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Skin & Beauty on

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The 6 Biggest Skin-Care Mistakes

Dec 20 09:33am

If there's one thing I stress to my patients, it's that great skin doesn't require spending a fortune on some "miracle cream" made from rare seaweed from the Arctic Circle! It's all about simple good habits. But let's approach those habits from the opposite direction: What are the most damaging bad habits that I see time and time again?

1. Using a cleanser with harsh detergents: Many people assume that the suds of their vigorously foaming cleanser are a good sign -- surely they'll leave skin extra clean. Unfortunately, copious suds are generally a sign that your cleanser contains a harsh detergent, like lauryl sulfate, that strips skin of vital lipids. (And don't get me started on bar soap -- that is always a no-no.) Instead, look for cleansers that contain fatty acids and will actually fortify your skin, like Dove's ProAge products, or even simple cold cream. If you have particularly dry skin, I recommend cleansing oils, which remove dirt and makeup without disturbing your skin's natural protective barrier.

2. Not using a retinoid: Retinol, a form of vitamin A, is the only topical ingredient proven not only to prevent lines and wrinkles but to minimize the ones you already have. Past the age of 30, I recommend seeing a dermatologist for a higher-concentration prescription retinoid (like Retin-A, Differin, or Tazorac, for example), but there are also many great over-the-counter creams that contain lower concentrations of retinol. I like Roc Retinol Correxion Deep Wrinkle Night Cream, Neutrogena Healthy Skin Night Cream, and [SkinCeuticals Retinol 1.0](#).

3. Spending too much on skin care: Splurging on the beautiful packaging and luxurious scents of pricey boutique skin care lines can feel wonderfully pampering -- provided you know that it's absolutely not necessary for great skin. In fact, many of my favorite products are made by drugstore brands, because those companies have the large budgets for top-notch research and development. If you have to choose, put your money toward that prescription retinoid, and buy the rest of your regimen at the drugstore.

4. Getting facials: Yes, that's right -- you can strike facials from your skin-care budget and actually be doing your skin a favor! Studies show that as many as 80% of people break out after a facial. Aestheticians often don't know which products are right for the skin of each client, and may use ingredients that can worsen acne, or essential oils that tend to irritate sensitive skin. Even if you don't break out, there are really no long-term benefits to facials.

5. Washing your face at the wrong time: Always wash your face after you rinse out your hair products and conditioner in the shower, never before. Many conditioners contain pore-clogging isopropyl myristate and other hair products often contain coconut oil -- both are common acne-causing ingredients that you don't want to leave on your skin.

6. Not using sunscreen every day: Not just for your trip to the beach. Not just during the long summer days. Every day. Yes, it's important to be even more vigilant if you plan to spend lots of time in direct sunlight. But incidental sun exposure typically accounts for more of our lifetime exposure to ultraviolet rays than those days at the beach. Walking to and from your car, dashing out of the office for a sandwich, or sitting outside for a few minutes adds up -- make sure you're covered with at least SPF 15, every day.

Wishing you great skin!

Dr. Baumann is author of the best-selling book, "The Skin Type Solution." To learn more about her revolutionary skin typing system, visit her Web site, [SkinTypeSolutions.com](#).

All of Dr. Baumann's recommended skin care products are available online, and a portion of proceeds goes to The Dermatology Foundation.



You can sign up for Dr. Baumann's newsletter.



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