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## 7 Dermatologist-Recommended Tips for Smoother Skin

BY JANECA RACHO · DECEMBER 12, 2018



If the constant emergence of cult products and skin care trends are any indication, it's that the quest for smoother, radiant and younger-looking skin is a never-ending one. From dealing with acne in your teens to stress-related breakouts, sun-damage and the first signs of aging in your adulthood, you always find yourself fighting the good fight to maintain a healthy-looking visage. While being diligent with your regimen definitely helps keep your skin's smoothness from going south, there are plenty of other factors that can make or break your skin care goals. Especially when you consider the fact that your skin takes a beating from a number of everyday stressors.

### What Causes Skin to Be Rough

Your skin's health is influenced by several factors—including pollution, stress and sun damage—that, over time, chip away at your complexion and make it more prone to roughness, wrinkles, age spots, bruises and sagging. Those who struggle with genetic conditions like eczema, ichthyosis, keratosis pilaris and psoriasis are especially susceptible to having dry and rough skin, says board-certified dermatologist [Lillian Soohoo](#), as well as those who live in dry climates with low humidity.

With older women, the chemical and hormonal changes the body undergoes due to perimenopause and menopause can contribute to an overall loss of skin smoothness. In fact, the normal aging process plays a huge role in your skin's health, says beauty chemist and skin care expert [David Pollock](#). “[As we age,] our body produces less and less of the key elements that keep us looking younger. Collagen protein provides firmness and support. Yet, by the time a woman reaches menopause, she has about 45 percent less collagen,” Pollock explains.

The buildup of dead and keratinized skin cells and repetitive irritation also take a toll on your skin's texture and appearance, says board-certified dermatologist [Anna Guanche](#), who also cites lack of moisture and hydration as one of the top reasons your skin appears rough and dry.

Doctor Soohoo echoes this, and adds, “The uppermost layer of the skin is the stratum corneum, which contains dead skin cells embedded in a waxy matrix of ceramides, cholesterol and fatty acids. These important substances are all types of fats (lipids) that help keep the skin moist and maintain an effective barrier.”

### How to Get Smoother Skin

Although it may not always be possible for adults to reclaim the firm, baby-smooth and blemish-free complexion of their youth, that doesn't mean you'll have to give up on your pursuit to age gracefully. Below, we put together a list of dermatologist-recommended tips for smoother skin from head to toe.

#### 1. Improve your diet to get better skin.

You know junk food is bad for you, but if you need more reasons to go easy on those tasty snacks, here's a good one: Processed foods, alcohol and refined carbs contribute to the destruction of good bacteria and create an imbalance in your gut's microbiome, leading to inflammation that can also manifest in your skin.

Instead, add more vitamins and antioxidants in your diet, in the form of berries and other bright-colored fruits and vegetables, to boost your skin's defenses against free radical damage. Fish is also a good source of omega-3 fatty acids, which are essential for smooth, radiant skin.

“Vitamins A and C and zinc all play an integral role in skin repair and health,” adds board-certified dermatologist [Heidi Prather](#). Most fruits and vegetables contain the first two, while zinc can be found in dairy and poultry products, legumes, meat and—best of all—dark chocolate!

#### 2. Make sure you're getting enough sleep.

Stress can wreak havoc on your skin, especially when you're not allowing your body to rest and recover from the daily grind. “Your body repairs itself and recovers from daily stress while you sleep, so not getting enough quality sleep can cause premature aging of the skin,” says Dr. Prather.

Doctor Guanche agrees and adds, “Those with exhaustion often appear with skin that is sunken in, dry or sallow. On the other hand, those who are rested often have less scalloping under the eyes and in their tear troughs and have plump, fresh-appearing skin.” Needless to say, it's time you make beauty sleep a priority. Clock in seven to eight hours of quality sleep every night to [rejuvenate your skin and your body](#).

#### 3. Sweat it out with regular exercise.

So you're already eating more veggies and sleeping better, but your journey to a healthier lifestyle and smoother skin won't be complete without adding regular exercise to your routine. “Exercise induces more blood volume to be pumped through the vessels of the face, leading to more micronutrients and healing properties to the facial skin,” says Dr. Guanche. It also helps [reduce inflammation](#), regulate skin-significant hormones and prevent free radical damage. Plus, sweating is also a great way to purge pores of debris!

#### 4. Get serious with cleansing and exfoliation.

“Cleansing and mild exfoliation can give skin a smoother, more radiant appearance by removing dead skin cells on the surface and allowing light to reflect from the skin,” explains Dr. Soohoo. [Double-cleansing according to your skin type](#) is a good way to make sure you remove all traces of pore-clogging dirt, grease and makeup without the risks of over-washing and drying out your skin.

Exfoliation, on the other hand, can be done either chemically or mechanically. But while scrubs and peels may already be part of your skin care routine, you may be overlooking the parts of your body that get the most wear and tear—your hands and feet. Mildly abrasive scrubs with moisturizing and antioxidant-rich ingredients can help soften and smoothen your legs and feet, which are prone to roughness, bumps and calluses. If you have sensitive skin that may be prone to micro-scarring, Dr. Guanche recommends lathering your body with a mild glycolic acid body wash with a soft puff instead.

As for your pout, gently brushing your lips with warm water and a toothbrush will prevent flaking and cracked lips and remove dead skin cells. If you'd like to exfoliate further, try a gentle lip scrub before putting on your hydrating lip balm or lipstick to [keep your pout kissably soft](#). For the rest of your face, exfoliating acids like salicylic, lactic and glycolic acids are best when trying to renew the outer layers of the skin as these dissolve the glue-like substance that binds dead skin cells to the surface.

If you're looking for an even deeper exfoliation, you can head to your dermatologist for any of these in-office treatments:

- **Chemical Peel Treatments** – This type of exfoliation helps tighten, tone and brighten the complexion while minimizing the appearance of age spots, blemishes, fine lines and wrinkles and mild-to-moderate scarring. “A light chemical-peel series coupled with a chemical exfoliating cream like Retin-A or glycolic acid work great,” says Dr. Guanche, adding that alternating it with microdermabrasion can produce even better results.
- **Microdermabrasion and Dermabrasion** – Microdermabrasion is a mild procedure that may be used on the face, neck, hands and body using a fine-tipped instrument or by applying a fine mist of abrasive particles. Dermabrasion, on the other hand, is a deeper and more powerful resurfacing technique, which is why it's not always recommended for all skin types. Both treatments work by removing top layers of the skin to encourage cell regeneration.
- **Laser Skin Resurfacing** – This procedure uses concentrated beams of light to improve skin tone, texture and fine lines and wrinkles. Laser skin resurfacing is also effective in treating redness and pigmentation, encouraging collagen production and removing unwanted body hair and scars. “Opt for a well-controlled laser with a skilled and qualified provider,” suggests Dr. Guanche. “Each of these procedures can work extremely well if performed in a series. Don't expect a one-and-done treatment, which can be harsh, risky and can lead to other problems such as hyperpigmentation, scarring or a white, shiny face.”

#### 5. Boost hydration with the right moisturizers.

Whether you have dry or oily skin, [moisturizing is important](#) to balance your skin's sebum production, prevent flaking and dry patches and replenish lost moisture. “Lotions and creams are oily products that can plump up some of the dead skin cells and provide a smoother-feeling texture by adding an oily layer to the surface,” explains Dr. Soohoo. “It can be made more effective by adding active ingredients to the lotion or cream. Think of the lotion or cream as the ‘base’ or vehicle for a more effective ingredient such as retinoid, growth factor, vitamin C or alpha/beta hydroxy acids.”

In choosing the right ingredients, taking note of your skin type and sensitivity is key. “It's also important to know whether you'll be treating other skin conditions such as acne, brown spots and eczema before trying anything new since choosing the wrong moisturizer can make your skin worse,” adds Dr. Soohoo. Your best bets are mild hydrating powerhouses like hyaluronic acid, glycerin and ceramides. For best results, apply your lotion or moisturizer on damp skin (or within three minutes of stepping out of the shower) to trap water, then follow up with a face or body oil to seal and lock in moisture.

#### 6. Hydrate your skin from within.

Take it from the French girls, and make water your best friend. Aside from helping to flush out toxins from your body, Dr. Guanche says, “The more water you drink, the more hydrated and plumper your cells become. The metabolic processes inside the cells can work most efficiently.” Drinking at least eight to ten glasses of water and eating at least five servings of fruits or vegetables per day are what Dr. Guanche recommends “to get all those micronutrients and antioxidants to maintain healthy skin. Remember to eat a rainbow—apples, oranges, banana, kiwi, blueberries and grapes!”

#### 7. Shun the sun.

It's no secret that [UV radiation is bad news for the skin](#). In fact, most of the skin damage in older patients is caused by a lifetime of unprotected sun exposure. “Chronic sun damage throughout our life has a cumulative effect of destroying the collagen and elastin that make up the connective tissues of our skin,” says board-certified dermatologist [Hal Weitzbuch](#).

Whether you're sipping a margarita by the beach or flying off to an alpine wonderland, broad-spectrum sun protection is key. Especially when you consider the fact that up to 80 percent of UV rays can penetrate cloud cover and can pass through glass and car windows. In the winter, the sun's rays can be reflected on the snow and bounce back, hitting your skin twice.

For daily use, opt for [broad-spectrum SPF 30](#) to give your skin adequate defense from both UVA and UVB rays. If spending an extended time outdoors, reach for SPF 50 or higher.

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