

# InStyle

## 10 Habits You Didn't Know Could Cause Breakouts

Wendy Rose Gould | October 15, 2016



How many times have you heard you should always wash your face before crawling into bed—even when you really don't feel like it? And how many times has someone told you to clean your makeup brushes at least once a week to avoid a breakout?

Sure, if you forget to do either, you absolutely run the risk of unleashing the pimple demon. These are blatant must-do's, though. Today we're fast-forwarding through the basics and covering the *not so* obvious bad habits that might be causing you to breakout.

### 1. Skipping Your Moisturizer

You've washed your face, but did you remember to hydrate? Skipping out on this important step—especially if you already have combo, oily, or acne-prone skin—is no good, says Slone Mathieu, medical aesthetician at Dream Spa Medical. She says many of her clients are not inclined to moisturize since they figure their skin has enough oil, but that's actually counterproductive. To make up for a dehydrated state, your skin will actually produce more oil.

### 2. Not Showering After a Steamy Workout

“A sweaty workout on its own doesn't cause acne, but if you have an underlying acne condition, it can certainly exacerbate it,” notes Beverly Hills Dermatologist [Dr. Ava Shamban](#). “When you work out and perspire, it increases oil production. The increased oiliness along with the bacteria that you might get from the yoga studio can certainly lead to an acne breakout. I always recommend to my patients that they shower with an antibacterial soap or ideally a benzoyl peroxide wash after a workout.”

### **3. Going Overkill With Your Clarisonic**

First and foremost, your electric cleansing tool should be spotlessly clean before you put it on your face. Second, don't overuse it. Miami-based dermatologist Dr. Barry Resnik says they could irritate your skin without giving anything back. If you use one and swear by it, make sure you're only using it as directed, and that you're not pressing it into your face.

### **4. Forgetting to Take Your Meds or Birth Control**

“If you make the mistake of skipping your regular acne medication or birth control pill, it can certainly lead to a breakout,” says Dr. Shamban. “Acne is a condition that people have anywhere from two to 10 years most commonly, although in some people it can be a condition that exists for life. During the time that you have an acne condition, flare-ups will occur once you stop your acne regimen, as it is always brewing below the surface.”

### **5. Making Out With Your Bearded Beau**

That beard may be sexy, but it may also be causing inflamed skin and breakouts, warns dermatologist Dr. Elizabeth Tanzi, founder and director of Capital Laser & Skin Care. Making out isn't the bad habit here, but kissing without consideration for your skin is a no-no.

“A beard causes irritation and acne because of friction and inflammation,” she explains. “If you can't get your guy to shave, then use products that help to calm inflamed skin, such as masks that help to sooth irritated skin.”

You should also make sure your dude is cleaning his beard regularly, adds cosmetic dermatologist Dr. Kaleroy Papantoniou. “Some women can even break out from a beard that is not clean, so recommend that they clean their beard daily, and are not applying any pore-clogging hair products to the area.”

### **6. Not Washing Beauty Tools**

You're probably good about washing your cosmetic brushes, but don't forget to clean other items that touch your face. That includes cosmetic sponges and reusable pads, Clarisonic brush heads, tweezers, and eyelash curlers.

“Any instrument that comes in regular contact with her face needs to be washed periodically,” insists Dr. Shamban. “This is because bacterial count can build up on these devices to a higher level than it does on the skin. Our skin has natural defenses against overgrowth of bacteria. If our skin function is somewhat compromised, as it is in patients with acne, then using a contaminated tool can worsen the acne.”

### **7. Sleeping on Your Arm, Hand, or Hair**

Your face is clean and your bedding is religiously washed... what's the deal with those zits that keep on coming? If you have a tendency to rest your head on your arm or your hands while catching ZZZ's, it could be causing blemishes. Make sure you've cleansed these areas thoroughly, as the occlusion of dirt and perspiration can easily fester where your skin touches.

The same goes for sleeping on unwashed hair with product in it, says Dr. Papantoniou.

“Dirty hair that is loaded with oils, hair products, and grime over the course of the average day can cause an acne flare for those who are prone to break outs,” she explains. “It is better to wash your hair before bed if you are noticing breakouts that occur on the temples, forehead and sides of your cheeks. The residue on hair clogs pores and can harbor acne flaring bacteria.”

She says to go hands free whenever possible (try headphones!) and to wipe down your phone regularly.

### **8. Applying Way Too Much Powder**

Too much setting powder could be a cause of your breakouts. "Layers of powder will eventually cake up and irritate the skin which can lead to pimples," notes makeup artist Erin B. Guth. "For people trying to cut down shine with powder, I recommend using blotting papers. Using a sheet first actually absorbs some of the oil so you aren't mixing powder with it."

### **9. Spending Too Much Time in Front of a Magnifying Mirror**

Try looking at yourself in a magnifying mirror without picking your skin. It's nearly impossible! Though it's nice to see the condition of your pores and skin at a 40x magnification, the truth is that nobody will ever see you that close up.

“The issue with the magnifying mirrors is that even though it is undeniably helpful for the application of makeup and tweezing of eyebrows, it is the worst thing for person to look at with acne,” says Dr. Papantoniou. “Magnifying mirrors can turn a mole hill into a mountain, the smallest pore into the Grand Canyon, and make you feel that you have popped the biggest blackhead of your life, but when you look for it on your finger you realize it was miniscule. Most of the time it is not worth bothering your skin for what you see in the magnifying mirror, and you end up with more marks and scarring from interfering with your skin.”

The lesson is to a) not over-analyze your face and b) not pick at your skin—especially those "imperfections" nobody will even notice.

### **10. Self-Diagnosing**

If you've been battling moderate to severe acne, it's time to put the extractor, exfoliating products, and harsh treatments down. "Self-diagnosis and home treatment of acne can be problematic for all skin types," says Mathieu. "It's very important to let a professional guide you through what may or may not be right for you."

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