

# Look younger in 28 days

Embrace vanity! People who appear more youthful tend to live longer, according to a study from the University of Southern Denmark in Odense. This easy, four-week skin-perfecting plan will leave you glowing, whatever your age. **By Lindsay Van Gelder**

## Week 1 Recharge your body and mind

### Get some beauty sleep

When you hit the sack at night, your skin goes into repair mode. Blood flow increases and with it, skin's oxygen supply; amino acids also kick into action, producing collagen, which helps fight lines. But you can reap the benefits only if you're sleeping enough (about eight hours). Fortunately, it's simple to fit in more and higher-quality shut-eye. First, avoid that gory Stephen King novel and the nightly news right before you go to sleep. "Violent subject matter can make you restless," says Susan Zafarlotfi, Ph.D., clinical director of sleep-wake disorders at Hackensack University Medical Center in New Jersey. And skip your late-night glass of vino. "You may nod off faster, but you're apt to be tossing and turning in a few hours." A healthier way to feel tranquil: "Put away your worries when you put on your pajamas," Zafarlotfi says. Stash the laptop and laundry out of sight.

### Break a sweat daily

Exercise gets the circulation going, pumps oxygen into vital organs and tissues, releases endorphins and fights stress—all of which are beneficial to your skin (not to mention your heart, lungs, muscles and mood). "Lower-body workouts are best at boosting blood flow, because they use your biggest muscles," says Julie Bobek, a personal trainer in New York City. (Stair climbing, the elliptical trainer, cycling or doing squats and lunges are all good picks.) Getting physical also improves fluid drainage in your face. "Your under-eye area will look dramatically less puffy if you simply work up a sweat for 20 minutes," says Ellen Marmur, M.D., chief of dermatologic and cosmetic surgery at the Mount Sinai Medical Center in NYC. But be sure to end your workout at least a few hours before you turn in for the night, or else those post-exercise feel-good hormones might make you too wired to drop off quickly.



The sun is a source of vitamin D as well as a sleep enhancer. Just smooth on sunscreen to protect from damaging rays.

### REV UP YOUR RESULTS

Reason #267 to ease up on sugar: Research suggests that when sugar binds to collagen's skin-plumping fibers, they can stiffen, possibly causing wrinkles. New topicals claim to help break the sugar-collagen bond.



Chanel Précision Ultra Correction Line Repair Intensive Anti-Wrinkle Day Fluid SPF 15, \$125, may lower sugar levels in skin.



A gel wash that pampers skin: Purpose Gentle Cleansing Wash, \$6

ARTHUR BELEBEAU: STILL LIFES (EXCEPT OIL OF OLAY); LUCAS VISSER: SEE GET-IT GUIDE.

## Week 2 Focus on the basics

### Swap soap for a kinder, gentler option

Regardless of your complexion type or age, it's crucial to wash off the day's grime and makeup before you slip between the sheets. (Unless you perspire a lot while you sleep, you probably don't need to wash your face in the morning.) For the best results, choose a simple, mild cleanser rather than bar soap, according to Jessie Cheung, M.D., assistant professor of dermatology at New York University Medical Center in NYC. That's because harsh soaps often contain stripping surfactants (the chemicals that create all that lather), causing dryness and exacerbating the appearance of fine lines.

### Shield your skin

We know you're sun-smart, but we'll say it again (and again!): You have to wear a sufficient amount of broad-spectrum sunscreen. Every. Single. Day. There's plenty of proof as to why. The sun is responsible for up to 90 percent of premature aging, according to the Skin Cancer Foundation in NYC. Yet only 20 percent of Americans wear sunscreen 365 days a year, finds a survey by Neutrogena and the American Society for Dermatologic Surgery in Rolling Meadows, Illinois. Get into the habit of applying one full teaspoon of an SPF-laced product to your face and neck every morning (even when it's overcast or raining), and always select the best type of product for your skin's needs. Sunscreens made with physical blockers such as titanium dioxide and zinc oxide are effective at preventing a wide range of rays from penetrating skin, but these formulas can appear chalky (especially on dark skin), which makes them tough to wear under makeup. So use these skin protectors on your body rather than on your face; from the neck up, try a product that contains chemical blends, like Mexoryl or avobenzone. These also guard skin from UVA and UVB rays, but they're lightweight, glide on smoothly and disappear into skin.



Neutrogena Spectrum+ Advanced Sunblock Lotion SPF 100, \$12, has potent chemical sunscreens.

### REV UP YOUR RESULTS

Grab a moisturizer that offers instant benefits and prevents future damage. Look for one with sunscreen (to ward off UV rays and the free radicals they produce) plus potent antiagers like peptides, which help collagen production.



Peptide-rich Olay Professional Pro-X Age Repair Lotion SPF 30, \$42, builds collagen.

# Week 3 Reveal smoother skin

## Help your cells along

As early as your mid 20s, skin-cell turnover slows from about once every 21 days to every 30 days; by your 40s, total turnover takes around 40 days. To look more luminous, remove dead skin cells yourself. Your best bet is to use an exfoliator that tricks your complexion into renewing itself more rapidly. Retinoids, the Rx version of vitamin A, are best for speeding cell turnover, as well as amping up collagen and reducing fine lines. You'll find this powerhouse ingredient in prescription-strength Retin-A and Renova. Retinol, the over-the-counter cousin of retinoid, is also an effective line- and acne fighter, though both products can cause redness and flaky skin. "Don't overdo it on these. It's best to apply only a pea-sized amount for your entire face and neck," says Ranella Hirsch, M.D., a dermatologist in



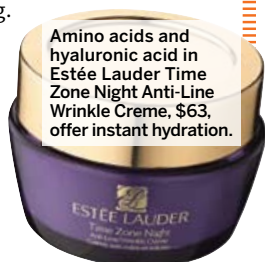
Line-lessening Peter Thomas Roth Retinol Fusion PM, \$65, contains skin-soothing vitamins.

Boston. To gauge if you're using the right amount, "place a tissue against your face. If it falls off, you haven't overapplied."

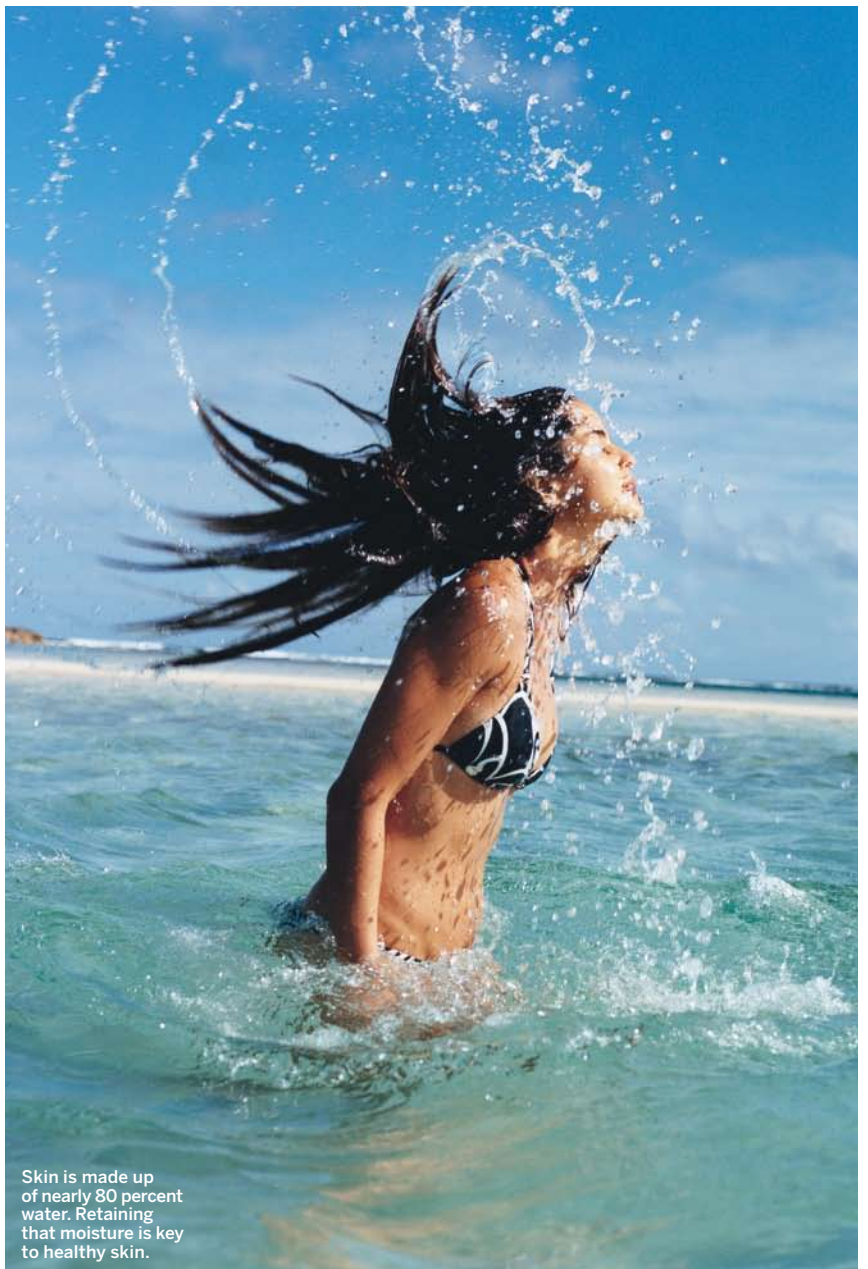
## Don't forget to moisturize

Because you're removing the top layer of dead cells, your skin requires extra TLC, both in the morning and at night. Applying a face cream daily helps prevent and soothe irritation as well as replenish skin's natural moisture. "Use as thick a formula as your skin can tolerate without breaking out," advises Dr. Marmur, who suggests products with water-attracting hyaluronic acid and glycerin. If you're prone to acne, try an oil-free gel formula or a lotion that replaces moisture but won't clog pores. And don't skip moisturizer in summer. Although higher humidity can keep skin feeling dewy, intense heat and sunlight are drying.

(If anything, skin needs more attention at the end of the season, after all the exposure to the elements.)



Amino acids and hyaluronic acid in Estée Lauder Time Zone Night Anti-Line Wrinkle Creme, \$63, offer instant hydration.



Skin is made up of nearly 80 percent water. Retaining that moisture is key to healthy skin.

**REV UP YOUR RESULTS** Serums are getting a lot of buzz lately, and for good reason: They can be infused with high levels of active ingredients and their lightweight consistency allows them to seep more deeply into skin, Dr. Hirsch says. Look for antiagers such as firming peptides, skin-repairing growth factors and botanicals, as well as pigment-reducing niacinamide (vitamin B). We like Dior Hydra Life Skin Energizer Pro-Youth Serum, \$73.

# Week 4 Fall for antioxidants

## Prevent sun damage

Once you have your essential skin routine down, you're ready to add antioxidants to the mix. Why isn't mere sunscreen enough? Antioxidants form a protective shield on skin, guarding it from pollution and free radicals, which assault and age your complexion over time. "When you leave your house, you lock your doors to prevent burglars from breaking in; that's like applying sunscreen," Dr. Hirsch says. "But sometimes, even if you lock up, robbers can still find a way inside. SPF is not foolproof—some UV light will slip through and cause dark spots, lines and crepeyness." Think of antioxidants as a burglar alarm of sorts, your skin's second-tier defense system against environmental damage. Key antioxidants to look for: vitamin C and E, coffeeberry, green tea, coenzyme Q10, idebenone (the synthetic version of CoQ10), pomegranate and resveratrol (the antioxidant in red wine). You'll typically find these in serum or liquid form, so they won't leave a film on skin or mess up your makeup. Apply them before you put on moisturizer and sunscreen. "But don't rely solely on products

as a source of antioxidants," says Leslie Baumann, M.D., a dermatologist in Miami Beach. Take a multipronged approach instead. "Drink green tea and eat fruit and vegetables every day," she says.

Mix the vitamin C powder with Vichy Aqualia Antiox Fresh Serum, \$45, to protect skin.



Packed with the antioxidant idebenone, Prévage Face Advanced Anti-Aging Serum, \$155, fights free radicals.



UV rays are a major cause of free radicals in the body.

**REV UP YOUR RESULTS** The eyes are the first area to show signs of aging (dark circles, crow's-feet at the outside corners, a downward drooping of the outer lids). Camouflage shadows and lines with an illuminating concealer, says Pati Dubroff, a makeup artist in Los Angeles. To counteract droopiness, curl lashes for lift, then flick eyeliner up subtly at the outer corner of eyes.

Opalescent Murad Hybrids Eye Lift Illuminator, \$35, diffuses dark circles.



**click!**

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