

The truth about dullness

From debunking common myths to understanding causes and effective skincare ingredients.

Section: Focus area stories

What is dull skin?

When skin is healthy, it seems to glow – you might even be told you look ‘radiant’ or ‘luminous’. Dullness is what happens when that light fades, often due to a build-up of dead skin cells. Pollution and smoking are triggers, as are sleeplessness, bad circulation and hormones.

What causes dull skin?

“Wash your face with hot water”

Lukewarm is better

Hot water is drying, so turn down that tap. Wash with lukewarm water and finish with hydrating serums and moisturisers, steering clear of oil-absorbing, mattifying formulations.

“You can scrub the dullness away”

Scrub that (gently)

While dead skin can turn that dewy face dull, don’t be tempted to over do it. Scrubbing too hard or often can cause sensitive skin. Stick to once a week to get that natural glow up.

“Ageing doesn’t have an impact on skin dullness”

Yes and no

This is partly true, thanks to slower cell renewal, but take heart. There are lots of effective treatments that can help slow down the years or even rewind a few.

The ingredients you need for dull skin

Glycolic acid

If you can tolerate this powerful AHA, it can do a lot for brightness. It sheds dead cells in the top layer of the skin to reveal a brighter, fresher face. Always use SPF the next day and watch for sensitivity.

Vitamin C

Skin pros swear by this brightening miracle, an antioxidant that targets free radical damage to beat uneven skin tone and fine lines while also controlling excessive melanin to beat age spots.