

beauty in action

Using too many products can create sensitive skin

4 weeks to gorgeous skin

Get glowing once and for all with our step-by-step plan, guaranteed to reveal your best complexion ever. BY SALLY WADYKA

➤ **While there's no shortage of miracle-in-a-bottle** treatments claiming to deliver smooth, even-toned, radiant skin overnight, to really see a major difference, you need about four weeks. "That's how long it takes for your skin cells to completely turn over," says Howard Murad, M.D., an associate

clinical professor of medicine at UCLA and the founder of Murad Inc. But if you nourish your body properly and take good care of your skin as new cells form, your face is guaranteed to look fresher by month's end. So follow our strategy and get pretty skin—pretty fast. Let the countdown begin!

WEEK ONE feed your face

You are what you eat.

For your skin to be healthy, you need to include fruits and vegetables, protein, and whole grains—plus good-for-you fats—in your daily diet.

■ **Fruits and vegetables** (three or more servings of fruit, five or more of vegetables; one serving equals a whole, medium fruit; 1 cup of berries; half a cup of cut fruit; half a cup of chopped veggies; or 1 cup of greens): They're loaded with skin-protective antioxidants as well as water, which helps keep your skin hydrated.

■ **Whole grains** (four to eight servings; one serving equals a slice of bread or half a cup of cereal or grains): Whole grains, such as brown rice, quinoa, amaranth, millet, and whole wheat, contain nutrients in their shell that help the body produce glycosaminoglycans, which assist in building firming collagen and elastin fibers.

■ **Protein** (four to six servings; one serving equals one egg, 3 ounces of fish or meat, or half a cup of tofu or beans): Protein-rich foods are also critical to the production of collagen and elastin. Eggs, in particular, contain lecithin, which helps strengthen cell membranes, making them better able to withstand environmental assault.

■ **Fats** (three to four servings; one serving equals 1 teaspoon of oil, six nuts, or 1 tablespoon of ground flaxseed): Get plenty of healthy unsaturated fat by including olive or

flaxseed oil and nuts, such as pistachios and walnuts, in your meals. They help keep skin soft and supple.

■ **Water** (eight 8-ounce glasses): Bottoms up. "Hydrating the body from the inside plumps lines and wrinkles on the outside," says Elizabeth K. Hale, M.D., a clinical associate professor of dermatology at the NYU School of Medicine.

■ **Supplements** "Everyone's diet falls short sometimes. Taking a multivitamin ensures your skin gets what it needs," says David Bank, M.D., the director of the Center for Dermatology, Cosmetic & Laser Surgery in Mount Kisco, New York. Best bet: **GNC WellBeing Be-Beautiful Hair, Skin & Nails Formula** (\$20; gnc.com), with nourishing amino acids and antioxidants.

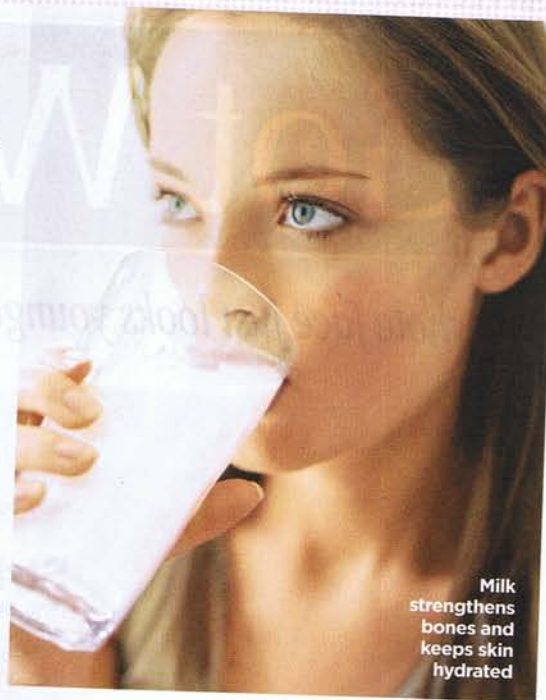
WEEK TWO transform your skin tone

The trick to minimizing splotchiness and brown spots and boosting radiance

is to "use products that increase cellular turnover," says Macrene Alexiades-Armenakas, M.D., Ph.D., a New York City dermatologist. Exfoliating every morning by using a gentle granular scrub or glycolic acid lotion, or at night with a retinoid

(a vitamin A derivative), is a good way to slough off dull cells and expose newer, healthier skin. Try **Patricia Wexler M.D. Dermatology Sensitive Skin Gentle Exfoliating Peel** (\$35; bathandbodyworks.com), with glycolic acid, or **Neutrogena 14 Day Skin Rescue** (\$26; at drugstores), with exfoliating retinol. If your face is

“Hydrating the body from the inside plumps lines and wrinkles on the outside.”



Milk strengthens bones and keeps skin hydrated

also speckled with brown spots, you may need to add a pigment-blocking serum with glucosamine, such as **Olay Professional Pro-X Discoloration Fighting Concentrate** (\$42; at drugstores), to your regimen.

WEEK THREE make over your medicine cabinet

Here's what to stock for daily use:

■ **Cleanser** A mild formula, such as



Even those with sensitive skin can use this wash

Gentle exfoliation helps reveal more radiant skin

Chock-full of hydrating hyaluronic acid—plus SPF

STILL LIFE: NICOLAI GROSELL



Assess your skin's needs in natural light

Aveeno Ultra-Calming Moisturizing Cream Cleanser (\$7; at drugstores), with calming feverfew, is suitable for most skin types, a.m. and p.m.

■ **Sunscreen** The most essential part of any skincare routine is daily, year-round use of a broad-spectrum sunscreen with an SPF 15 or higher. (Make life easier by choosing a moisturizer that incorporates one.) We like **Shiseido Future Solution LX**



Contains one of the most potent new antioxidants

Use this at night and you'll wake up looking fresh-faced

Pat, don't rub in eye cream; tugging at skin can cause lines

Daytime Protective Cream SPF 15 (\$240; macys.com), with hyaluronic acid.

■ **Antioxidants** "Even with sunscreen on, some UV rays will still get through," says Bank. "Having antioxidants on your skin provides an extra level of protection against free radicals." Layer an antioxidant serum, such as **RoC Multi Correxion Skin Renewing Serum** (\$25; at drugstores), underneath your sunscreen. Or, for maximum convenience, use a product that does triple duty (moisturizer, sunscreen, and antioxidant), such as **Prevage Day Ultra Protection Anti-Aging Moisturizer SPF 30** (\$125; elizabetharden.com), which contains the free radical fighter idebenone.

■ **Night cream** The best time to give your skin an extra dose of nourishment? While you sleep and your body shifts its attention to cellular repair. Try **Chanel Ultra Correction Lift Ultra Firming Night Cream** (\$165; chanel.com).

■ **Eye cream** The skin around the eyes ages faster than the rest of the face because it's thinner and has fewer oil glands to keep it hydrated. So by the time you hit your 30s, you'll need to add a cream specifically for this area, such as **Estée Lauder Time Zone Anti-Line/Wrinkle Eye Creme** (\$44; esteelauder.com).

WEEK FOUR minimize your wrinkles

By now the only thing left to contend with may be a few pesky lines. Surprisingly, some of the latest cures come in a bottle—not a syringe—and can be used in the morning and at night in place of your moisturizer or cream. "Many women can't afford wrinkle-erasing injections or are squeamish about needles," says Loretta Ciraldo, M.D., a dermatologist in Miami. "That's why some companies are offering what I call 'surgical substitutes.'" These are topical solutions that mimic the effects of injectables, albeit not as



Conceals crow's-feet and laugh lines—pain-free!

Use under or in place of your regular face cream

dramatically. **Dr. Brandt Crease Release** (\$150; drbrandtskincare.com) contains a gamma-aminobutyric acid complex that has the power to relax your facial muscles so they can't contract and form creases; **Dr. Loretta Youth Fill Deep Wrinkle Filler** (\$45; drloretta.com) features potent hydrators, like hyaluronic acid and urea, that draw moisture deep into skin, helping to plump it up; and **Olay Regenerist Filling + Sealing Wrinkle Treatment** (\$19; at drugstores) has silicone to fill in and camouflage lines on contact.

A new weapon against lines?

➤ Soon you'll start to hear a lot about Dysport, an injectable botulinum toxin recently approved by the FDA. It functions very similarly to Botox, temporarily relaxing facial muscles so you can't do things like squint or furrow your brow, which eventually leave behind wrinkles. "Some people say they start to see its effects more quickly than Botox, but the results are comparable. You might simply respond better to one than the other," says Michael Kane, M.D., a plastic surgeon who conducted trials on the drug. It's been used safely in Europe for several years to treat crow's-feet, forehead furrows, and creasing between the brows.