

marie claire

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Associated with girlie nights in rather than scientific results, the face mask has an unduly fluffy rep. Granted, they go perfectly with a pint of Pinot and a soak in the tub, but they also contain an array of nutrients that put back into skin everything that your lifestyle takes out.

Masks combat issues at each layer of the skin: hydrating deep down, detoxing environmental damage, delivering vitamins into the dermis and removing dead skin cells from the skin's surface. The many actives required for this can't be blended into an ultra-light cream that sinks in, so they have to be left on the skin and washed off. This does not mean, however, that leaving them on for longer will increase their effect. Masks are designed to be quite potent, so what it says on the tub will be the optimum and maximum length of time the products should be left on for,' advises Sian Jones, founder of Balance Me skincare. Who said pampering can't also be productive?



Nourishing FACE MASKS

Proving they're not just for girlie pamper-fests, Jess Lacey tries six of the best



1 Fresh Crème Ancienne Ultimate Nourishing Honey Mask, £97

The pure honey in this mask helps skin retain moisture, and it left mine instantly more youthful-looking and robust.

2 Dior Prestige Le Grand Masque, £150

A must if you wake up looking like a crumpled piece of A4. With significant plumping from the most meagre application, the jar should last months.

3 Balance Me Radiance Face Mask, £18

Tiny walnut grains give a gentle polish, while clay tackles the day's dirt. My skin looked lustrous, and I've abandoned my face scrub altogether.

4 Aveda Tourmaline Charged Radiance Masque, £29

Buffed out any underlying bumps and dead cells. After a series of late nights, the energy-boosting minerals gave my grey skin its life back.

5 Estée Lauder Radiant Vitality 2-Step Treatment, £46

Five minutes after smothering this on, my complexion was clearer and more even. It bought me two days without foundation – that's a first.

6 Aurelia Cell Revitalise Rose Mask, £65

After weeks of having stressed-out skin, this calmed down my redness in just two uses. It smells incredible, too.