

28 WEEKENDER BEAUTY

PERFECTING PROBLEM SKIN



Cameron Diaz looks stunning here, but she knows only too well the nightmare of acne



She's got perfect skin, as the song goes. Here's how to give your skin the best chance to look fantastic. By **Shereen Low**

Perfect skin is high on every woman's wish list, along with slimmer thighs, a flatter tummy and bigger breasts. Good skin days are essential for our self-confidence, with 87% of women saying clear skin makes them more confident and lifts their mood, according to Neutrogena. For some, bad skin days occur more often than good ones. While we may get upset over a breakout of spots, they have to deal with adult acne, rosacea and uneven pigmentation on a daily basis.

ADULT ACNE

It may seem like a teenage condition, but some of the world's prettiest women, such as Cameron Diaz (above) and Lindsay Lohan, still suffer from acne. "Adult acne is drfer and can result in wrinkles," says dermatologist Dr Howard Murad. "You shouldn't treat it harshly with ingredients like benzoyl peroxide, which can irritate and dry out skin."

Lush's Helen Ambrosen agrees. "With acne, definitely the way to go is thorough but gentle. Proper cleansing is particularly important. If you play and poke around too much and use too many stringent products, you will provoke it, encouraging swelling deeper under the skin."

Dr Murad's Anti-Ageing Acne Treatment and NV Perricone Acne line have been created for adults. Dr Murad's full range, consisting of cleanser, toner and mask, is priced from £12.50 at Boots, while NV Perricone's, with cleanser, toning pads and moisturiser, are priced from £29.50 (0800 783 2583).

Other treatment regimes to try include Clinique's Anti-Blemish Solutions, from £10, Philosophy's Acne Kit, £36 (0870 990 8452), and pH Advantage Acne Treatment, from £25 at Strawberry andcream.com - all of them use the more gentle salicylic acid to smooth the skin and control excess sebum production. Superdrug's Clarity Skin Rescue, from £1.29, and Neutrogena Visibly Clear, from £3.99, are cheaper alternatives.

Dermologica's Medicated Clearing Gel, £25.80 (0800 591 818/1 800 556 785), and Ketsugo, £10.95 from Tesco, work best on stubborn spots.

MILIA

"Milia are those difficult little whiteheads that pop up on skin from time to time around the eyes and cheekbones. There is no simple way of getting rid of them, and the worst thing you can do is to squeeze them as it will leave scarring," Murad adds. "They shouldn't cause any problems to your daily life, but if you do want to get rid of them, get them professionally extracted."

Helen adds: "The best thing to do would be to keep your beauty routine simple and use calming and healing products around the area."

Try Lush's Enchanted Eye Cream, £8.25, containing lavender honey water and jojoba, or Liz Earle's Eyebright



Soothing Eye Lotion, £8 (01983 813 913/ www.lizearle.com).

ROSACEA

Symptoms of rosacea include reddening or flushing on the cheeks, forehead, nose, or chin, and sometimes acne-like symptoms. It can't be cured but can be controlled.

"Rosacea is an inflammatory response - people believe it happens after you've eaten too many spicy foods or drunk too much coffee, but that's not really true," explains Dr Murad.

"It's a chemical process, which is often triggered by the constant bombardment of internal and external things, such as the environment and diet especially too much red meats and processed foods. Minimise symptoms by using sunscreen with moisturiser, and eating foods rich in good omegas to encourage the body to store anti-inflammatory fats." Seaweed, aloe vera, camomile and liquorice extracts can help soothe the skin.

Gentle cleansers like Lush's Ultrabland, £4.50, Dr Hauschka Cleansing Cream, £12 (01386 791 022/ www.drhauschka.co.uk), and Dr Andrew Weil for Origins Mega-Mushroom Face Cleanser, £20, with liquorice extract and camomile, will help.

Tone down the flush with Clinique CX Redness Relief Cream, £65, Elemis Daily Redness Relief, £45 (01278 727 830/ www.elemis.com), or Dr Brandt Laser Relief, £63 from Space NK (020 8740 2085/



www.spacenk.com). Bargain buys include No7 Calm Skin Redness Relief Gel, £16, and Eau Thermale Avene Anti-Redness Rich Moisturising Cream, £12.95 (0845 117 0116).

UNEVEN PIGMENTATION

"Melasma is the most common form of pigmentation, and causes dark brown spots and patches usually on the cheeks, lips and forehead," Murad says.

"The main cause of it is from female sex hormones, which produces excess pigments, so it can affect pregnant women, or those taking birth control pills. Severe acne can also leave dark spots."

It can take a while to go away, so either obtain a prescription lightening cream or try brightening creams like Laura Mercier's Renewal Serum, £60 Space NK, Ella Bache Corrective Skin Lightening Serum, £53.50 from Hqhair.com, or Darphin's Instant Lumiere Brightening Cream, £50 (0870 034 2566).

Sothys W Lightening Touch-Up Powder, £24.85 (01303 262 666), and Coverderm Luminous Compact, £20.92 (0845 230 1087), conceal any imperfections. Crabtree & Evelyn's Fade Serum, £20 (01443 445 538/www.crabtree-evelyn.co.uk), and Skin Doctors Fade Away Pigmentation Lotion, £19.95 at Boots, can be applied directly onto patches.



BEAUTY SPOT 1

Fall in love with Yves Saint Laurent's new Fashion Bracelet. The eye-catching gold gem-clad charm secretly conceals an eye and lip make-up palette, with one copper and pink eyeshadow, Golden Burgundy lipstick and Frosted Pink gloss, and can be worn on the wrist, hooked onto a belt or a handbag. The bracelet costs £35 and is available now, but is limited edition, so you better hurry!

BEAUTY SPOT 2

Be kind to your hands with Ecosoapia's new range of organic liquid soaps. Made from pure natural ingredients using organic oils and plant extracts, there are seven scents - Rose Geranium, Lavender, Almond, Tea Tree, Eucalyptus, Peppermint and Unscented. They cost £6 each, and 10% of profits will go to charity - call 020 7289 2121 or see www.ecosoapia.com



BEAUTY SPOT 3

Getting something tailor-made for you is the epitome of personalised luxury. Wella's new colour system, Inspire by Koleston Perfect, can create any hair colour you want. Forget about swatches of colour, now you can choose exactly what permanent shades you want with Inspire, and whichever effects and accents you prefer. Log onto www.wella.co.uk to find your nearest Wella salon