

# Skin Care 101

## Basic Function & Care

Early in my education, I noticed that even though I had one, I really didn't know anything about the human body. How did that happen, I wondered. How could I be issued a body without an owner's manual? How was I supposed to know how to take care of myself? I also suspected that I wasn't alone in this quandary, for none of my friends had been issued owner's manuals, either. So, with the question of basic owners care in mind, here is a bit of Skin Care 101.

Thick or thin, smooth or wrinkled, fair or dark, we all have skin. Skin, regardless of its condition, is an outer protective layer, a mantle, as Dr. Hauschka called it and it is our most external protection barrier from harmful bacteria and pathogens. The skin is made up of two layers, the epidermis and the dermis, and although they are different layers of cells with different functions, they really are one system, working in concert to perform critical functions.

The most superficial layer, the epidermis, functions as a barrier to the outside world, keeping things out, such as water, germs, and dirt, while also keeping things in – things like water (yes, the skin keeps water both out and in – how dynamic is that?), blood, minerals, hormones, and proteins. In concert with the dermis, the inner layer of skin cells, the epidermis provides temperature regulation by controlling sweat evaporation and blood flow.

The tandem functions performed by both the epidermis and dermis include this waterproof outer layer which self-renews through the constant birth and death cycle of skin cells. Skin cells are born at the deeper dermal levels and migrate to the surface, dying and sloughing off. While performing these delicate regenerative functions and while being sensitive enough to communicate even the slightest touch such as the tickle of a feather, this outer mantle is also simultaneously a tough barrier which resists friction, temperature fluctuations, abrasions, and pressure. And if that wasn't enough to tire even a superhero, our skin also serves as an organ of elimination and assimilation. According to Dr. Hauschka, our skin absorbs during the daylight hours and eliminates during the nighttime hours. It is because of this function of absorption that we must pay close attention to our skincare ingredients.

So, how do we care for this incredibly sophisticated system of the body? How

do we ensure that we don't damage our skin? And how do we nourish and care for this precious protective barrier?

In my experience, skincare can be divided into two categories – basic care and corrective care. Basic care consists of a non-soap cleanser to remove makeup and dirt, a gentle exfoliant (key word is "gentle" – we aren't scrubbing the bathroom floor) to stimulate the skin cell cycle, a toner to balance the ph or a treatment serum to plump fine lines, and a moisturizer to protect and hydrate. (I prefer to address sun care separately.) Basic care steps should focus on general daily maintenance; remember to cleanse! Leaving your makeup on overnight can age your skin the equivalent of 10 days. Recommended clinical care is generally every four to six weeks to keep your skin glowing. Of course, basic owners care such as sufficient sleep, hydration, and proper nutrition play key roles in both basic and corrective skincare approaches.

Corrective care expands from these basic steps and uses a variety of more advanced and concentrated approaches including topicals, technology, and advanced techniques which address wrinkles, pigmentation, acne, rosacea, and other specialized needs. Advanced topicals include botanical fillers, peptides, fruit, and lactic acids and homeopathic remedies. Computerized technologies use current, light, and energy to stimulate collagen and elastin production, reducing fine lines, lifting, toning, and reducing puffiness. Resurfacing techniques smooth and brighten, literally erasing years. And neuromuscular and acupressure techniques lift and tone.

Within the corrective care category, lifestyle considerations become more important. Nutrition, sleep, hydration, exercise, and hormone levels are all key ingredients to vibrant, healthy skin and warrant a closer examination. Are enough essential fatty acids being consumed? What is the omega 3 to omega 6 ratio? How many antioxidants are being con-

sumed? Are enough hours of REM sleep being enjoyed so that stress hormones are deactivated? What are the levels of estrogen, progesterone, and testosterone? How much water is being consumed? How much sodium? How much of the food eaten is processed or is fresh and organic? Is enough exercise occurring to raise the heart rate and pump a good detoxifying sweat through the skin? Are the bowels eliminating at least once per day? What is the free-radical production, and, finally, how much inflammation is the skin, as a system, experiencing?

Maintaining a balance of these components, many conditions can be corrected. To address these issues, a corrective care treatment plan will incorporate the basic care steps, expand into treatments, specific techniques, advanced topicals, and lifestyle modification. Clinical care will be more frequent, depending on the goals.

Our skin is not only a delicate sense organ and protective, regenerating barrier; it is the image we offer to the world. It becomes a visual representation of who we are, so put your best face forward in the New Year. By taking care of your skin, it will be supported and will provide optimal health and a vibrant glow in return.

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## Natural Beauty



### Plant of the Month - Pineapple

**Description** – Originally from Brazil and Paraguay and now cultivated throughout most of the tropics, this unusual fruit has a tough, thorny exterior and a sweet, yellow, fleshy center, if you can get past the prickly leaves. The tropical, perennial pineapple is a member of the family

*Bromeliaceae*. The bush-like plant grows to a little over three feet or one meter. The inhospitable leaves grow directly from the ground, forming a protective rosette. At about one year, the fruit appears from the crown of leaves, and the thick stem is closely packed with white, blue, or purple flowers.

**Constituents** – Fruit sugars and acids, carotene, B vitamins, and vitamin C. Pineapple is also a significant source of bromelain. This enzyme was discovered in the mid-20th century and offers support to digestive and inflammatory disorders as it cleaves proteins in a wide variety of contexts.

**Uses** – Whether working within an acidic or alkaline environment, bromelain supports digestion in both the stomach and intestines. It is also an excellent anti-inflammatory helping to dissolve blood clots, reduce swelling after surgeries or minor injuries, and provide relief to sinusitis and inflammation of the veins with thrombosis. Tropical cultures have used pineapple for centuries as a remedy for constipation, poor appetite, diarrhea, flatulence, and intestinal parasites.

Pineapple is a key part of indigenous beauty rituals throughout the Southeast Pacific due to the outstanding exfoliating properties coming from its fruit acids. In modern skincare products, it is an outstanding ingredient to reduce puffiness of the delicate tissues around the eye and lip areas. Look for pineapple in Dr. Hauschka's Daily Eye Cream and Eminence's Three-Step Lip Treatment.

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