sun as a skin wrecker: It reduces the blood supply to the skin by damaging the frail membrane lining the arteries, leading to shiny, fragile skin and delayed healing.

Just 10 minutes of cigarette smoking decreases the oxygen supply to the body and skin for almost an hour. Nicotine narrows blood vessels and prevents blood from circulating to the capillaries (tiny blood vessels) in the upper layer of the skin. This contributes to deeper wrinkles and slower healing time when skin is damaged.

Smoking also forms vertical “lipstick lines” when you purse your lips to take a drag. And don’t expect that a face-lift will reverse the damage: In one survey, 40 percent of plastic surgeons said they

would refuse to operate on cigarette smokers because they are notoriously bad healers.

The toll? By age 40 to 50, the facial wrinkles and sags of smokers may rival those of nonsmokers in their 60s and 70s. Their skin may look gaunt, fragile, and sallow. In fact, heavy smokers are almost five times more likely to have wrinkled facial skin than nonsmokers are. Even more troubling, cigarette smokers are more susceptible to skin cancers, including squamous cell carcinomas and giant basal cell carcinomas.

Problems don't stop at the skin. Smokers are also prone to premature thinning and graying of the hair. Men who smoke are twice as likely to become bald as are men who don't smoke, and premature graying is three to six times more common in smokers.

The Rx: Find a way to quit by joining a program, using a nicotine patch, or whatever else it takes.

Set a Lower Drink Limit

The dehydrating effects of heavy drinking can lead to dry, dull skin. The Rx:

- Limit drinks to one a day if

Wrinkle-Reduction Acts

Stop reinforcing your "expression lines."

Keep a hand mirror near the telephone and look at yourself while you're talking. If you're frowning, furrowing your brow, pursing your lips or squinting without realizing it, train yourself to relax your facial muscles.

Sleep face-up.

Lying on your back helps prevent fluid buildup in facial tissue, so you won't have that smushed-up, morning-face look. To stay on your back, try putting a pillow under your knees.

Skip anti-wrinkle exercises.

Face-muscle exercise routines that promise to reduce wrinkles actually make things worse by deepening expression lines.

you're a woman and two a day if you're a man.

- Offset potential dehydration by drinking plenty of water throughout the day.
- Avoid drinking alcohol within 3 hours of bedtime. Alcohol increases the risk of leaks in the capillaries, which allow more

water in and cause puffiness. Capillary leakage increases when you're lying down.

With age, your skin naturally dries out and loses elasticity. Your goal: to keep your skin moist and pliable, inside and out.

Get More Shuteye

They don't call it beauty sleep for nothing: During sleep, the body regenerates collagen and keratin (a protein in the skin's top layer). Lack of sleep can dull your complexion, make dark circles under your eyes worse, and make under-eye skin look puffy and baggy. The Rx:

- Get 7 to 8 hours of sleep each night.
- Raise the head of your bed by putting blocks under the legs to reduce under-eye puffiness, or try sleeping on two pillows.
- Invest in a satin pillowcase. It's easier on your skin at night.

Relax

Tension isn't a problem just for acne-prone skin—too much stress can leave you pale and drawn. The Rx:

- Practice relaxation techniques, such as deep breathing, meditation, yoga, or even a long walk, which can all help. Try a stress-reduction tape, keep a journal,

or brew a cup of herbal tea and drink it outdoors.

- Treat yourself to a face and body massage. It improves blood and lymph circulation, accelerates the elimination of toxins, and speeds the delivery of oxygen and nutrients to your skin. Your skin will regain its healthy glow.

Maintain—or Achieve—a Healthy Weight

Losing weight? Good for you! Choose a slow but steady pace: Abrupt, rapid weight loss shrinks fat cells in the face before chemicals can tell the skin to react by tightening up. You're left with baggy-looking skin. The Rx:

- Aim for a loss of 1/2 to 1 pound per week.
- Work out. Physical activity not only strengthens and rejuvenates your body, it also helps your skin by revving up circulation. This speeds the removal of toxins and the growth of new skin cells.

3 Edible Wrinkle Protection

Can the right foods discourage wrinkles? Can the wrong foods make your skin wrinkle sooner and deeper? When researchers from Australia's Monash University looked at the diets of 453 women and men from Australia, Greece, and Sweden for clues, the answer to both questions was a clear yes.

They discovered that a high intake of fruit, vegetables, and fish could reduce skin wrinkling—even among smokers and people who spent more time in the sun. But eating lots of red meat and sweets seemed to accelerate skin aging. The researchers note that their work doesn't mean that food itself makes skin wrinkle or stay smooth; it's more likely that the right diet helps protect against the effects of the sun and natural aging, while the wrong diet aids and abets these skin wreckers.

Two types of foods seemed especially protective: high-antioxidant fruits and veggies and monounsaturated fats from fish, nuts, and vegetable oils. A diet high in antioxidants may prevent wrinkling by helping skin cells cope with sunlight-generated free radicals. Meanwhile, your skin's structure includes fatty acids. Replenishing them by providing your body with monounsaturated fats keeps skin healthy and glowing; monos may also act as antioxidants, the researchers say.

Reach for these skin savers.

The study volunteers with the fewest wrinkles ate the most of these foods: olive oil and olives, fish (especially fatty fish such as sardines), reduced-fat milk and milk products such as yogurt, eggs, nuts and beans, vegetables (especially leafy greens, such as spinach,

eggplant, asparagus, celery, onions, leeks, and garlic), whole grain cereals, fruit (especially prunes, cherries, apples, and jams), tea, and water.

Steer clear of wrinkle promoters.

More wrinkling was associated with eating more of these: saturated fat in red meat, processed meats, butter, and full-fat milk, cheese, and ice cream; sweetened drinks; cakes, pastries, and desserts; and white potatoes.

Skin-Healthy Nutrients

Here's the lowdown on the top skin-friendly nutrients that belong on your plate at every meal.

- **Vitamin A.** Top sources: liver and dark green, yellow, or orange vegetables, such as spinach, Swiss chard, carrots, apricots, yellow squash, and sweet potatoes.
Vitamin A helps maintain the structural integrity of skin cells. A deficiency disturbs the delicate balance of the skin, resulting in the loss of cells that produce lubricants intended to keep skin soft and supple.
You can get all the vitamin A you need from food and a daily

multivitamin. A single serving of spinach supplies all you need in a day. The vitamin A in your food comes in two forms: retinol, from meat and dairy products, and carotenes (mostly beta-carotene) from fruit and veggies. The deeper the color, the more beta-carotene's inside.

- **Vitamin C.** Top sources: citrus, strawberries, tomatoes, potatoes, green veggies, red peppers, and eggplant.

This important antioxidant helps maintain healthy tissues and fights wrinkles by neutralizing damaging free radicals, the unstable oxygen molecules that are thought to accelerate aging by causing cell and tissue damage. Vitamin C also plays an important role in the formation of collagen, the scaffold-like structure of fibers that supports your skin.

- **Vitamin E.** Top sources: vegetable oils, nuts, whole grains, egg yolks, wheat germ, and leafy green vegetables.
Another antioxidant, vitamin E also protects and maintains the structural integrity of cell membranes. You'll get all you need from a healthy diet.

Research confirms it: Your choice of foods has a major influence on the health and beauty of your skin.

- **Zinc.** Top sources: red meat, whole wheat, pecans, pumpkin seeds, and oysters.

This key mineral works with vitamin C to make healthy collagen, an essential component of connective tissue.

- **Essential fatty acids.** Top sources: salmon, trout, tuna, and other fatty, cold-water fish; walnuts; and ground flaxseed.

Omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids help hydrate the skin by holding on to moisture.

- **Water.** Top sources: beyond tapwater and bottled water, 100 percent juice and green, black, or herbal teas.

Drink at least eight 8-ounce glasses of water a day to stay hydrated. This helps flush toxins through your kidneys instead of your skin.

Sun Blockers on Your Plate

New research suggests that some foods have the power to protect skin from the damage caused by the sun's UV radiation. While a salad is no substitute for a

sunblock, adding these sunscreen stars to breakfast, lunch, and dinner could add inner protection at the cellular level.

- **Red, yellow, and orange fruits and vegetables.** They're packed with carotenoids, and studies show they reduce sunburn intensity.
- **Tart cherries and peppermint leaves.** These flavorful treats contain perillyl alcohol, which may halt cancer formation. In lab studies, this ingredient stopped cancer in cells exposed to UV light.
- **Dark green lettuce, spinach, kale, and Swiss chard.** Leafy greens are top sources of the antioxidants lutein and zeaxanthin, which halted cell growth prompted by UV light in animal studies.
- **Green tea.** This delicately flavored tea is full of antioxidants called EGCGs. Among their health-promoting capabilities: EGCGs stopped genetic

damage in human skin cells exposed to UV light in one University of Wisconsin study.

- **Oranges, lemons, and limes.** Citrus fruits have the potent ingredient limonene, associated with a whopping 34 percent lower risk of skin cancer in one University of Arizona study of 470 women and men.
- **Salmon.** This fish is a great source of oils rich in omega-3 fatty acids. In a small British study, fish oils guarded against sunburn and DNA changes that can lead to cancer.

Supplements for Younger-Looking Skin

While a growing stack of research shows that vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants are more effective when consumed from food than when taken in a pill, consider these supplements. They can't replace a diet packed with fruit, vegetables, whole grains, dairy products, and lean protein, but they're good "insurance policies" for days when you don't eat all the right stuff.

- **A multivitamin.** Provides the full range of vitamins and minerals your skin needs for basic

good health, plus small amounts of the antioxidant vitamins A, C, and E.

- **Selenium.** This mineral may protect against prostate cancer, and at doses of 50 to 200 micrograms per day, it may also protect against cell-damaging free radicals.
- **Vitamin C.** You'll get all you need if you eat plenty of fruit and veggies each day. But everybody messes up, so increase your intake of this skin-guarding antioxidant with a supplement that provides 500 to 1,000 milligrams a day.
- **Vitamin E.** This antioxidant protects cell membranes by inactivating free radicals. Applied directly to the skin, it may reduce skin damage. Some dermatologists suggest taking small amounts to reduce sun damage and improve skin texture, but recent research suggests that taking large doses of supplemental E could be hazardous. We recommend sticking with the amount in your multivitamin or adding a supplement of no more than 200 IU per day.

4 Drugstore Wrinkle Cures

Cleopatra—the glamour girl of ancient Egypt—reportedly bathed in buttermilk to improve her complexion.

Thousands of years ago, she and other women knew a secret that modern skin researchers have only recently rediscovered: Acids derived from natural foods have the power to

reduce wrinkles and ease dryness, age spots, and even acne.

Today, you don't have to soak in a vat of buttermilk. Alpha-hydroxy acids (AHAs) are available in a staggering variety of skin lotions and cleansers—from pricey spa formulas to bargain-priced drugstore brands. Derived from a variety of natural ingredients—including citric acid from oranges

and lemons, glycolic acid from sugarcane, lactic acid from milk, malic acid from apples, pyruvic acid from papayas, and tartaric acid from grapes—they're a natural way to exfoliate dead skin layers.

AHAs work by gently dissolving the intercellular “glue” that makes old skin cells stick to the epidermis. The result: The out-

Natural acids “unglue” dead skin cells for natural, all-over exfoliation.

ermost layer of your skin looks brighter and finer. These skin smoothers may also stimulate the production of skin-supporting collagen and elastin. Some dermatologists also believe that AHAs enhance the skin's moisture-retaining ability so the tissue maintains its soft, padded firmness. The downside: AHAs make skin extra-sensitive to the sun. If you don't

Never skip your sunscreen.

AHAs strip off the upper layer of skin, leaving your face a whopping 50 percent more sensitive to the sun. We can't give this advice often enough: Wear a daily sunscreen that offers protection against UVA and UVB rays.

wear a sunscreen, you may actually increase your risk of wrinkles! Also, AHAs sometimes cause redness and irritation.

With so many types of AHA products on the market, these insider tips can help you choose the best one for you—and then use it to best advantage.

Don't let "low" concentrations fool you. AHA products sold over the counter usually have AHA concentrations that are below 10 percent. They're gentle (provided you follow the label directions) and designed for regular use. Look for one with an AHA as the second or third ingredient to be certain you're getting an effective concentration.

Have acne or oily skin *and* sun damage? Consider salicylic acid. This beta-hydroxy acid (BHA) is oil soluble; AHAs are not. The advantage: Salicylic acid can penetrate oil-clogged pores and loosen dead skin cells inside. It's also less irritating than AHAs. The downsides: Salicylic acid may discolor dark skin. It also makes all skin types even more sensitive to sun exposure than AHAs do. Daily sunscreen is an absolute must.

Be patient—and realistic. Drug-store wrinkle smoothers are gentle and slow. It can take 6 months to see a visible difference in fine lines.

Stick with one product. Use one product containing AHAs at a time—not a lotion *and* a cleanser, for example. (A lotion is probably a better bet, since the acid stays in contact with your skin longer than it would if you used a skin cleanser.) Also, don't combine a drugstore product with a prescription wrinkle cream or one purchased at the doctor's office. Too much exfoliation will leave your skin red and irritated.

Use sparingly. A dime-size amount is enough for your whole face. Using too much can lead to redness, burning, itching, pain, and even, in rare cases, scarring.

Keep it away from your eyes. Don't use AHAs on the delicate tissues surrounding the eyes unless the cream is specially formulated for that use. Facial products are too strong and lack the moisturizers needed for these areas.

If your complexion is dark, consult your doc before using an AHA (or BHA). People with darker skin are at a higher risk for scarring and pigment changes from AHAs than those who have paler complexions.

Need faster results? See a trained cosmetologist or dermatologist. Cosmetologists use AHAs with concentrations of up to 30 percent in chemical peels that can smooth fine lines in one to three applications. The downside: You have to repeat the process every 3 to 6 months. Meanwhile, dermatologists use concentrations of 50 to 70 percent. Smoother skin may last for 2 to 5 years, but you'll have severe redness, flaking, and even

oozing for the first 1 to 4 weeks after the treatments.

Also in Store: More Wrinkle Helpers

- **Retinol:** A smoother for aging skin. Often listed on labels as vitamin A, retinal, or retinyl palmitate, this ingredient is found in many over-the-counter skin-care products. Dermatologists say it can effectively soften fine lines and wrinkles and lighten skin tone. Prescription formulas containing synthetic vitamin A derivatives called retinoids—such as Retin-A—may be more effective. If you try an over-the-counter product, look for one that lists the concentration. The FDA warns that drugstore retinol skin products are unregulated, so the amount of active ingredients is often unknown, and some products may contain none at all.
- **Copper peptide:** Worth a try. The copper complex GHK-Cu—now becoming available in more and more face and eye creams, foundations, and concealers—may make skin look

A little dab is all you need: AHAs are powerful. Use a dime-size dollop.

visibly smoother. Here's why: Copper peptides play a role in the development of collagen and elastin, the support structure within the dermis (the skin's second layer). In theory, this may help fix sun-damaged skin. Several studies support this idea; a copper peptide cream reduced fine wrinkles, facial discoloration, and other sun damage by 17 percent in one study from Tulane University School of Medicine.

- **Antioxidant creams: Skin protection in a bottle.** Applied before you're exposed to the sun (for example, under your sunscreen), antioxidant creams may help protect skin from sun damage, research suggests.

In studies, vitamin E creams, especially those containing a type called alpha-tocopherol, eased roughness, decreased the length of lines, and slightly smoothed wrinkles. Vitamin C-fortified lotions seem to cut skin swelling prompted by too much sun and over time could prompt more collagen production. Skin products with coenzyme Q₁₀ (CoQ₁₀) may boost the skin's ability to resist UV radiation damage and perhaps reduce crow's-feet, one study suggests.

5 The Healthy-Skin Beauty Routine

Wrinkles are only part of the story; skin goes through many changes as we reach our 40s, 50s, and beyond. Dryness—with flaking, itchiness, and even cracking—may develop even if it was never a problem in the past. Age spots can make a surprise appearance, and so can bright-red dots called cherry angiomas—harmless dilated blood vessels.

Pay attention to what's happening to the surface of your skin when you're showering, bathing, or washing your face. Here's why: Not all skin changes are benign. If a new mole suddenly appears, or an existing mole changes size, shape, or color, see your doctor pronto. It could be a sign of skin cancer.

Meanwhile, our soothing skin-care plan can help your skin look supple and more youthful. First, some ground rules.

Think past your face. The skin of your neck and upper chest is very sensitive, making it a prime target for telltale signs of aging such as dryness, sunspots, and wrinkles. To keep this area looking youthful, use facial cleansing creams that hydrate and cleanse gently instead of using deodorant soaps, which can be drying. Top it all off with a good facial moisturizing cream.

Check for dryness. The outer layer of your skin may be drier—and more in need of moisturizing TLC—than you realize, even if it's not scaly, itchy, or peeling. Try this two-second test: Scratch a small area on your arm or leg with your fingernail. If a white scratch mark is left behind, your skin is dry and needs more moisture.

Go simple. Keep your beauty products clean and simple, particularly if you have sensitive skin. Stay

away from products with color or fragrance and those that produce bubbles or have “antibacterial” on the label. These can all irritate skin. Even if your skin isn’t super-sensitive, steer clear of scented lotions and perfumes before spending a day outdoors. Scented products can lead to blotchy skin when exposed to the sun (and attract biting insects!).

Use a single family of skin-care products. If you buy and use lots of different products, there’s a good chance that some contain the same ingredients, thus making them redundant. You may be overusing an active ingredient that’s irritating in higher doses. Also, some brands just aren’t very compatible with others, although you have no way of knowing that until after you pay for them and open them. You’ll get much better results if you use brands of products that are designed and formulated to work together, such as Clinique, Mary Kay, or Neutrogena. You may have to shell

out a little more cash, but experts agree you’ll get better results.

Two Steps to Younger-Looking Skin

STEP 1: CLEAN

Long, hot showers strip skin of its moisture and wash away its protective oils. Limit showers to no more than 10 minutes and keep the water as cool as you can stand it. Consider these tips when buying and using soaps and cleansers.

Switch from deodorant soap to one with added fat. Try brands such as Dove, Oilatum, or Neutrogena. Deodorant soaps can be drying, whereas added-fat soaps leave an oily yet beneficial film on your skin.

Make an oat scrub and use it on your face every other day. Oats moisturize and exfoliate your skin at the same time. For a homemade scrub, grind enough rolled oats in a food processor or coffee grinder to make 1/2 cup. Combine with 1/3 cup of ground sunflower seeds, 1/2 teaspoon of peppermint leaves, and 4 tablespoons

Cool it. Long, hot showers and baths rob your skin of youthful moisture.

of almond meal. Mix 2 teaspoons with a small amount of heavy cream, then scrub your face and neck with the mixture and rinse thoroughly.

Rub with a loofah or bath brush daily. This helps keep ingrown hairs and scaly skin under control. While in the shower, gently scrub bumpy or scaly skin with a circular motion to remove dead cells. For extra-smooth skin, sprinkle a few drops of an AHA product on the loofah before scrubbing. (Store your loofah in a dry place with good air circulation.)

STEP 2: MOISTURIZE

Lock in moisture by applying a cream or lotion within three minutes of leaving the tub or shower to trap moisture in the upper layers of the skin and prevent dryness and itching. Here's advice on doing this to best effect.

Select a moisturizer that contains skin-repairing ingredients.

Moisturizers can stop dryness, bruising, and tearing, but they won't directly fix wrinkles. Look for one of these active ingredients when choosing yours.

Moisturizing Masks From Your Kitchen

Grab a towel, a bowl, and your favorite book. Then whip up one of these six mild, fun, yummy-smelling masks, apply, and relax for a while. Rinse off the mask after 15 minutes, unless otherwise noted. All are marvelous for your skin.

- 1 tablespoon of plain yogurt plus a few dashes of sesame oil.
 - A banana mashed with a little honey.
 - 1/4 cup of whipping cream mixed with 1/2 teaspoon olive oil, 2 tablespoons of mashed ripe avocado, and 1 teaspoon of calendula petals.
 - A lightly scrambled raw egg. If your skin is oily, apply an egg white only.
 - A cooked apple (simmered until soft) mixed with 1 teaspoon each lemon juice and crushed peppermint leaves.
 - Mashed mango. Leave this one on for just a few minutes.
- **Humectants, such as glycerin, sorbitol, urea, or propylene glycol.** These attract water by pulling it up from deeper skin

When to Call the Dermatologist

If you have a sudden, unexplained skin condition—a rash that's lasted for more than a week, a sore that won't heal, a mole that's changed in shape, size, or color—or a long-term problem, such as acne, eczema, or psoriasis, that's not responding to drugstore remedies, it's time to visit the skin doctor. Your family doctor may be able to recommend and refer you to a local dermatologist, or, if your health plan allows it, make your own appointment with a skin doc who's nearby and is recommended by friends or coworkers.

layers. They're good choices for people with oily skin.

- **Occlusives, such as petroleum jelly.** These prevent water from evaporating.
- **Lipids, such as monolaurin.** These may rebuild the skin's barrier that guards against moisture loss and damage.

Don't assume that expensive means better. When one large consumer organization tested

moisturizers, it found that both pricey and cheaper products worked about the same.

Add an under-eye cream. The thin, delicate skin beneath the eyes produces little of the protective oil that keeps skin soft. Specially formulated gels reduce puffiness and dark circles while they moisturize. Don't smear on eye cream; this can pull skin and encourage wrinkle formation. Instead, tap it on very gently.

Switch moisturizers when the seasons change. Your skin needs more moisture in winter than in summer, so the same day you bring those sweaters down from the attic for the winter, buy a heavier moisturizer. When you trade in the sweaters for shorts, switch to a lighter one.

Here's why: When humidity drops in the winter, your skin loses moisture and feels dry, itchy, and irritated. Indoor heat, hot showers, and harsh winds further dry out skin. In contrast, summertime humidity levels are higher, so your skin retains more moisture and can easily replenish itself by absorbing moisture from the air.

For soft, young-looking hands and feet, moisturize while you sleep. Before you go to bed, slather on moisturizing cream, then slip on thin-fabric socks and gloves. It's like a spa treatment, and you won't get your sheets oily or rub off the cream.

Go natural with olive oil. Smooth a couple of drops over your face, elbows, knees, and the backs of your arms every evening. The oil contains monounsaturated fat, which refreshes and hydrates skin without leaving a greasy residue.

Mask an extra-dry face and neck. Use a facial moisturizing mask twice a month.

More Dry-Skin Cures

Rub on real aloe vera. The acids in aloe eat away dead skin cells and speed the healing process. Cut off an end of an aloe leaf, split the leaf open, and spread the gel on the dry area.

Plunk rough, dry elbows into grapefruit. First, exfoliate your elbows with a brush or loofah in the bath or shower, then cut a grapefruit in half and rest one

elbow on each half. Soak for 15 minutes. Wash and gently exfoliate again, then rub on a moisturizer. The acid in the grapefruit helps loosen dead skin.

Apply ice wrapped in a towel to dry, itchy skin. Do this for a few minutes on, a few minutes off. Let the moist cold soothe your skin and draw warming blood to it, but don't let your skin get so cold that it stings or hurts.

Soak in a soothing tub. To ease dry, rough, itchy skin, add one of these to a warm bath.

- **1/2 pound of sea salt and 1 pound of baking soda.**
Soak until the water is cool to detoxify your skin and soothe the itch.
- **2 cups of Epsom salts.**
In addition to soaking, while your skin is still wet, rub handfuls of Epsom salt on rough areas to exfoliate.
- **A few bags of your favorite tea.**
The tea provides antioxidants as well as a delicious scent.
- **1 cup of uncooked oatmeal tied into an old stocking or muslin bag.** Oats are not only wonderful

A Message for Men

Skin-preserving products such as cleansers and moisturizers aren't just for women. Men need skin care just as much as their wives and sisters do. To prevent wrinkles and skin cancer, use a moisturizer containing a sunscreen with an SPF of at least 15 daily. Also use a gentle exfoliant weekly and a nighttime moisturizer that contains alpha-hydroxy acids to encourage skin regeneration.

for your inner health, they also provide a healthy glow on the outside, leaving a film on your skin that seals in water.

- **Equal parts of apple cider vinegar, wheat germ, and sesame oil.** The vinegar is both antibacterial and alkalizing (meaning it helps maintain the proper acid balance), while sesame oil and wheat germ add moisture.
- **1 cup of powdered milk mixed with 1 tablespoon of grapeseed oil.** The lactic acid in the milk will exfoliate your skin, and the oil will give it a powerful dose of antioxidants.

Use an herbal spritzer with essential oils. Rose, sandalwood, and bergamot oils are great for hydrating the skin. To create an herbal spritzer, mix a few drops of essential oil with water in a small spray bottle and spritz your face whenever your skin needs a little boost. Your skin is more pliable when it's hydrated, so a spray helps stave off frown lines and general movement wrinkles. The hydrator also keeps pollutants out and your skin's natural lubricants in. As a bonus, your makeup will stay on longer and look more natural.

Pat unscented baby powder on areas where skin meets skin. Powder keeps your inner thighs, underarms, and the sensitive skin beneath your breasts clean and dry. It also prevents a common skin condition called intertrigo, in which trapped moisture fosters the growth of bacteria or fungi.

Skip astringent toners. Astringents clean oils and soaps from the skin, but they're too harsh for women (and men) with dry, sensitive, or irritated skin. If you use one, your skin may itch, burn, or tingle.

Today's Best Makeup Techniques

Check any woman's bathroom, and chances are you'll find a plethora of makeup, much of it old and barely used. But choosing a makeup should be as simple as choosing an ice cream flavor—once you know what's best for you.

As your skin begins to age, your makeup is expected to do more and more. Not only does it emphasize your good points—lovely green eyes, a full mouth, and high cheekbones—but it may also be called upon to deflect attention from features you'd rather weren't in the limelight, like wrinkles, dryness, sagging, and age spots.

The good news is, all this *is* possible. You may need new products, new techniques, or a new appreciation of the value of distraction (a brilliant smile, the perfect

lipstick, and a great haircut may “hide” crow's-feet better than a thick coat of foundation). And sometimes, less really is more: Concealers, powders, and foundations that promise to cover everything may instead accentuate expression lines. With that in mind, follow this advice.

Foundation

Go light. If you're blessed with great skin, use as little foundation as possible. If you do use it, choose a sheer liquid foundation and top it off with loose powder.

Go for a matte or semi-matte finish. Mature skin usually requires a heavier cream foundation. Avoid products that leave a powder-like finish.

Makeup Management

These steps will keep your skin fresh, healthy, and looking its best.

- Use a moisturizing makeup remover that leaves your face feeling clean and soft.
- Discard foundation after 3 months. After that long, the oils in foundation can go bad and smell rancid. Powder makeup such as blush and eye shadow lasts a little longer, but be sure to throw them out after a year.
- Keep your makeup style fresh and current. A subtle change now and then will keep your look fashionable. If you'd rather not change your colors completely, change the texture. For example, if you love a particular shade of eye shadow, choose the same shade in a sparkly version. The small change will be noticed, but it won't be too dramatic.

Apply lightly. Using too much foundation is like pointing a neon sign at your wrinkles. Instead, dip a fine brush or makeup sponge in a lightweight foundation and dab it on blotches and brown spots to even them out. Then take a damp sponge and apply foundation to your entire face, being sure to match the color of your neck and blend well so there's no obvious line at your chin.

Avoid touching. Dipping your finger into your foundation spreads bacteria, which can cause break-outs. Instead, use a fresh, disposable makeup sponge every day.

Get instant radiance. Mix liquid bronzer with your foundation or moisturizer before applying it to your face.

Powder lightly, or not at all. Powder may actually accentuate lines in your face.

Use season-specific make-up. You may need different beauty products for cool and hot weather. Winter dries your skin; summer poses added sun risks.

Concealer

Buy quality. It's worth splurging on a higher-priced concealer that you like. (Be sure to try it first. This is a good product to buy at a department store makeup counter.) Concealer can hide a multitude of flaws, such as pimples, dark circles, or patchy lip tone. Look for a creamy, yellow-based concealer that's one shade lighter than your skin tone.

Don't use it all over your face.

Dab a bit on where it's needed, but don't try to substitute concealer for a good foundation.

Cover your lids, brow bones, and eye corners. This evens out skin tone and provides a base for eye makeup so the color stays in place longer.

Skip under-eye concealer if you have under-eye lines. The skin under your eyes is too thin to hold the heavy concealer. Instead, dab on foundation.

Hide pimples with neutralizing concealer. You can find this type of concealer at a beauty supply store. Just dab it on the pimple before putting on foundation.

Fool the Eye: Three Beautiful Distractions

Hide wrinkles in plain sight by playing up other facial features, such as:

- **A bright smile.** Discolored, stained, or simply dull-looking teeth can add years to your smile—and your face. Invest in an over-the-counter tooth-whitening kit for a brighter smile, or see your dentist.
- **A great haircut.** Now's the time for a flattering new style. Ask the stylist about color choices, too. If you've never had highlights, consider adding them; they give dimension to colored hair.
- **New eyebrows.** The right eyebrow shape can change your face almost as radically as a face-lift. Make an appointment to have your brows waxed or plucked at a good local salon (ask your friends for a recommendation). Then return for touchups or buy a good pair of tweezers and follow the contours to maintain your new shape.

Lips

Match your lip liner to the shade of your lipstick. Lip liner shouldn't look as if it's outlining your mouth. Instead, apply a sheer, frosty lip gloss over your regular lipstick for a more subtle, elegant look.

Choose the right color lipstick. That means pink shades for light complexions and dark, earthy tones for dark skin.

Put a little concealer on your upper and lower lip. This keeps lipstick from bleeding past your lips. Or try a lip-setting cream or facial foundation. Follow up with a little translucent powder.

Exfoliate your lips once or twice a week. It will keep them soft and kissable. Once they're exfoliated, douse them with a lip balm enriched with vitamins E and C.

If your hair color has changed, update your lip color, too. If your hair is graying, you may need lighter shades than you've used in the past. If you color and/or highlight your hair, you may find that a warmer shade complements your new hue nicely.

Eyes

Use a light touch for an elegant, refined effect. Reconsider your eyeliner, choose mascara that goes on with precision, and keep shadow shades subtle.

Zigzag your mascara wand. Applying mascara this way will give you clump-free lashes.

Use powder eye shadows over a moisturizer. They're less likely to accentuate wrinkles than cream-based shadows.

Apply eyeliner with a brush. It provides a smoky look while gently blurring the color. It also gives your eyeliner more staying power. For best results, look for a thick, angled sable or synthetic fiber brush.

Remove waterproof, smudge-proof mascara with makeup remover before bed. Nothing makes you look more worn out than residual mascara under your eyes in the morning.

Draw attention to your eyes. Apply a dab of gold or silver eye shadow to the center of each eyelid just above the lashes. Your eyes will

Makeup Don'ts

These makeup mistakes add years to your look. Skip them!

○ **Bright blue eye shadow.**

Turquoise or any brilliant blue shade is older than granny glasses. Instead: Use hues that flatter your eye and hair color.

○ **Waxy foundation.** Old-fashioned

pancake makeup may seem to give you unbeatable coverage, but it looks like a mask. Instead: Lightly apply a sheer or creamy foundation.

○ **Dark hollows in your cheeks.**

Deep-hued contouring powder, once thought to create hollows under the cheekbones, is dated.

Instead: Stick with natural skin color below your cheeks.

○ **Bright rouge spots.** Little pink or red dabs aren't flattering—they look very 1950s. Instead: Blend in a shade that matches your lipstick or your own coloring.

○ **Blusher on your jawline.** This older technique actually makes your jowls look heavy. Instead: Keep blusher high on your cheeks.

○ **Darkly penciled eyebrows.**

Heavy eyebrows look harsh. Instead: Skip the pencil or change to a lighter shade.

look bigger, and when you blink, people will be attracted to the light and therefore to your eyes.

Brush on Japanese rice powder before applying mascara. This enhances thin or short lashes.

Accentuate the outer corners of your eyes. Apply a gray-brown powder and extend it toward the edges of your eyes to make close-set eyes look farther apart.

Cheeks

Match your blush to the shade of your unadorned lips for the most natural color. Or match your cheek color after you've exercised or gotten overheated. Now's the time to reconsider your best color: It should complement your hair and changing complexion.

Smile broadly, then brush blush on the puffy tops of your cheek-

Home Remedies for Age Spots

Sometimes old-fashioned remedies are the most appealing. Here are some to consider to cover up sun-related age spots on your skin. Keep in mind that it may take weeks or months to see improvement. In the meantime, remember to always put on protection from the sun to prevent further skin damage.

- **Porcelana.** This fade cream contains a 2% solution of the bleaching agent hydroquinone. (Darker spots may need a 3% solution, but for that you will need a prescription). Read the package directions carefully before using.
- **Lemon.** Dab the juice of a fresh lemon on the spots at least twice a day. Lemon juice may be sufficiently acidic to slough off the skin's outer layer and remove or lighten age spots.
- **Honey and yogurt.** Blend the two to create a natural bleach that can lighten age spots. Mix 1 teaspoon of plain yogurt and 1 teaspoon of honey. Apply, let dry for 30 minutes, then rinse. Do this once a day.
- **Aloe vera gel.** As mentioned earlier, this plant contains chemicals that slough away dead cells and encourage the growth of healthy replacements. Spread gel straight from the snapped end of an aloe vera plant leaf.
- **Buttermilk.** Yes, we noted that Cleopatra used buttermilk so many years ago for her skin. Indeed, it is an age-old folk remedy for age spots, thanks to its lactic acid content. This acid gently exfoliates sun-damaged skin and pigmented areas.

bones. Brush upward and outward to your hairline.

Camouflage with a blush or color wash. Either can help conceal a spidery network of dilated capillaries on the nose and cheeks.

Look for powder blushes. They're preferred because they blend easily on top of foundation.

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