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# FIVE SIMPLE HABITS

## STICK WITH IT

Products can take up to six weeks (and sometimes longer) to show results, experts say. You'll want to use RoC Multi Correxion 5 in 1 Perfecting Cream SPF 25, \$29.

### 1 Be a little type A.

As in organized. Efficient. Regimented. The same traits that get you ahead in life will also help your looks. "Staying rigid with your skin-care routine is going to make your skin look better," says Paul Jarrod Frank, M.D., a dermatologist in New York City. Total commitment gives the ingredients a real shot at working, and being consistent means using the same products daily and in the same order. What you need is a system. Beauty companies have made this easy with packaged kits that give you everything necessary for your skin type and spell out exactly what to do, so there's no time wasted messing with different products. A few we like: Rodan + Fields Soothe kit, \$160, for sensitive skin; La Roche-Posay Effaclar system, \$30, for acne; and Olay Professional Pro-X Even Skin Tone kit, \$40, for antiaging.

### 2 Put oil on your face. Really.

If you spent your teens degreasing your skin, we get that this seems nuts. But unless you still deal with acne, oils give skin an absurdly beautiful sheen because they sit on top of it and reflect light. The newest offerings tout antioxidant-rich properties and nongreasy formulas that moisturize naturally. Use oil the way you would any lotion. "Actually, oils can hydrate better than lotion because they mimic the effects of human sebum—what the sebaceous glands secrete to lubricate skin," Dr. Frank says. One common face-oil ingredient, squalane, derived from plants, is similar to the skin's natural lipids. Try Peter Thomas Roth Oilless Oil, \$38; it's 100 percent squalane.

### 3 Don't stop at your jawline.

Neglecting the skin on your chest ages you as much as your face. You may be years away from thinking this a real problem. That's great, because *now* is when you can do something about it! "Skin on your chest and neck tends to be thicker than on the face but scars more easily and doesn't heal as well, so preventing damage there should be a priority," says Macrene Alexiades-Armenakas, M.D., an NYC dermatologist. And, unless you're going to live in turtlenecks, people see it. "Women come to me in their 30s with spots and wrinkles on their chest. That makes you seem older no matter what your face looks like," says Ranella Hirsch, M.D., a dermatologist in Boston. The easy fix: Smooth your face SPF and antiager on your chest, too. Done.

### 4 Take a vacation from wrinkle fighting.

You know Rx retinoids are like time machines for skin. Tons of research shows they build collagen to smooth wrinkles, improve texture, lighten pigmentation and unclog pores. (A recent study in *Aesthetic Plastic Surgery* found that two months of Rx tretinoin—what's in Retin-A—was as effective at reducing wrinkles as three minimally invasive laser treatments!) But here's the catch: "Because retinoids thin the outer layer of skin, you aren't as protected from the sun," says Brandith Irwin, M.D., a Seattle dermatologist. "Stop using them on sunny trips, and limit your use to once a week in the summer if you're outside a lot." Then, switch to an antioxidant serum to ward off sun spots and wrinkles. "You'll get the repair benefits of retinoids without risking the side effects," Dr. Irwin says.

### 5 Downshift the scrubs.

Ever since microdermabrasion kits, gels, scrubs and home peels became popular a few years ago, derms have seen patients get hooked on exfoliators and their squeaky-clean results. But a too-frequent "E" fix creates a vicious cycle. "It ultimately makes skin drier and duller. Then you think, I've got to keep exfoliating," says Dr. Irwin. You actually need some dead surface cells to seal in moisture and protect against sun damage. Scrubbing daily removes the extra layers of protection before skin replenishes it, leaving cells exposed and allowing moisture to escape. If your skin is oily, cut back to twice a week with a mild scrub or peel pad, Dr. Frank says. (Sensitive skin? Switch to a scrub with softer granules or a glycolic cleanser.) If you have dry skin, quit cold turkey, plug in a humidifier by your bed (skin loses most of its moisture at night), and try an old-school steam treatment twice a week to soften the dry top layer and help moisturizer penetrate. Fill the sink with hot water, hover over it for a few minutes with a towel over your head, then apply moisturizer or face oil to damp skin to make it gorgeously glowy. ■

## SELF

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Beauty director, Elaine D'Farley; hair, Peter Butler for Wella Professionals; makeup, Carmindy for Carmindy & Co.; model, Erika at New York Models. See Get-It Guide.

STILL LIFE, CATHY CRAWFORD