

Act your age

How to get clearer, younger-looking skin in your 20s, 30s, 40s and 50s

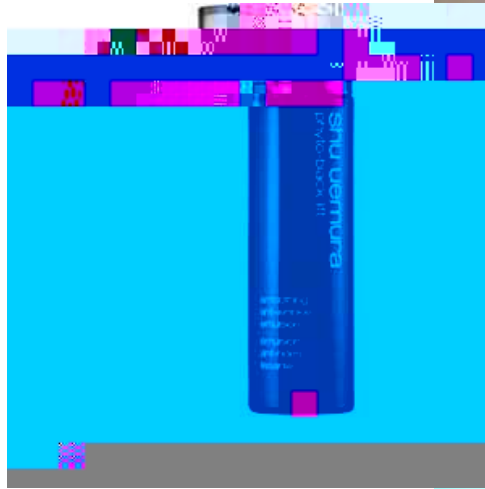
While there are few skin-care staples suitable for women of any age, the majority of products you use in your 20s are pretty much useless later in life. The rule when it comes to treating your skin is much the same as dressing your body: what you put on should evolve over the decades. The good news is that, no matter what your age, there's something tailor-made for your skin's specific needs.



Although most twentysomething women aren't showing visible signs of aging, some have to contend with other skin ailments, such as adult acne. To soothe inflamed skin, Dr. Jody Levine, cosmetic dermatologist and owner of Plastic Surgery & Dermatology NYC, advises using products containing salicylic and glycolic acid. "I recommend using glycolic acid (either in a cleanser or toner) starting in your 20s because it gets rid of the dead skin cells, giving skin an nice glow," she says, adding that she prescribes a retinoid because retinol unclogs the skin, prevents blackheads that turn into pimples and improves skin's radiance and smoothness.



As the demands of careers and young families increase, the first signs of aging - crow's feet, freckles and dark under eye circles - creep up. This is the time to start using products containing vitamin C, which helps keep wrinkles at bay. "When you get into your 30s, you start seeing the early sun damage," says Levine. To reduce the appearance of freckles and sun spots by applying a brightening cream on a daily basis. To combat dark under eye circles, use an eye cream containing peptides. Peptides build collagen, thereby plumping the skin under the eyes. This is especially important for women in their 30s, when skin in this area



Just when many women start to really feel comfortable in their own skin, their skin starts to let them down. Deeper lines, jowls, skin discoloration and increasingly visible pores (due to enlarging oil glands) all develop. Look for products containing chestnut extract, which combats dryness and flaky skin as well as the super-potent anti-oxidant NDGA, which shrinks enlarged pores by reducing the buildup of excess oil deep within. This is also the time when you should stop using products containing salicylic acid (even if you are still battling adult acne) as it's too harsh for skin that's continually becoming drier. That's why Levine recommends stronger, richer moisturizers for her fortysomething patients.



Women who are over 50 and looking fabulous are using products that pamper their skin with moisture to help soften the look of deepening wrinkles.