

# SKIN SOLUTIONS

*Choosing effective peels, masks, and more*

For years, at-home facial treatments delivered little more than a relaxing experience. Today many products offer real benefits. "What people do at home is extremely important in order to see great results from a skin-care regimen," says Macrene Alexiades-Armenakas, a professor of dermatology at the Yale School of Medicine. If you have skin treatments at a doctor's office, a store product can sustain the results. And if you don't see a dermatologist, a good home routine will keep your skin at its best.

**HOW THEY WORK**

Peels, scrubs, and masks treat skin in different ways, but the effects can be similar. Most treatments will exfoliate the skin, either physically (by scrubbing) or chemically (with ingredients that encourage the skin to shed dead cells). This can improve skin on a cellular level. "You're stimulating the dermis, which sends it into building mode—turning over skin cells and increasing hyaluronic acid," which keeps skin plump, says Linda Franks, director of Gramercy Park Dermatology, in New York City. The hope is that it helps stimulate collagen production as well.



**INGREDIENTS TO SEEK**

**Glycolic acid** can have a mild bleaching effect for dark spots and may also diminish fine lines. **Salicylic acid** is best for those with clogged pores and breakouts.

**POST TREATMENT**

Don't use Retin-A or other retinol products the day of or the day after your peel or dermabrasion. Use sunscreen to protect newly exposed layers of skin from ultraviolet rays.

**PRODUCTS TO TRY**

(clockwise from top right)

- ESTÉE LAUDER**  
Idealist Dual-Action Refinishing Treatment, \$50
- NEUTROGENA**  
Ageless Intensives Tone Correcting Peel, \$22
- CLINIQUE**  
Turnaround Radiance Peel Once-A-Week System, \$55
- LANCÔME**  
Hydra-Intense Masque, \$28
- NARS**  
NarsSkin Mud Mask, \$45
- OLE HENRIKSEN**  
Ultimate Lift Eye Gel, \$38
- PHILOSOPHY**  
The Microdelivery Mini Peel Pads, \$35



**HAPPINESS AND EXERCISE**

If you're having a less-than-perfect day, you'll likely feel better if you get moving. Michael Bracko, an exercise physiologist and fellow of the American College of Sports Medicine, explains why.

**How does exercise improve your mental outlook?** The simplest way it can help is that exercising temporarily takes your mind off the problem, thus reducing mental stress. It can also give you time to think through problems, or provide an escape and time to think about nothing.

**What about "runner's high"?** During exercise, endorphins—which are opiate-like substances—are secreted by the brain. They have the same painkilling mechanism as morphine, [so they can] cause a sense of euphoria when the endorphins bind with the brain's receptor sites.

**What's the best way to benefit?** Any vigorous, repetitive activity—such as cycling, hiking, swimming, or walking—done for 30 to 90 minutes can induce this state. But to simply clear your mind, as little as 15 minutes of activity can help.

*Martha's pick*



**This antiaging cream treats all of the problems common to the eye area, including crow's-feet, puffiness, and dark circles. A small dab quickly makes skin look brighter and more hydrated and also provides long-term protection via sunscreen. The cream is cool, refreshing, and gentle, and many of the ingredients—including pomegranate extract, shea butter, and damask rose water—are natural.**

**RODIAL** Glamtox Eye Light SPF 15, \$129, [rodialskincare.com](http://rodialskincare.com)

HELP FOR CHAPPED LIPS

One of the unfortunate side effects of blustery winter weather is that lips get dry, flaky, cracked, and generally uncomfortable. "That's because lower humidity and colder temperatures dry out skin, and lips are part of the skin system," says Elizabeth Hale, clinical associate professor of dermatology at New York University School of Medicine. She has these tips for maintaining soft and healthy lips.

**Keep them covered.** We've all heard it before, but it bears repeating: Wear a good lip balm, and avoid licking your lips, which can cause them to lose moisture, making the problem worse, Hale says. Look for products with conditioning ingredients (such as petrolatum) as well as sunscreen (such as octinoxate). Don't rely on glosses, which actually attract sun.

**Deep-condition while you sleep.** A thicker, more emollient product (such as the kind sold in a squeeze tube) will help repair and soothe lips overnight.

**AQUAPHOR** Healing Ointment, \$6 for two tubes

**NIVEA** A Kiss of Moisture Essential Lip Care, \$3

**KIEHL'S** Lip Balm SPF 15 in clear, \$10

**ELIZABETH ARDEN** Eight Hour Cream Lip Protectant Stick, SPF 15, \$17

ON THE MENU: CALM

"**STRESS IMPACTS DIET**, and diet impacts stress," says Lisa Dorfman, director of sports nutrition at the University of Miami. The physiological changes that anxiety causes—namely the release of hormones such as adrenaline and cortisol—affect the way we metabolize energy and use food. Certain nutrients and ingredients can help reduce the effects of stress. Here are Dorfman's suggestions on what to eat and why.

WHAT YOU NEED	WHERE TO GET IT	HOW IT HELPS
<b>ANTIOXIDANTS</b>	Colorful fruits and vegetables—berries, leafy greens, carrots, red peppers—are rich in antioxidant phytonutrients.	Antioxidants help protect the body's cells from breaking down under stress.
<b>OMEGA-3 FATTY ACIDS</b>	Fatty fish (such as salmon) and flaxseed are good sources of these essential fatty acids.	Omega-3s are anti-inflammatory and help regulate blood pressure.
<b>MAGNESIUM</b>	The mineral is found in whole grains, nuts, black beans, and spinach.	This electrolyte sends messages to the muscles telling them to relax.
<b>POTASSIUM</b>	Avocados, bananas, and yogurt are rich in this mineral and electrolyte.	Potassium has been shown to help regulate blood pressure.
<b>"GOOD" CARBOHYDRATES</b>	Whole-wheat bread, oatmeal, and brown rice are excellent choices.	Carbs help produce higher levels of serotonin, which has a calming effect on the body and helps curb cravings for sugary foods.



Text by Sally Wadyka