

Health

No Filter Necessary: How to Undo Dark Spots, Redness, and Uneven Skin Tone

Are dark spots, unevenness, or redness getting in the way of your glow? Know this: They're totally fixable. Here, top dermatologists teach you how to combat these issues and heart your skin for good.

By Lisa Whitmore

Get perfect skin



If you get daily compliments on your perfect complexion, you can probably stop reading now. For the rest of us—who have spent more time in the sun than we care to admit, watched the birthdays tick by, or slacked just a bit (or, heck, a whole lot) on an anti-aging routine—dark patches, a dull appearance, and flushing that won't go away can be beauty headaches.

"At least 50% of my office visits involved redness or dark spots," says Jeanine Downie, MD, a dermatologist in Montclair, N.J. The good news? You're not destined to get splotchier and ruddier over time. With some smart strategies (and well-picked products), it's easier than ever to reverse the most common issues and reclaim great skin. Let's get glowing.

Undo redness



Fix redness at home: Gentle skin care is the name of the game, so use a mild cleanser and moisturizer. Stick with a physical sunscreen that contains zinc or titanium dioxide, ingredients that sit on top of the skin to deflect the sun's rays and are best for delicate skin. (Chemical sunscreens, which contain ingredients like oxybenzone and octocrylene, get absorbed into the skin to fight UV rays but can irritate sensitive types.)

Fix redness at the dermatologist's office: Newer prescription topical creams, including Soolantra and Mirvaso, can help bring down inflammation and redness in the skin. Soolantra works gradually to reduce redness, while Mirvaso constricts blood vessels instantly, so you can get an immediate (albeit temporary) effect. Some derms prescribe low-dose antibiotics, which "help reduce the redness because they address the underlying inflammatory aspect of rosacea," says **Ava Shamban, MD**, a dermatologist in Beverly Hills. Interestingly, a topical, dermatologist-prescribed retinoid can work well for rosacea patients, as the drug—which can sometimes dry out the skin in the beginning of treatment—can also have an anti-inflammatory effect. For more serious improvement, lasers such as the VBeam and Excel V emit light that's absorbed by the red pigment in the skin, destroying it underneath the surface. As with most laser treatments, you'll need three to six sessions, from \$250 and up, spaced about a month apart to see a discernible improvement.

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