

# SKIN SENSE: A GUIDE TO HEALTHY, HAPPY SKIN

By Robin Lee

A simple skincare guide with tips to help you renew and rejuvenate your skin from the inside out!

Just  
be  
your  
beautiful  
self

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## *Chapter 1: The Skin You're In*



We look at people all day long, every day. That's a lot of skin. And let's face it (pun intended) we make instant judgments about people based in part on their skin. A person's health and fitness level, attractiveness, and desirability – fortunately or unfortunately – often gets graded the moment you look at their face.

*Did you know your skin is the largest organ of your body and one that changes the most over your lifetime?*

Believe it or not, your skin, in addition to protecting you, is designed for sex - procreation - and biology promotes its prime directive. Basically, this means that the way we look during different stages of life is in large part genetically programmed for the purpose of keeping our beautiful species going.

Think about it. Baby skin is incredibly smooth and soft – it encourages its mother to care and protect it.

Teenage skin can become red, irritated, and angry looking – showing the hormonal changes and growth spurt of change from child to adult.

Skin in the childbearing years (the 20's and 30's) is designed genetically to be at its peak of health to attract a mate and produce kids!

The childbearing years put a lot of strain on the skin, and in the 20's and 30's problems related to hormonal changes during monthly cycles and pregnancy can cause massive changes in the skin – dark spots, acne, stretch marks. This is the time when your skin most likely will look its best but face a lot of challenges

Around the age of forty, the DNA instructions for renewing our skin basically stop. From an evolutionary standpoint, there's no pressure for survival once you aren't having children - so as far as our DNA is concerned, its job done. By 60 and beyond, women experience more than just skin changes; the skin is restructuring. There is a loss of the adipose tissue that fills out the "apples" of our cheeks, thinning of lips, jowls, etc. The skin is drier and less elastic.

Whatever skin phase of life you're in, understanding what it needs is critical to getting and keeping it healthy and happy. But though we have more information available to us than ever before to help us achieve the clear, smooth, supple, skin we crave – there's a lot of confusion about what works and what doesn't; what's real as supported by science and what's not. The skincare biz is an economic FORCE – about \$15 BILLION in anti-aging products alone. And with so many choices and so much conflicting information it's no surprise there are a lot of questions out there. . .

- What ingredients are proven to deliver a specific result? Why do they work?
- Why do I need one cream to tighten my pores, one for undereye dark circles, and one for toning and tightening?
- Are so called "natural" remedies better for my skin?
- Do I need to use separate products for daytime and evening?

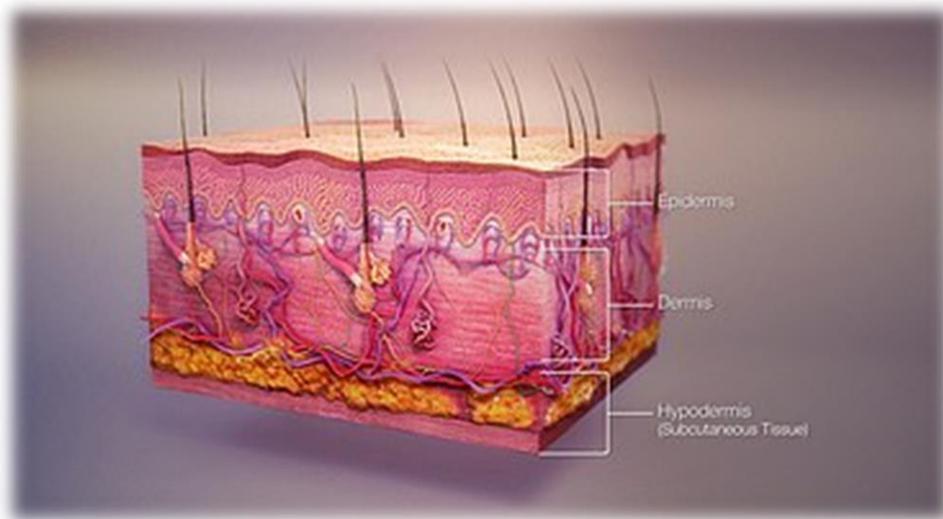
So, the first step that makes total skin sense is determining your skin type and/or skin condition. The skin you're in right now.

Ask anyone with great-looking skin and they'll probably tell you that they use products specifically formulated for their skin type and concerns.

Consider your body is just about the most incredible organism on the planet.

It's constantly working to regenerate and re-balance itself despite how it is treated. It's our home, temple, palace – but for many of us it's a cluttered basement level apartment. Skin Sense begins with you taking a good look at your skin, what you're feeding it, your lifestyle habits and how you feel about yourself and your self-care.

## Chapter 2: Skin Sense 101



To understand what to do to take care of your skin and what products will give you the most results, it helps to know a bit about how that outer covering on your body works.

For starters, your skin is the largest organ in your body. It protects all the other organs, keeps out bacteria and toxins, provides cover from the weather and generally keeps everything from falling to pieces. And It changes dynamically over the course of your life.

- The main skin layers are
  - the dermis – the lower, thick layer
  - the epidermis - the thin outer layer (about 20 cells deep)
- There's also a bottom layer of adipose tissue (fat layer) that protects the other 2

## How it all works:

The dermis is alive with cells called fibroblasts. The fibros are surrounded with stretchy fibers of collagen and elastin – these support the skin structure, kind of like a box spring supports the mattress on a bed.

The dermis is full of blood vessels that supply nutrients (aka FOOD) and remove waste. They contain nerves too which give your skin sensation and feeling. Your hair and sweat glands are located here and they wind their way out to the surface of the skin.

Resting on top of that pulsating dermis is the thin epidermis that contains cells called keratinocytes. The cells reproduce and divide extremely fast, but they only go one way – UP. Whenever the keratinocyte divides the newer cell is on the top. It's always growing (the entire process takes about 28 days from start to finish) so the old cells get pushed up to the outermost layer – the stratum corneum – which is basically a dead skin cell layer.

BUT even though the cells are dead, the stratum is important! It prevents water from escaping from the skin. Without this important barrier function, you'd dry up and evaporate – you'd look like a dried apricot in just a few hours. It also helps keep out bacteria and viruses - literally a life protector.

So why don't the old skin cells just flake off leaving your face a mess of dermal tissue? Those cells on the outside skin layer are stacked up kind of like roof shingles. When the cells reach the top layer, they flatten out and are mixed with "intercellular cement". This mixture is formed from:

Ceramides which are lipids or a type of oil. The ceramide molecule has 2 ends. The ends bind to other chemicals, so a kind of "mesh" gets formed. The mesh binds the flattened cells together to become the STRATUM CORNEUM.

Ok, that's a quick look at your skin bio. [Here's why you care:](#)

The entire process of forming all those skin layers has to do with DNA which programs our body at the cell level.

Our genetic code tells the cells what to do, how to act, when to act and when to change what's going on. When we get sick, and *especially as we age*, the DNA program is going to influence the cells to change direction.

When the cell gets signals from damaged skin, or during the aging process it can change direction and *follow a course that is harmful to the skin*.

You can change this for the better by introducing skincare ingredients that give the cells new direction – and reprogram the cell to change course and function.

If you understand that your skin is a product of millennia of biological evolution (and evolution doesn't care about modern health care advances – it's still functioning the same old way) you'll understand that there's a part of the process that's pretty much out of your control. And it begins pretty early in life (starts around the mid-20's). It's called

### ***INTRINSIC AGING***

- It's part of our genetics at the cell level and follows a specific direction
  - the outer skin barrier gets weaker
  - DNA repair becomes less and less efficient or able
  - Blood flow declines (check out very elderly skin which is almost transparent)
  - Collagen degrades (you lose volume)
  - You're more prone to chronic inflammation
  - The fat layer (that adipose tissue mentioned earlier) gets absorbed and your face starts to show a hollow look
  - Muscles supporting the skin weaken which causes that "jowly" look as well as thinner appearing lips, sagging earlobes and jutting cheekbones

Then there's another kind of aging that you CAN do something about, and you most definitely DO want to control it. And younger skins are not immune to it – in fact, many younger skins look much older than their years because of it.

It's called:

## ***EXTRINSIC AGING***

Meaning, it's driven by lifestyle.

The biggest factor – PHOTOAGING – or the extremely damaging effects of sun exposure. Regardless of what you've heard – there's no such thing as a healthy tan.

That darkening skin is a result of the cells rushing to combat what they perceive as inflammation (burning) of the skin.

Effects of sun damage include:

- Excess thickness
- Rough, flaky skin
- Wrinkled, mottled, uneven pigmentation (age spots)

Other extrinsic aging causes are smoking, poor nutrition, excessive alcohol, **STRESS**, and lack of sleep. If you play today, you're going to pay tomorrow – especially true as you get older. It's just a fact.

So, let's look at what's in your power to transform your skin.

## *Chapter 3: Inside Out Skin Care*



*"Let food be thy medicine, and medicine be thy food."*

*Hippocrates, ancient Greek physician and known as the father of medicine*

Our skin is the largest organ in our body, weighing around 8 pounds total. It's our first defense and protection from the elements. Environmental and lifestyle stressors like the climate we live in, seasonal changes, eating processed foods, drinking alcohol, smoking and stress all contribute to accelerated skin dehydration.

Most of us are aware by now that healthy skin starts from the inside and shows up on the outside. When we feed our body healthy food, our cells show their gratitude in how we feel and how we look. And your skin is more able to make normal cells, generate new collagen, and fight environmental damage.

*Side Note: Dry skin does NOT cause wrinkles.*

The myth of dry skin causing wrinkles probably persists because when you have dry skin wrinkles look more pronounced. To really change the appearance of wrinkles you need to replenish your skin with what's lost.

How do we know dry skin doesn't cause wrinkles? Because extensive research has shown that **sun damage, muscle movement, loss of estrogen, cellular aging, inflammation, free-radical damage, gravity, and fat movement** are what cause wrinkles (and sagging).

An anti-wrinkle diet can help you reverse the skin's aging process from the inside out. There's an important connection between diet and wrinkles and I'll explain how vitamin C, vitamin E, lean protein, coenzyme Q10, omega 3 fatty acids, vitamin A, beta-carotene, zinc, quercetin, selenium and low GI foods can help reduce the appearance of fine wrinkles and fine lines and promote the production of collagen.

### **#1: Load on Foods Rich in Vitamin C and Vitamin E**

Vitamin C is inarguably one of the most important vitamins in the battle against wrinkles. *Research has shown a direct link between low intakes of vitamin C and prevalence of a wrinkled appearance and dry skin.* Vitamin C is known to support collagen production and protect against damage from UV radiation. It may also help with pigmentation problems and inflammatory skin conditions. To enhance the anti-wrinkle effects of vitamin C, combine foods rich in vitamin C with foods that contain vitamin E, another vitamin that can protect the skin from the sun. Vitamin C and vitamin E protect each other and are more effective when consumed together.

### **#2: Up Your Lean Protein Intake**

Protein is crucial for maintaining youthful skin as it contains amino acids that are **essential to produce collagen and elastin**. Collagen and elastin give the skin its texture and ability to stretch. As we age, our collagen and elastin production decreases rapidly, which can show up as wrinkles and lines in the skin.

The most important amino acids for collagen and elastin production include glycine, proline, and lysine. These three amino acids are plentiful in several foods, including fish, eggs, meat, beans, nuts, and seeds.

### #3: Eat Plenty of Foods That Contain Coenzyme Q10

*Coenzyme Q10, found in spinach and several other foods, has strong antioxidant properties.*

Coenzyme Q10 (also known as ubiquinone or CoQ10) is a vitamin-like substance found in all human cells. The human body can synthesize some of its own CoQ10, but the production level declines dramatically as we age. CoQ10 is also found in several foods, the richest dietary sources being red meat — particularly organ meats such as liver and heart — and fresh sardines and mackerel. It is also found in some vegetables including spinach, broccoli, peanuts, whole grains, and wheat germ. Processing and cooking (particularly frying) significantly decrease the CoQ10 content of foods. Due to its *strong antioxidant properties and its ability to boost the antioxidant effects of vitamins C and E*, CoQ10 is an important nutrient for anybody who wants a healthy skin glow.

### #4: Watch out for Fats but Don't Eliminate the 'Good Fats'

A diet high in fat can contribute to wrinkles. That said, don't eliminate all fats from your diet. Essential fatty acids (EFAs) — found in large quantities in foods like nuts, seeds, fatty fish, and unrefined whole grains — are absolutely necessary for the proper functioning of the body and must be obtained through diet. Not only are EFAs needed for several bodily functions, but they **can also help fight wrinkles when consumed in moderate amounts**. They help moisturize the skin, keeping it soft and smooth.

Research also suggests that omega-3 fatty acids, a type of EFAs, can help **protect the skin from UV damage, and thus from premature aging and wrinkling**. The protective effects are believed to result from the anti-inflammatory properties of these fatty acids.

Today, most modern diets in Western countries lack enough of the anti-inflammatory omega-3 fatty acids. Good sources of omega-3 fatty acids include soybeans, flaxseeds, walnuts, and cold-water fish like salmon, cod, and halibut.

## #5: Consume Foods High in Vitamin A and Beta-Carotene

Vitamin A is an important nutrient **needed to maintain, protect, and repair skin**. A deficiency of vitamin A can cause skin rashes and dry skin. Beta-carotene — which is found in yellow/orange and green vegetables and fruit such as spinach, carrots, sweet potatoes, winter squash, mango, melon and apricots — also plays an important role in the fight against wrinkles due to its antioxidant properties as well as its role as a precursor to vitamin A.

## #6: Eat Quercetin Rich Foods

Flavonoids (also referred to as bioflavonoids) are natural compounds that give many plants, including fruits and vegetables, their vibrant colors and protect them from microbes and insects. Some of these compounds contain structural elements that allow them to act as antioxidants and devour free radicals, which defends in the battle against wrinkles.

Quercetin, one of the most abundant bioflavonoids in nature, is *particularly effective at scavenging free radicals. Quercetin is a super-antioxidant.*

Good dietary sources of quercetin include red and yellow onions, broccoli, capers, apples, red grapes, citrus fruits, cherries, tea, red wine, and many berries including raspberries, lingonberries, and cranberries.

## #7: Get Enough Selenium

There is a lot of buzz out there about the benefits of selenium – and improving dietary intake of this mineral through foods like Brazil nuts, cremini mushrooms, cod, shrimp, and halibut may help protect the skin from the damaging effects of the sun. A good quality supplement is beneficial too if your diet doesn't provide enough. The potential benefits of selenium on the skin are based on its role in the antioxidant system of the body: selenium is an important component of several enzymes involved in antioxidant defense. To get the most out of selenium's health benefits, combine selenium rich foods with foods high in vitamin E (selenium boosts the effectiveness of vitamin E).

## #8: Favor Complex over Simple Carbs

Carbohydrates — classified either as simple (single and double sugars) or complex (starchy foods) — are the primary source of energy for the human body. An anti-wrinkle diet should focus on complex carbs and limit the number of simple/double sugars. In one study, researchers gave 14 healthy subjects a drink containing 75 grams of glucose — the simplest form of sugar. This amount is roughly equivalent to the sugar content of two cans of a cola type drink. The control group were given a drink composed of water and the artificial sweetener saccharin.

Blood samples revealed that free radical generation increased significantly in the test subjects while there was no change in free radical formation in the control group.

Free radicals can contribute to wrinkles by damaging healthy collagen and elastin. In addition, simple sugars and refined carbohydrates generally lead to a quick rise in blood sugar levels, which in turn encourages inflammation on a cellular level, possibly contributing to saggy, wrinkled skin. And sugar can directly attach to the collagen in the skin, making the tissue stiff and saggy (a process known as glycation). Finally, sugar may deplete the body of some important wrinkle-fighting nutrients, including vitamin E and vitamin C.

## *6 FOODS FOR HYDRATION HEALTH*



Eating foods with a high concentration of water will help hydrate us from the inside. They're loaded with nutrients that feed our skin and they are readily available most of the year. The following have scientific evidence behind them that they provide a high concentration of supplemental water to help you get that dewy glow.

**Lemons & Limes:** They're about 88% water and are packed with Vitamin C, Vitamin B6 and potassium. The form of Vitamin C contained in lemons and limes is some of the most easily absorbed by the body and they uplift our spirits with their bright smell!

**Apples:** About 86% water and are deeply beneficial to the skin on a cellular level. Apples provide phytochemicals that feed the neurons and increase electrical activity in the brain. They cleanse our organs and lymphatic system and provide electrolytes and mineral salts that help rehydrate you after exercise or stress. A pure, powerful fruit!

**Melons:** Containing high levels of electrolytes, melons are about 90% water. The water in melon is close to our blood. Its potassium, sodium and glucose levels are bioavailable making melons a wonderfully hydrating food. They help our bodies flush out toxins, allowing the immune system to repair itself.

**Cucumbers:** This vegetable is almost completely water – about 97%. They help cool down the adrenals and kidneys that help aid in the filtering process.

They deliver trace minerals and amino acids to neurotransmitters which has a calming influence on the body – literally – cool as a cucumber.

**Radishes:** At 95% water, radishes are incredibly healthful to the heart. They help reduce bad cholesterol and increase the good one. The green part on the top is particularly powerful – it's full of antioxidants, phytochemicals and cancer fighting alkaloids. The Sulphur in radishes helps clean arteries and veins and stop plaque from adhering to the lining of blood vessels.

**Blueberries:** Especially the wild variety, blueberries are considered one of the world's healthiest foods. They're about 84% water and contain amino acids and polyphenols which help in the detoxing of heavy metal in the body. These blue boys help brighten and repair the skin and provide more antioxidants than green tea.

## *Chapter 4: 10 No Hype Skin Care Ingredients that Really Work*



In addition to adopting a healthy diet and lifestyle, there are well-researched and results driven skincare ingredients to help your skin look its best. For this little “shook” (short, helpful book) I’ve chosen 10 of my go-to’s – available either as supplements or in skincare formulations.

**1. Vitamin A – Retinol.** It helps skin cells create better, healthier skin cells and has been shown to increase the skin's collagen production and glycosaminoglycans content, resulting in firmer skin with an improved texture and enhanced barrier function. It’s pretty much the gold standard when it comes to addressing fine lines and wrinkles and blemish prone skin.

**2. Vitamin C.** A potent antioxidant, Vitamin C has been shown to increase collagen production (including dermal collagen, which is significant for wrinkle reduction), reduce the appearance of skin discolorations (pigmentation), strengthen skin's barrier response, enhance skin's repair process, reduce inflammation, and help skin better withstand exposure to sunlight, whether protected by sunscreen or not.

*Research has shown a direct link between low intakes of vitamin C and prevalence of a wrinkled appearance and dry skin.*

**3. Alpha & Beta Hydroxy Acids:** AHAs are derived from sugar and fruit and are best for normal-to-dry, sun-damaged, and mature skin because they help bind moisture and improve healthy collagen production and smooth uneven skin texture. BHA (willow bark – salicylic acid) is best for normal-to-oily or breakout-prone skin as it penetrates the skin follicle to dissolve skin debris and sebum which can cause breakouts.

**4. Vitamin E:** Works in several different ways including helping to protect cell membranes from oxidative damage and preventing collagen from being destroyed. It also works in powerful synergy with vitamin C. Vitamin E on an ingredient label may be listed as tocopheryl acetate, tocopheryl linoleate, tocotrienols, alpha tocopherol and tocopheryl succinate.

**5. Niacinamide:** A component of vitamin B3 that has been shown to increase ceramide and free fatty acid levels in skin, preventing skin from losing water content. It also stimulates microcirculation in the dermis.

**6. Allantoin:** In its organic form, allantoin is found in several plants, such as sugar beet, comfrey, chamomile, tobacco seed, and wheat sprouts. Its gentle, non-irritating qualities make it an excellent addition to anti-aging products and for those with sensitive or easily irritated skin. Allantoin is a known keratolytic, meaning that it can increase the water content of cells. Allantoin also helps to increase skin smoothness, aids in wound healing and promote cell proliferation and longevity.

**7. Evening Primrose Oil:** This omega packed oil significantly reduces redness and irritation from a variety of skin conditions. It also has wound-healing properties. For fighting wrinkles, it is one of the top superstars and is an excellent inflammatory fighter for conditions like dermatitis, eczema and for rash, irritation, or skin redness.

**8. Sodium Hyaluronate (Hyaluronic Acid):** Sodium hyaluronate (hyaluronic acid) is a natural moisturizing polysaccharide present in the skin that holds 100 times its weight in water and diminishes with age. Every skin type can benefit from adding hyaluronic acid to their skin care routine.

**9. Peptides:** Peptides are created when several amino acids link together. Amino acids are the smallest building blocks of protein. Different numbers of links create different forms of peptides. For example, when five amino acids link, they create a pentapeptide. Peptide combinations include palmitoyl tripeptide-1 (three amino acids), palmitoyl tetrapeptide (four amino acids), and hexapeptide-2 (five amino acids). Certain peptides can have an immediate effect on the skin by softening fine lines and wrinkles and improving the appearance of skin tone. One of the most effective in skin care, Matrixyl 3000, works to mimic the appearance of this broken-down collagen, causing your skin to naturally react by producing more collagen. It's been shown in studies to be as effective as retinol at healing wrinkles and skin damage, while lacking the irritation and downtime that often accompanies retinoid products.

**10. Clays:** Mineral-rich clays such as kaolin, diatomaceous earth, and illite help cleanse deeply and draw impurities from the skin. Kaolin's unique properties help refine the complexion and make skin smoother and more flawless. Diatomaceous earth is a naturally occurring, soft, sedimentary rock that is easily crumbled into a fine powder, and is abundant in polysaccharides, vitamins B12 and C, proteins, and essential amino acids. This fine powder helps tone and refine the skin's texture, lessening the appearance of visible imperfections. Illite is a clay crystalline mineral that deep cleans, exfoliates, and helps remove excess oils from the skin.

## Chapter 5: What Your Skin Doesn't Need



The average woman uses 5–12 different products on her skin every day — basically an untested chemical soup that could be damaging. One of the first things to check are your products ingredient list for synthetic chemicals.

Synthetic additives in cosmetics are largely unregulated by the FDA, yet many of these compounds have been proven to disrupt health on several levels. And some chemicals used in mainstream cosmetics and creams can generate free radicals and inflammation, undermining their claims of being youth-enhancing.

These have been classified as “The Dirty Dozen” - Ingredients to Avoid In Your Skincare:

1. **ALUMINUM:** A toxic metal that can have estrogen-like effects in our systems, disrupting the healthy functioning of the endocrine system. It's found in almost every personal care product, especially antiperspirant deodorants.
2. **DEA (diethanolamine), MEA (Monoethanolamine), and TEA (triethanolamine):** A clear, colorless, viscous liquids with ammonia-like odors. They are often found in products that foam like facial cleansers and soaps. They are also found in eye makeup, fragrances, hair products, and sunscreens.
3. **DMDM HYDANTOIN & UREA (Imidazolidinyl):** Preservatives that often release formaldehyde which may cause joint pain, skin allergies, headaches, and loss of sleep.

Found in skincare products, cosmetics, shampoos and conditioners, and detergents.

4. **MINERAL OIL:** A petroleum by-product that coats the skin like plastic, clogging pores. This is incredibly harmful because it interferes with skin's ability to eliminate toxins, therefore increasing likelihood of acne and other disorders. Found in creams, lotions, ointments, and cosmetics.

5. **PARABENS (Methyl, Butyl, Ethyl, Propyl):** These are not always labeled, used as preservatives, and may contribute to hormone imbalance. Found everywhere - including skincare products such as moisturizers and deodorants. Check ingredients list carefully.

6. **PEG (Polyethylene glycol):** This can alter and reduce the skin's natural moisture factor. It adjusts the melting point and thickens products. Found in cleansers to dissolve oil and grease.

7. **PHTHALATES:** Chemicals used to increase flexibility and strength of plastics, and not often listed among the ingredients on products. Found in cosmetics such as fragrance oils and listed under the term "fragrance".

8. **PROPYLENE GLYCOL (PG) & BUTYLENE GLYCOL:** Gaseous hydrocarbons which in a liquid state act as "surfactant". They penetrate the skin so quickly and can weaken the protein and cellular structure. Usually used to make extracts from herbs.

9. **SILOXANES:** Look for ingredients ending in "-siloxane" or "-methicone." Used in a variety of cosmetics to soften, smooth, or moisten. A suspected endocrine disrupter and reproductive toxicant (cyclotetrasiloxane). Harmful to fish and other wildlife.

10. **SODIUM LAURYL SULFATE (SLS) & SODIUM LAURETH SULFATE (SLES):**

Detergent that makes products foam, lather, and bubble. Usually found in 90% of personal-care products that foam!

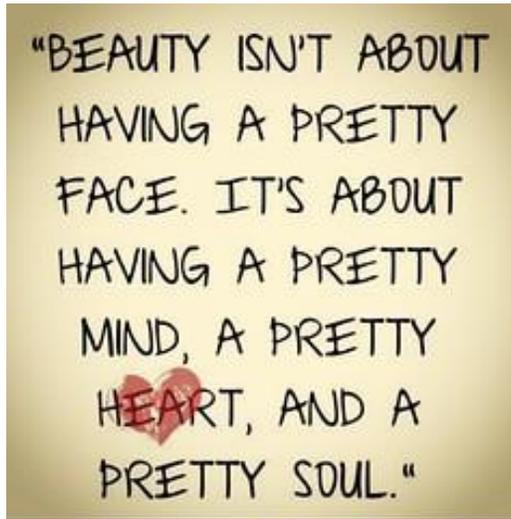
11. **SYNTHETIC FRAGRANCES:** Anything synthetic or artificial is a RED FLAG raiser. These are made up of hundreds to thousands of different ingredients not listed on the label, so you are never sure what you are exposed to. They are usually found in cosmetic and skincare products but also many household products such as candles, air fresheners, and scented trash bags.

12. **TRICLOSAN:** A synthetic antibacterial agent that may disrupt thyroid function and can degrade into a form of dioxin, a class of chemicals linked to a broad range of toxicities including cancer. Found in soaps, mouthwash, shaving cream, deodorants, and toothpastes.

Take the time to read, read, read ingredient lists on skincare products carefully! Stay as close as you can to natural, organic products made with ingredients whose names you can pronounce!

*For more information or to research the safety of ingredients of a particular product, visit the [Campaign for Safe Cosmetics website](#).*

## *Chapter 6: Be Your Beautiful from the Inside Out*



Your face tells a story. How we look on the outside reflects how we feel on the inside. But how does the whole connection thing work?

I'm a research geek so discovering a scientific link between **feeling good inside and having beautiful skin on the outside** was exciting.

An emerging field called *psychodermatology* studies the relationship between the mind and skin and evaluates how our skin manifests what's happening inside us. From there we can learn how we can heal and beautify our skin by creating a happier inner life.

Before I begin any facial procedure, the first thing I ask a client with an apparent skin condition (rosacea, blemish breakouts, rashes, etc.) is if there is any particular stress in their life at that moment that could be contributing to the condition. Often, I'll get a blank or surprised look – mostly because in our Western culture we aren't taught to take the whole mind-body self into consideration when it comes to "dis-ease."

Allopathic medicine focuses on the treatment of disease and its symptoms – not how to prevent it.

It breaks the body down into little parts and either chemically suppresses the symptoms of illnesses or surgically removes them – which in many cases masks the basic body-mind-spirit imbalance instead of healing it. We spend billions of dollars a year looking for the next new “best kept secret in a bottle” skin care ingredient and are usually disappointed with either no results or results that don’t last. I still buy into the quick fix skin hype from time to time – but I’ve never experienced the amazing results promised! Anyone ever tried Crepe Erase body cream? Despite what I know, the hope that this might just be the wonder product that will – fill in the blank – is sometimes hard to resist.

We won’t find the secret in a bottle because the secret is inside of us! Not that there aren’t great skincare products out there that can help us achieve our glowing, healthy skincare goals. But their results are much more effective when we’re taking care of ourselves from the inside out.

*A “meta-study” published by the British Journal of Dermatology found that changing negative thought patterns and cultivating a meditation practice helped heal skin diseases and inflammation in more than 900 patients across 22 studies.*

Reading this was empowering for me, because it confirmed what I have come to believe—**when I feel healthy, happy, and positive about my life, the results show up on the outside.**

Stress causes inflammation in the body. It is an automatic response (the hormone cortisol is released) that the body uses to protect us from threats to our safety. Now that’s useful if you’re trying to escape from a burning building or if a tiger is chasing you. Fight or flight syndrome – I’m sure you’ve heard of it. But when it happens often or daily to stress that isn’t a threat, eventually our systems get worn down. Inflammatory response is constantly being activated and that can mean problems for your skin.

Known as the “stress hormone,” cortisol triggers inflammation—and inflammation *breaks down collagen, which is the protein that keeps skin plump, firm, and vital.* As more cortisol is released, more skin cells become inflamed and sap the collagen supply.

No topical skin care serum, cream or treatment will deliver lasting results if the skin is constantly stressed. On the flip side, a good skin care product's ability to repair is majorly enhanced when stress is reduced or absent.

One recent study showed a 20% decrease in cortisol levels after four months of regular meditation.

Meditation or even just taking a few minutes to relax every day helps our bodies and brains decompress. When your system is free from its need to combat the stress response, it has more energy available to heal and repair.

In one study, psoriasis sufferers listened to meditation tapes while receiving UV light treatments—and **healed four times as fast as the non-meditators.**

### **Break the cortisol-inflammation connection.**

Any amount of mindful awareness you bring to your day reduces your cortisol levels and calms inflammation. That will lead to more radiant skin. Go easy on yourself, don't expect perfection, and experiment with practicing loving self-care in whatever small ways feel accessible to you.

Before you know it, you'll be chilling out your neural pathways, calming down your fight-or-flight responses, and nurturing your skin's innate ability to heal and repair itself.

(You might even find a more radiant reflection looking back at you in the mirror!)

## *Chapter 7: Inflammation*



Inflammation is so destructive to the skin and is so prevalent that I've devoted another short chapter to it. Dr. Nicholas Perricone, author of *The Wrinkle Cure* and *The Perricone Promise*, was among the first to introduce a new way of thinking about skin care that focused on inflammation. By the time a woman notices visible signs of aging (usually in her late 30's or early 40's), it's highly likely that her body has been exposed to ***low-grade inflammation for years***.

*Inflammation* is ideally a normal, short-term natural immune response that involves the release of immune cells by your body to counteract infection and heal trauma. Once the danger is past, the response is supposed to turn off. If it stays activated, immune cells will remain in circulation and can damage healthy cell functions like natural skin rejuvenation and turnover.

### *Some causes of internal inflammation:*

- Undiagnosed food sensitivities & leaky gut
- High-sugar diet
- Additives, artificial sweeteners, and trans fats
- Stress, stress, stress
- Hormonal imbalance
- Toxin or prescription drug overload
- Sedentary lifestyle
- Autoimmune disorders

Eating too much sugar or high-glycemic food ultimately leads to a process in which sugar molecules in the blood bond to proteins and DNA. This process is *known as AGE (advanced glycation ends)*. Eventually the process affects collagen proteins, changing their shape, flexibility, elasticity, and function. The result is premature aging (wrinkles, sagging, loss of volume) and additional inflammation.

### *External causes of inflammation*

- Sun exposure
- Harsh or constant exposure to weather
- Yeast, bacteria, parasites and/or other infections
- Environmental toxins and pollution
- Smoking, excessive consumption of alcohol
- Certain chemicals in skincare and other self-care products

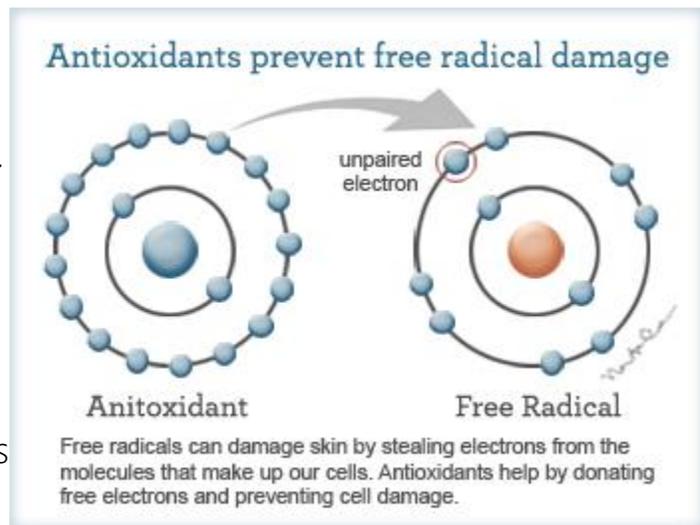
These factors can weaken collagen, dilate surface blood capillaries, and clog pores. How these effects show up in the skin varies from person to person, but for most of us they appear as uneven skin tone, infrequent or chronic outbreaks and, of course, wrinkles and other signs of premature aging.

To significantly improve the tone and texture of your skin, you need to calm inflammation in 2 ways:

1. *Neutralize free radicals (unstable oxygen molecules created by the above causes) both inside and out.*
2. *Boost immune function through good nutrition, supplementation, hormonal balance, detoxification, and topical support.*

Neutralizing free radicals — antioxidants to the rescue!

Many of the external causes listed above create free radicals in the body, which leads to inflammation. Free radicals are highly unstable oxygen molecules missing a single electron in their outer ring. Electrons travel in pairs so free radicals “steal” electrons from healthy cells which hurts those cells and sets off a complicated inflammatory response.



*Antioxidants are molecules that inhibit the oxidation of other molecules.* They neutralize free radicals and stop minor inflammation by “sacrificing” one of their electrons without a negative effect. *Since free radicals are always present in our bodies, we must have a constant supply of antioxidant nutrients to keep our skin cells healthy.* And what’s very cool is research shows that antioxidants may encourage our cells’ enzymes to repair damage. Cells have an amazing ability to heal themselves, but the process does become less efficient as we grow older.

Getting antioxidant protection from supplements, quality skin care products and food sources is especially important.

*Ingredients helpful to inflammation issues:*

- Vitamin C (found in plant-based foods)
- Vitamin E, specifically *high potency tocotrienols* (good sources are rice bran oil and palm fruit oil)
- Coenzyme Q-10 (or *ubiquinol*, found naturally in our cells but decreases after age 20)
- Alpha-lipoic acid (ALA, available from both plant and animal sources)
- Dimethylaminoethanol (DMAE, found in fish)
- Carotenoids (phytonutrients found in the red, yellow, and orange flesh of plant leaves, flowers, and fruits)
- Bioflavonoids (good sources include green tea, soy isoflavones, red wine, and other plant-derived foods)

## *Chapter 8: True & False of Natural and Organic Skincare*



There's a lot of information and misinformation out there regarding organic and natural foods and products. It's important to know what constitutes a "natural" versus "organic" product to be able to separate fact from fiction. Here are a few true & false – see how you do!

**THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS CHEMICAL FREE. (TRUE)**

Everything is made of chemicals – including our bodies. Plants are the same – they contain carbon, nitrogen, sulfur, chlorine, etc. The benefits to the skin are because of their special chemical components. Using the term "chemical free" is not only wrong – it shows a misunderstanding of science.

**NATURALS ARE LESS LIKELY TO CAUSE ALLERGIES/REACTIONS/SENSITIVITIES (FALSE)**

Many allergies are caused by proteins which are commonly found in plant extracts. Its possible natural ingredients may be more likely to cause a reaction. Also, anyone can be sensitive or reactive to anything – including plants.

Plants have complex chemical makeups, so the skin is exposed to a lot of components interacting with each other and with the skin.

## THERE'S A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN NATURAL AND ORGANIC. (TRUE)

The term organic is regulated by the USDA (Dept. of Agriculture) which determines that the ingredients have been grown under certain conditions. Certified organic means the majority of the ingredients in the product have been grown from certified organic sources.

Natural can mean that much of the ingredients are derived from natural sources but are mixed or suspended with ingredients that are not naturally sourced.

## MANY CHEMICALS IN PRODUCTS COME FROM PLANT SOURCES. (TRUE)

Examples include salicylic acid (willow bark), AHA's like glycolic (sugar cane) and lactic acid (milk). Many prescription drugs come from plant sourced components.

## PRODUCTS MADE WITH NATURAL INGREDIENTS DON'T NEED PRESERVATION. (FALSE)

Preservation of some kind is necessary to kill bacteria and other contaminants. Mostly natural and/or organic products may spoil or oxidize faster, therefore preservation is extremely important.

## SOME NATURAL PRODUCTS WORK EFFECTIVELY JUST AS THEY COME FROM NATURE. (TRUE)

Examples include Aloe Vera Gel, Green Tea, and arnica. All can be used in their original state.

## NATURAL INGREDIENTS IN PRODUCTS ARE MORE EFFECTIVE. (FALSE)

No evidence exists that a chemical extracted from a plant is more effective than one produced in a lab.

## EDUCATION IS THE KEY TO UNDERSTANDING INGREDIENTS. (TRUE)

There is so much out there to study and learn about ingredients and new and changing information is constantly being discovered. Educate yourself on skincare products and their ingredients. Look for good, non-biased classes, webinars, books, and videos. Or ask our [student estheticians and instructors](#) – they're always happy to answer your skin sense questions!

## *Chapter 9: Creating Your Personalized Skin Care Routine*



Here's where the rubber meets the road. Taking care of your skin (hopefully) is something you already do regularly. Great! The good news is even if you've neglected or mistreated your skin there's always time for repair. And it doesn't have to be complicated. You do have to use quality products, however, and you do have to commit to daily care.

Healthy eating, staying away from simple carbs and sugar, minimizing or eliminating smoking and alcohol, wearing sunscreen and a hat (always!), drinking lots of water, getting adequate sleep and dropping the stress level down a few notches are going to weigh in with a lot more importance with each passing year. That's just how it is, and you'll feel tons better if you don't fight it. That said, your life is your own and you make all the decisions. Even if you decide "healthyish" is the best you can do – bravo!

I found that I do feel and look better when I stay close to my personal health regimen, but I don't beat myself up anymore if a day goes by and the closest thing to a fruit or vegetable that I've eaten is a gummy vitamin.

The first step in building your own skin care routine is determining your skin type.

Ask anyone with great-looking skin and they probably tell you that they use products specifically formulated for their skin type and concerns.

### Must Have Products for Your Routine

Regardless of skin type or concern, there are a few non-negotiable products you'll need.

**Cleanser:** You MUST wash your face. Morning and evening. Period. Look for a cleanser that is formulated for your skin type to get the best results.

Oily or blemish prone skin types need to cleanse away impurities and surface debris without stripping – think: Rosehip Seed Cleanser or AHA/BHA Cleanser (Alpha & Beta Hydroxy natural acids which cleanse and exfoliate). For dry, dehydrated, or mature skin, try our Moor Lavender Creamy Cleanser or Green Tea Cleanser (great for sensitive skin). These mild cleansers will provide your skin with a hydrating, soothing cleanse. For gentle exfoliation, AHA/BHA Cleanser can be substituted a couple of times a week to remove buildup of dead surface skin cells.

**Moisturizer:** EVERYONE needs to use a moisturizer. If you have dry or mature skin, you probably include moisturizers in your routine to help replenish hydration levels. Heavier lipid levels are usually necessary for drier skin – like our Super Emollient Crème or Advanced Moisture Crème.

But if you've got oily or blemish prone skin, you might think it's ok skip moisturizing. You would be wrong. When oily skin gets too stripped from over drying cleansers or treatments, it signals to the skin that it is dehydrated. The puts the sebaceous glands into overdrive to produce more oil to compensate for a perceived lack of moisture. Use a lightweight, non-comedogenic moisturizer like our Herbal Complex Crème or Marine Hydration Crème which will provide needed hydration without a greasy or heavy feel.

For special treatments – [Advanced Vitamin C Crème](#) helps brighten and even out skin tone while providing antioxidant protection from free radical damage. [Vitamin A Crème](#) combats the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles and diminishes and heals breakouts. Both are natural and organic plant-based forms of vitamin c and retinol (vitamin A).

**Broad-Spectrum Sunscreen:** The other [non-negotiable product in your routine is sunscreen](#). The sun's rays are at work every day, all year long, rain or shine, contributing to photo aging and permanent skin damage. Look for a physical (think natural, without harmful chemicals) that contains at least an SPF 30. [Our Raw Elements Tinted Moisturizer SPF 30](#), which comes in both a lighter foundation-like airless pump and a heavier solid protects your skin from harmful UV rays while moisturizing in an easy, natural looking tint.

### Want to go a step further?

Once you've got your basic arsenal complete, think about boosting your routine to address those individual skin care concerns. Your routine can be as basic or complex as you choose – and your personal esthetician can help you build a customized home care regimen!

And remember, your routine needs to change from time to time due to changes in your health, stress levels, diet, climate, weather and seasons. Check in every so often to make sure it includes everything you'll need to get the results you want.

Here are a few add-on's I recommend when you're ready to take it to the next level:

**Toner:** [Toners can help](#) to remove excess dirt, oil, and impurities that may be lingering on your skin's surface even after cleansing.

They help balance the skin's pH—which is especially helpful if you have hard water and prep the skin for the next layer of treatment (serum and moisturizer).

**Serum:** Serums are the work horses of skin care. Their smaller molecular weight helps them penetrate deeper into the skin's layers, delivering their active ingredients.

Used after cleansing and toning and before moisturizing, your serum addresses a variety of skin conditions (lines, wrinkles, blemishes, redness, dry or dull and uneven skin tone and texture) We recommend adding [antioxidant Vitamin C serum](#) into your routine and layering it under your sunscreen each day. But don't stop there - try our [Evening Primrose Oil](#) which is an amazing healer for just about everything from wrinkles to breakouts and inflammation.

**Eye Cream:** For some people, eye cream is essential, for others it's an option. For under-eye dark circles, or puffiness, an eye cream should be a part of your routine. Our deeply hydrating [Collagen Eye Crème](#) (with shea butter) locks in moisture and minimizes appearance of fine the [Advanced Peptide Eye Gel](#) soothes, calms, and reduces puffiness.

**Exfoliator:** We think this is a must have for clear, glowing skin. Surface skin cell build up causes dull-looking skin and can contribute to uneven texture, enlarged looking pores and breakouts. Exfoliating even once a week can make a huge difference. We have options for every preference – [Enzyme Peeling Creme \(if you prefer a gentle manual scrub\)](#), [Glycagel 15%](#) (a mild form of glycolic acid gel which can be left on the skin) and active physical exfoliators that utilize enzymes from yummy pineapple and pumpkin.

That's a start, but there's a lot more you can do! Pay attention to your skin health – inside and out – and it will reward you with a radiance and glow that everyone will notice!



*We hope you've enjoyed this little "shook" (short-helpful-book). Please visit the [Euro Institute of Skin Care](#) to find out how you can become a holistically trained esthetician, tour our facility, or sign up for our monthly Open House.*

*Visit our [Products Page](#) to view our signature line of carefully crafted skincare products or [email our spa](#) to book a facial or treatment at our spa clinic.*