

So This Is How to Wash Your Face

There's more to a good cleansing routine than just soap and water. Here's what you should (and shouldn't) be doing to get the skin you've always wanted. By Maureen Choi



cleansing. How hard can it be? You lather up, splash with water, rub with towel, done. Turns out, however,

there's more to it than that—you could actually be *improving* your skin while you're at it. "The purpose of cleansing is to remove sweat, dirt, bacteria, and makeup from your skin," says New York City dermatologist Neal Schultz, M.D. "But to do that, you need to factor in everything from the products you use and the water temperature to when and how often you're doing it." Another reason to step things up: "The more effective you are at removing all the junk on your skin, the better all the stuff you put on top will work," he explains. Ready for our face-washing boot camp? Here's what to do:

Remove makeup before cleansing.

It may seem obvious, but most regular cleansers alone won't sufficiently dissolve heavy-duty sunblock and long-wearing makeup, especially around the eyes, says Santa Monica, California, dermatologist Sonia Batra, M.D. You'll need to do that first, "as gently as possible so you're not rubbing and tugging at your skin," she says. For the eyes, press a cotton ball soaked in oil-based eye-makeup remover

over lids, wait 10 seconds so it can dissolve mascara and liner, then wipe away the remnants. For the rest of your face, use either a few cotton pads doused in cleansing water (a soothing, soap-free fluid), such as Dr. Jart+ Dermaclear Micro Water (\$32, sephora.com), or cleansing cloths until they come up clean. Once that's done, you're ready to wash.

Know the right way to cleanse, rinse, and dry. The trick is face "swimming," explains NYC epidermologist and facialist Isabelle Bellis. "On damp skin, starting at the corners of your mouth, glide your fingertips, covered with cleanser, up over your

nose, onto your forehead, around the eyes, and down the cheeks until you reach your chin," she says. "Kind of like doing mini breaststrokes on your face." Do it for one to two minutes to thoroughly remove dirt and oil. Rinse with lukewarm water (it breaks down residue better than cold and isn't as drying as hot); then pat—don't rub—skin with a clean, dry towel. If you're acne-prone and worried about spreading bacteria, use a few stacked tissues instead of a towel, suggests Bellis. "They're super gentle and germ-free."

After cleansing, layer on skin care treatments. Now that you've cleansed, get

the postwash part down pat: Apply whatever products you use (toner, serum, eye cream, moisturizer) within a few minutes, while skin is still damp and pores are open, says Bellis. The only exception is a prescription-strength retinoid treatment, says Dr. Batra; she recommends rubbing that in only after skin is fully dry, to help prevent irritation.

Repeat after us: Facial wipes are not a daily-cleansing solution. Sure, they're convenient, but according to Chicago dermatologist Peter Lio, M.D., "many wipes are loaded with harsh surfactants and preservatives that can cause dryness and irritation if not washed off the skin." His advice: Don't be a wipe-aholic—reserve them for when you're on the go. And follow these guidelines: (1) Choose ones for sensitive skin. They're less likely to contain strong, irritating ingredients. (2) Use efficiently by starting in the center of your face and working to the perimeter. Then turn the cloth over and gently swipe again to ensure that you're lifting makeup and dirt away, not just smearing it around your face. (3) Always, always rinse with water or toner to get rid of any residue.

If you're feeling extra grimy, try double-cleansing. Washing your face twice? We know; it's a lot to ask. But many experts are in favor of it. "This trend has been popular in Japan for years, because it gives a much more thorough cleanse," says Dr. Batra. But don't just repeat the same routine twice. For your first wash, massage an oil-based cleanser—or grab some olive oil from your kitchen—into dry skin (no need for makeup remover beforehand; the oil will do the job). Rinse, then move to the second cleanse, a skin-type-specific formula (see sidebar, right) to get rid of bacteria and sweat. Everyone can benefit from this two-step process, but women who live in polluted areas should consider it a daily must, she says: "Cleansing meticulously is the only way to completely remove pollutants, which can cause dryness and wrinkles over time."

Cleanse before working out. "If you don't remove everything prior to exercising, you run the risk of driving makeup, dirt, and oil into pores when you wipe away your sweat," says Dr. Schultz. To keep things easy, stock your gym bag with makeup-removing wipes and a bottle of toner. No time to shower? Use the toner at the end of your workout too.

The Best Cleanser for Your Skin

Do you need a specific formula? Find out here.

IF YOU HAVE NORMAL SKIN

You hit the complexion jackpot and can use pretty much any cleanser out there. "Even a mild, pH-balanced bar cleanser like Dove works great," says Patricia Farris, M.D., a dermatologist in Metairie, Louisiana.



La Prairie Advanced Marine Biology Foaming Mousse Cleanser (\$65, laprairie.com)



Dove Beauty Bar in White (\$4 for two, at drugstores)



Neutrogena Naturals Purifying Makeup Remover Cleansing Towelettes (\$7.50, neutrogena.com)

IF YOU HAVE DRY OR SENSITIVE SKIN

Steer clear of medicated cleansers, as well as ones with fragrances, which can be irritating. Go with gentle, nonfoaming options like balms, oils, and milks that soothe and plump skin.



Perricone MD Blue Plasma Cleansing Treatment (\$39, perricone.md.com)



La Mer The Cleansing Oil (\$80, lamer.com)

IF YOU HAVE OILY OR ACNE-PRONE SKIN

Look for formulas with ingredients like salicylic acid, benzoyl peroxide, or charcoal. They target breakouts and help keep pores clear, says Dr. Batra. Start out by alternating a day of these with a day of normal cleanser so you don't get too dry.



Murad Transforming Powder (\$30, murad.com)



Proactiv+ Skin Smoothing Exfoliator (\$40, discover.proactiv.com)



Boots Botanics Hot Cloth Cleansing Balm (\$8.50, target.com)



Bioré Pore Penetrating Charcoal Bar (\$6.50 at drugstores)

©2015 Gannett, LLC.

THE ST

Know whether you're dealing with "hard water." Tried everything above but find your skin still has a filmy feeling? Hard water could be the culprit, says Dr. Batra. "The calcium and magnesium in 'hard water' can react with a cleanser's ingredients, so you don't get that sudsy lather or a clean rinse," she says. Her easy solution: Get a filter for your sink and shower. Or try Bellis' fix: Spritz a generous amount of thermal spring water (we like Eau Thermale Avène Thermal Spring Water, \$13, dermstore.com) on freshly cleansed skin, and blot with a soft towel to absorb excess minerals. Simple and effective.

To boost your glow, invest in a facial device. Hands work fine, but a cleansing tool (see sidebar, below) is "highly effective at removing makeup and exfoliating dead cells in a really gentle way," says Dr. Lio. Just "don't use it to the point of redness or peeling." To figure out what works best for your complexion, start by using the brush (with cleanser) once or twice

a week, and ramp up use if your skin doesn't become dry or irritated. If skin *still* looks dull, Dr. Lio suggests incorporating cleansers with chemical exfoliants like lactic or glycolic acid once or twice a week, max. But resist the temptation to use a grainy scrub along with your brush; that combination is too harsh.

And while washing your face before bed is always the goal, don't freak out when (yes, when, not if) you slip up. "There's not a huge difference between wearing makeup for eight hours during the day as opposed to eight hours at night, particularly if you sleep on your back," says Dr. Schultz. Whatever happens, just don't overcompensate by scrubbing vigorously in the morning. Instead, cleanse thoroughly right when you wake up, apply a detoxifying mask for five to 10 minutes to help unclog pores, and throw your pillowcase in the wash. Then stash some wipes and a bottle of toner on your nightstand for the next time you're just too tired to make it to the sink. **G**

A Little Face Hardware, Anyone?

These gadgets could take your face to next-level clean. Here are our favorites:

BEST FOR BRIGHTENING

We love its ability to gently sweep away dirt while getting rid of dark spots. And the extra-plush brush feels more like a treatment than a chore.

Clarisonic Mia 3
(\$249 for Sonic Radiance kit, clarisonic.com)

BEST FOR CLOGGED PORES

Thanks to the two types of bristles that reach every crevice where oil lurks, our skin looked noticeably clearer, even after just one use.

Clinique Sonic System Brush (\$90, clinique.com)

BEST FOR BREAKOUTS

The sheer squishiness of this konjac root (a natural fiber that helps dissolve blackheads) sponge is enough to make us actually want to wash our face.

Sephora Clean Machine Konjac Sponge (\$15 for Duo in Polish Me, sephora.com)

BEST FOR SENSITIVE SKIN

We're fans of the smooth silicone nubs that lift gunk out of pores and slough off dead cells without pulling at our face. Best thing: no brush heads to replace.

Foreo Luna Mini (\$139, sephora.com)



COVERGIRL®

THE LATEST LOOKS
EASY AS
1,2,3,4!



NEW
EYE SHADOW QUADS

Blipp imagery for foolproof how-to.

