



How to CLEAN your FACE

Sarah Halliwell learns the best ways to do the washing-up

It's easy to be dazzled by the elaborate skincare weaponry available to us – but the bedrock of any good routine is simple. While we're merrily piling on make-up, serums and creams to try and achieve glowing skin, we're alarmingly lazy about taking it all off. "It's the most important thing we do – and yet most people don't clean their faces properly," says dermatologist Dr Rosemary Coleman, "Especially men." Make-up and daily exposure to dirt clog pores and leave skin looking dull and lacklustre, excessively oily or rough. Pollution's an issue too: after researching the damaging effects of pollution our skin is exposed to on a daily basis, Clinique have created a new sonic brush to deep-clean in a gentle way. Try using a mild (foamless) cleanser in the morning and then a more intensive, exfoliating cleanser at night: "It's crucial that your evening cleansing routine is more rigorous," explains US dermatologist Dr Lancer. "Nighttime is when your skin has time to regenerate and repair itself, so increasing circulation to the skin's surface before bed will aid the process."

Cleansing needs to be thorough, then, but also gentle. We need to beware of scrubbing our skin: harsh grainy exfoliators, for example, can act like sandpaper. "Overly cleansed skin will be irritated, sensitive to the elements, red, raw and tight-feeling," explains Dr Lancer. Claire Vero, founder of Aurelia Probiotic Skincare, says it's vital to choose the right cleanser. "A foam or gel-based cleanser containing sodium lauryl sulphate will strip the skin's natural oils, enabling irritants to enter, causing sensitivity and transdermal water loss. You're then in an inflammation cycle and the result is unsettled skin." Avoid anything too gritty: instead, Dr Lancer's Polish and Aurelia's oil-based Refine & Polish Miracle Balm (both at SpaceNK) use fruit enzymes to gently dislodge dry skin cells in an effective yet non-irritating way. Don't be afraid to massage your face,

though: "An extra minute's massage every morning is going to wake up the skin circulation, perk up your facial contour and give you a natural glow," says skincare expert Liz Earle.

We also need to adjust our routine as we get older. By your 40s, "it's a good idea to switch to a lotion or cream cleanser rather than gel," reckons US dermatologist Dr Tina Alster. "Clean pores with a sonic brush and non-drying cleanser; when you're older you don't have the same capacity to produce oil." You'll know when you're doing it right: properly cleansed skin has a healthy glow and even tone and texture. And to avoid? You know it already. No wipes. Full stop. "Wipes have no role in skincare," admonishes Dr Coleman (as well as every dermatologist I've ever spoken to). They drag and irritate skin, and all you're doing is moving grime and make-up around your face. Equally, thick cream cleanser wiped off with cotton wool just leaves a film on your skin. Finally, when you've cleansed properly, don't forget to apply a moisturiser and SPF, reminds Dr Lancer. "Foregoing proper hydration after cleansing will leave skin dry, dull and aged looking." ■

FIVE EASY WAYS TO CHANGE YOUR ROUTINE, MORNING AND NIGHT:

ALL SKIN ... THE SKIN BRUSH

The biggest recent development in cleansing is the sonic brush, which vibrates with a massaging motion. First-timers are amazed how clean their skin feels when they go sonic: it's the equivalent of changing to an electric toothbrush. Clinique's new Sonic System Purifying Cleansing Brush is a "skin-changer", boasting 10,000 sonic movements per minute to give a deep-down yet gentle clean. Think of it as exercise for the skin, says Clinique's Dr Tom Mammone: "It boosts exfoliation, removing dirt and unclogging pores for smoother skin and leaves skin better prepared for subsequent products and treatments, like serum and moisturiser," he explains. Used alongside the classic Clinique Three-Step programme, it has shown startling test results. The emphasis is on being gentle: let the brush glide rather than pressing it on, and it will do the work for you. It's suitable for everyone from gadget-loving males to younger, oilier skin types and is light enough to pack when travelling. €89; €25 for replacement brush head.



DRY SKIN ... THE OIL

Make-up artist Shu Uemura introduced the first oil-based cleanser in the 1960s, as a gentle way to remove layers of make-up. Try also Nude's Pro-Genius Cleansing Oil which avoids harsh ingredients and chemicals and uses probiotics; ideal for shaving, too. €34, SpaceNK.



DULL SKIN ... THE POWDER

The latest powder cleansers, which fizz and emulsify with water, are a bit of a novelty, and might inspire reluctant face-cleaners. Try Nude's Detox Brightening Fizzy Powder Wash (€46), rich in nourishing omega oils, three times a week: the fizz activates the exfoliating fruit enzymes and brightening ingredients, including vitamin C.



CONGESTED SKIN ... THE SALICYLIC ACID

Clogged pores can be a problem at any age, not just in the teen years. Teens should start with a simple cleansing routine (Dr Coleman recommends La Roche-Posay's acne regimen or Simply Clean as a good place to start). Blackheads are caused by natural oils that have oxidised and turned black: use a gentle salicylic acid-based cleanser for oily skin. Dedicated products include Murad's two-step Pore Reform duo (€65, at Therapie Clinics nationwide), which clears pores and then creates a buffer between sebum and oxygen.

NORMAL SKIN ... THE MUSLIN CLOTH

Eve Lom, Liz Earle and Emma Hardie all advocate muslin cloth methods for removing make-up, then gently polishing off dead skin cells. My current addiction is Aurelia's super-soft bamboo muslin antibacterial cloths (Monday to Sunday set, €25), with the fragrant, creamy Miracle Cleanser (€45). Also try Elemis' Pro-Collagen Cleansing Balm (€48.50) as a ten-minute mask.

