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Youth-Boosting Moves That Really Work

Top skin docs share the skin-saving habits, products, and in-office treatments that give the most bang for your buck.

By Elizabeth Woodson



Something to smile about: Sleeping (a little) late can help you look younger.

ONE THING'S FOR SURE: WHEN

it comes to fighting the good fight against aging, there is no shortage of options. But with everyone claiming to offer the fountain of youth (be it in a jar, syringe, or pill), how do you figure out what's really worth your time—and your money? “A youthful appearance comes from two things: smooth, firm skin, and a bright, even-toned complexion,” says dermatologist Howard Sobel, MD, director of the New York Institute of Aesthetic Dermatology and Laser Surgery. So anything that helps you achieve those goals should be at the top of your list. To help you find the moves with the biggest beauty payoff, we went to the experts. Here, they suggest lifestyle changes, over-the-counter products, and in-office fixes that help you look younger. Plus, we'll tell you how many years each trick can take off!

YOU WANT ... Smooth, Firm Skin

THE LIFESTYLE FIX

“Wrinkles, fine lines, sagging—they're all the result of collagen loss and the fact that skin loses the ability to hydrate itself effectively as we age,” says Steven Dayan, MD, a Chicago-based facial plastic surgeon.

But the good news is that tweaking your diet can slow the aging process. “Women with nutrient-rich diets tend to have firmer skin,” explains Dr. Dayan, who recommends eating foods high in omega-3 fatty acids, as well as foods with vitamins E and C, which “help to promote the production of collagen.”

Knowing what *not* to eat and

drink is important, too. Atop the don't list? Alcohol, which dehydrates skin. "As skin becomes drier and less elastic, it looks less supple," Dr. Sobel notes.

And don't underestimate the power of a good (and long!) night's sleep. "When you don't get enough sleep, the body produces excess cortisol, a hormone that breaks down skin cells," Dr. Sobel says. Getting plenty of rest helps your body "produce more human growth hormone, which helps skin remain supple and elastic so it's less likely to wrinkle prematurely."

RESULTS: Improve your diet, cut back on alcohol, and increase sleep, and you can look two to three years younger in about four to six weeks, experts say.

THE OVER-THE-BEAUTY-COUNTER FIX

To soften lines without a doctor's help, "use products with hyaluronic acid, which captures and holds water in the skin, helping to plump up lines and wrinkles," Dr. Dayan says. **Dr. Brandt**

Lineless Lines No More (shown on opposite page, \$55; Sephora stores) boasts peptides to boost collagen production over time and hyaluronic acid, which plumps skin on contact so lines are less noticeable. Another must-have in your wrinkle-fighting arsenal: a product with retinol. "Retinol, derived from vitamin A, thickens the epidermis, increasing skin firmness," says Ronald Moy, MD, president-elect of the American Academy of Dermatology and director of dermatology for the California Health and Longevity Institute. Try **L'Oréal Paris Revitalift Complete SPF 30 Day Lotion** (shown on opposite page, \$17; drugstores), which has Pro-Retinol A and SPF 30 (a plus, as sun exposure can accelerate collagen breakdown). Dr. Moy also suggests applying a serum with epidermal growth factors (EGFs), one of the newest ingredients to hit the anti-aging skin-care market. "EGFs are peptides that thicken skin and may increase cell turnover even faster than topical retinoids," he notes. Try **DNA EGF Renewal Growth Factor Serum** (shown on opposite page, \$145; dnaegfrenewal.com).



Apply moisturizer to slightly damp skin for even more hydration.

RESULTS: After four weeks of using a wrinkle-plumping cream with hyaluronic acid, a daily moisturizer with retinol, and an EGF serum at night, you may look two to four years younger.

THE IN-OFFICE FIX

Fillers (gels made with hyaluronic acid that are injected just beneath skin) remain the gold standard for plumping up wrinkles and fine lines. They also "add back some of the volume that disappears with age," Dr. Dayan says. A plastic surgeon or dermatologist can inject fillers, such as Juvéderm or Restylane, in a few minutes, and the wrinkle-smoothing results last 6 to 12 months. Unfortunately, those results come at a steep cost: a treatment with fillers starts at \$350 and can go up to more than \$1,000, depending on the doctor, the filler used, and how much is needed.

RESULTS: In a recent study, doctors estimated that women who got filler injections looked up to seven years younger (while the women themselves thought they looked up to nine years younger!).

**YOU WANT ...
A Bright, Even-Toned
Complexion**

THE LIFESTYLE FIX

Skin that seems to glow from within (without age spots or areas of redness) is another hallmark of youth, and, once again, a nutrient-rich diet plays a big role in maintaining this look. Unfortunately, the reverse is also true: The worse your diet, the more sallow your complexion will be. "There's evidence that people who eat diets high in refined sugars get a dull, yellow cast to their skin," Dr. Dayan explains.

So, what's on the grocery list for a glowing complexion? Lots of leafy, green vegetables (they're loaded with minerals like calcium and iron) and foods rich in essential fatty acids (avocado, nuts, seeds, etc.). "Essential fatty acids help to regulate cellular function and have anti-inflammatory properties that can alleviate skin redness," Dr. Dayan says. Antioxidant-rich fruits like blueberries may also help even out your complexion by reducing hyperpigmentation (brown spots usually caused by sun damage to the skin's DNA). Outside of the kitchen, exercise also revitalizes and adds radiance to your complexion. "It increases oxygen flow to skin cells, which results in better tissue health," Dr. Dayan points out.

RESULTS: Loading up on the healthy foods suggested above and exercising at least three times a week may get you looking two to four years younger—though it will take at least a month to see those results.

essence to help break apart pigment clusters below the skin's surface, and **Dermalogica Pure Light SPF 30** (shown at right, \$60; dermalogica.com), which has brightening vitamin C to prevent spots.

RESULTS: Using an at-home peel, a spot treatment, and a moisturizer with SPF, it takes about a month to see changes. The results are worth the wait: You can look up to three years younger.

THE IN-OFFICE FIX

One of the best ways to achieve a radiant, even-toned complexion is a dermatologist-administered glycolic peel. "Glycolic acid, which can be delivered at strengths of up to 70 percent in an office, gives a very deep exfoliation, revealing brighter skin and even removing some dark spots," Dr. Moy says. Depending on the strength of the peel, results can last up to six months, and costs range from \$100 to \$250.

“WOMEN WITH NUTRIENT-RICH DIETS TEND TO HAVE FIRMER SKIN.”

THE OVER-THE-BEAUTY-COUNTER FIX

Exfoliating is key to getting radiant skin, and products containing glycolic acid gently slough away dead skin.

Brazilian Peel (shown, bottom right, \$78; sephora.com), with 30 percent glycolic acid, is one of the strongest peels available outside of a doctor's office; one 10-minute treatment a week evens out your skin tone in about a month. Dr. Moy suggests treating specific areas of hyperpigmentation with pigment-inhibiting ingredients like hydroquinone or azelaic or kojic acids. Try **Dermelect Beautone Enlightening Spot Treatment** (shown at right, \$49; dermelect.com). And don't forget the daily SPF to prevent new spots. We like **Garnier Skin Renew Anti-Sun Damage Lotion with SPF 28** (\$13; drugstores), because it contains pine

Dr. Dayan also recommends intense pulse light (IPL) treatments, which use light energy to correct pigment issues, treat broken capillaries, and reduce redness. Treatments are generally done in a series, and sessions start at \$150. Unfortunately, IPL treatments don't work well on darker skin tones. But you can see similar spot-reducing results from a non-light-based treatment, such as Ematrix, a device that emits bipolar fractional radio frequency (sessions cost \$300 and up).

RESULTS: Chemical peels may make you look two to four years younger, and IPL or bipolar fractional radio frequency may shave up to five years off your looks because the treatments have the added benefit of boosting collagen production for a firmer face. ☺

GET SMOOTH

The hyaluronic acid in **Dr. Brandt Lineless Lines No More** plumps up skin.



lines no more

DNA EGF Renewal Growth Factor Serum has complexion-firming epidermal growth factors.

L'Oréal Paris Revitalift Complete SPF 30 Day Lotion softens fine lines with retinol.

BRIGHTEN UP

Dermelect Beautone Enlightening Spot Treatment fades spots with kojic acid.

The vitamin C in **Dermalogica Pure Light SPF 30** evens out your complexion.



Exfoliating glycolic acid in **Brazilian Peel** leaves skin radiant.

BRAZILIAN PEEL
AHA + GLYCOLIC + AZELAIC