

Natural Skin Care for Every Skin Type

Discover the best natural skin-care solutions for your specific skin type, whether normal, dry or oily.

OUR SKIN HOLDS 650 SWEAT GLANDS, 20 blood vessels, 60,000 melanocytes (pigment skin cells) and more than 1,000 nerve endings, according to *The Green Beauty Guide* by Julie Gabriel. This incredibly large and complex organ also protects us from the elements, regulates our body temperature, turns sunlight into vitamin D and flushes toxins from the body.

But no skin is alike. It undergoes constant changes, depending on our age, our diet, the weather and even the stressors in our lives. It can be dry one day and shiny the next. And what most people don't realize is that many products on the market can worsen the skin issues we're trying to resolve. Always steer clear of products made with a laundry list of synthetic ingredients, and check the safety of any ingredients that seem worrisome with the Environmental Working Group's Skin Deep Cosmetics Database (ewg.org/skindeep).

Although our skin type naturally falls into one category more often than others—whether normal, oily or dry—skin types as we know them aren't rigid, lifelong designations. Instead of following a strict skin-care regimen, personalize yours to support the normal functioning of your skin. Use the following skin-care recommendations based on your skin type.



Normal Skin

It may seem like there's no such thing as normal skin—products that aren't designed for dry or oily skin are instead marketed “for combination skin.” But most of us actually have normal skin, despite what we've been led to believe. “A slight dryness and a shiny T-zone are perfectly normal, no matter how hard the beauty industry tries to convince us we need to address these issues,” Gabriel says. If your skin is neither too oily nor too dry, and you rarely break out or experience redness, then you likely have normal skin. This skin type maintains a balance of moisture, small pores and even tone, resulting in a radiant complexion.

YOUR BEST APPROACH: “Interfere as little as possible with your skin's already awesome natural balance,” says Adina Grigore, author of *Skin Cleanse*. Cleanse and moisturize daily with gentle products that contain the fewest ingredients possible. Grigore recommends using organic rosewater for daily cleansing—it's gentle and brimming with antioxidants and vitamins. Moisturize with a pure skin oil or a mild, nongreasy cream free of harsh ingredients. Even a dab of coconut oil alone works great.

Dry Skin

Flakiness and easy irritation are the leading traits of dry skin; sensitive skin is an extreme version of this skin type. If you suffer from dry skin, you likely have nearly invisible pores; a dull, rough complexion; less skin elasticity; and more visible lines. Ordinarily, dry skin isn't serious, but it can be uncomfortable.



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What's Your Skin Type?

TRAITS OF NORMAL/ COMBINATION SKIN

- 3 Soft, smooth, even skin tone
- 3 Some areas can be oily and others dry

TRAITS OF DRY SKIN

- 3 Rough complexion
- 3 Skin appears dry and flaky

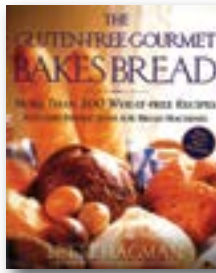
TRAITS OF OILY SKIN

- 3 Shiny complexion
- 3 Moderate to severe breakouts

Plus, when exposed to common drying factors such as dry or windy weather or harsh products, dry skin can crack, peel, become irritated, or create fine lines and wrinkles. Note: Chronic or severe skin problems associated with dry skin may require evaluation by a dermatologist.

YOUR BEST APPROACH: If you suffer from dry skin, one of the first ways to care for it is to take shorter, cooler showers and avoid long baths (limit to five to 10 minutes). Immediately following a bath or shower, apply a rich moisturizer all over your skin. "Dry skin needs a lot of moisture and extra TLC," Grigore says. One of the best moisturizers for dry skin is argan oil, says Leslie Baumann, a doctor and author of *The Skin Type Solution*. "Argan oil is anti-inflammatory and hydrating. It's the best natural oil for dry and red skin."

Antioxidant-rich olive oil is another effective, more cost-friendly moisturizer, whereas shea butter is extra-hydrating. "A little bit of shea butter goes a long way and it can be used anywhere—your face, your body and even your scalp," Grigore says. >>



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Many conventional products on the market can be too harsh for dry, sensitive skin. Be sure to only purchase gentle skin-care products free of fragrance, as fragrance can contain a combination of hundreds of chemicals, including hormone disruptors, allergens and phthalates.

Oily Skin

Our bodies naturally produce sebum (an oily substance secreted by the sebaceous glands) to keep skin healthy. But excess sebum production can result in oily skin. Symptoms associated with oily skin include blemishes and acne flare-ups; enlarged pores; and a shiny complexion. This skin type can be worsened by hormonal imbalances, stress or exposure to too much humidity.

YOUR BEST APPROACH: Cleanse skin no more than twice a day (in the morning and at night) with a gentle, nonscrubbing, nonfoaming cleanser, as harsh ingredients can trigger skin to increase oil production. Follow up with a toner that contains naturally healing ingre-

dients such as witch hazel, tea tree oil, chamomile, aloe or calendula. Avoid astringent toners with a high percentage of alcohol, which can irritate the skin and lead to more oil production.

“One of my favorite natural ingredients for excessive oil production is apple cider vinegar,” Grigore says. “It aids to balance out the skin’s natural pH, meaning you’ll be less oily without any of the nasty, drying after-effects.” Use apple cider vinegar as you would a store-bought toner, applying it to the T-zone (forehead, nose and chin) with a cotton ball.

People who have oily skin also tend to avoid moisturizer under the notion that their skin is oily enough as it is. But rather than removing excess oil with concentrated foaming cleansers or drying lotions, turn to healing, antibacterial plant oils. “If you put oil on the oily skin, it will help loosen impurities and refine the pores. It also sends a message to your skin that it is producing enough oil,” says Susan West Kurz, co-founder of Dr. Hauschka Skin Care, in *The Green Beauty Guide*. Turn to a high-quality oil such as rose hip, grapeseed, jojoba or tamanu.

Combination Skin

If your skin tends to be dry in some areas and oily in others, then you may have what is commonly referred to as combination skin.

Oily areas are typically concentrated in the T-zone, while dry areas usually reside on the cheeks and jawline. This skin type can produce overly dilated pores, blackheads and shiny skin, and it can vary with the weather. Whether combination skin exists is a matter of debate—dry spots and oily spots are completely normal.

YOUR BEST APPROACH: Don’t feel that, because your skin can have patches of dry or oily skin, you need to buy a special product to combat problem areas. If you have what you believe is combination skin, the best advice to follow is to simply experiment with all of the above tips and really listen to your skin: Wash your face with a gentle cleanser, use an alcohol-free toner and embrace natural plant oils. “The nice thing is you only have to look in the mirror to see what works,” Grigore says.

—GINA DEBACKER

PRODUCTS |

Natural Solutions for Every Skin Type

Turn to these editor-recommended products when shopping for effective, chemical-free skin-care solutions.



CREAM CLEANSER

Soften skin while removing impurities. Soothing jojoba, sesame and coconut oils work together in this gentle cleanser, perfect for normal skin.

TO BUY: \$16, madhippie.com



VINEGAR TONER

Apple cider vinegar, the standout ingredient in this nighttime essential for oily skin, works to even skin tone and neutralize pH.

TO BUY: \$22, swbasicsofbk.com



ARGAN FACE OIL

Argan oil, an anti-inflammatory and moisturizing treat for dry skin, makes up this organic serum, along with avocado oil and vitamin E.

TO BUY: \$22, eoproducts.com



CALMING MOISTURE

Especially great for dry, sensitive skin, this soothing moisturizer calms redness and hydrates skin with a mixture of aloe and oat extract.

TO BUY: \$49, cvskinlabs.com



BULGARIAN ROSE WATER

This antioxidant-rich floral water, an amazing treat for normal and combination skin, is made by natural steam distillation.

TO BUY: \$24, alteyaorganics.com