

The Effortless Man's Guide to Basic Skin Care

By Jennifer Chesak | August 13, 2018

Minimalist tips for any man looking to invest in self-care



If you've been skipping out on skin care, it's time to talk. You don't need to do much to repair, protect, and even pamper your mug. We're recommending the most basic adjustments for long-lasting results. Come learn how to combat breakouts, shaving irritations, and those fine lines that'll creep out of nowhere.

Plus, a little shine on the outside treats the inside, too.

Here's how to get started — or how to brush up your game, because there's always something new to help buff up your glow.

A simple skin care regimen



As with anything we do and expect results, skin care requires consistency. But developing a routine can seem daunting if you don't know what to do or use.

That's why we asked [Dr. William Kwan](#), a board-certified dermatologist in San Francisco, California, to streamline skin care. Here are the three most important steps he highlights, ones that men usually skimp on.

1. Cleanse

One thing dudes have gotten right is not washing their face every single morning. This is because washing too much can ruin your skin's natural oils.

But this only works if you wash every night. We start each day with a clean slate, so why not let your skin end on a fresh note, too? Don't let dirt and pollution soak into your pores overnight.

Kwan recommends using a mild foaming cleanser before you shave to help reduce surface oil. As long as you don't have sensitive skin, you can alternate between an exfoliating cleanser for an enhanced shaving experience and a mild wash.

Pro tip: If you have oily skin, you can use a hot towel to clean your face in the morning. Splash with cold water for a refreshing boost.

2. Repair

Our skin takes a beating over time, thanks to free radicals causing oxidative stress. Without going into a chemistry lesson, oxidative stress relates to our bodies' negative reaction to bad things like:

- air pollution
- cigarette smoke
- industrial chemicals
- UV rays

“An antioxidant serum, for example, like vitamin C, is helpful to reduce damage and should go on in the morning underneath moisturizer,” Kwan says.

Apply after your shaving routine.

Pro tip: Before bedtime, Kwan recommends a retinol cream for those in their 30s and up. “Retinol helps smooth fine lines and wrinkles,” he explains.

3. Moisturize and protect

In the a.m., follow up your antioxidant serum with a moisturizer that has at least SPF 30. Sunscreen isn't just for the beach or outdoor sports. Incidental sun exposure, like the time you spend walking to the train or sipping a beer on the patio after work, adds up and causes skin damage.

At night, opt for a lightweight moisturizer without sunscreen.

Pro tip: You don't have to moisturize at night if your skin isn't dry! Moisturizing is a lot like drinking water. Do it when you need it.

How to pick products



From luxury beard oils to tasty, pocket-friendly lip balms, more products have hit shelves with men in mind. Now the dude-specific skin care industry has been more on-point than ever. Which is great — but the influx might also leave you feeling at a loss for what to buy.

Here are a few things to consider.

1. Know your skin type

“Men tend to have oily and thicker skin, mainly due to the effects of testosterone,” Kwan says. Many products for fellas will be formulated to combat oil. But if you have flaky, dry skin, seek out products that address that. For dry skin, Kwan recommends a cream cleanser and a heavy moisturizer.

You may also have a mix of oily and dry patches. If so, look for products formulated for combination skin. And if you have sensitive skin, you may be prone to burning, stinging or irritation. Choose products listing as few ingredients as possible.

Take this quiz to learn your skin type.

Pro tip: Try “cocktail moisturizing.” This isn’t a fuss-free way to do skin care, but it can be game-changing for combination skin. Instead of using an “all-in-one” moisturizer, try tackling your individual skin concerns with targeted products.

Products to try:

- Neutrogena Ageless Restoratives antioxidant moisture night cream
- CeraVe daily moisturizing lotion

2. Forget gender

“Men-specific products are nice, but many skin care products are unisex and typically are suitable for men and women,” Kwan says.

Don’t limit yourself to skin care lines based on packaging. If you’re hoping to avoid scents, look for fragrance-free products. Or opt for items with earthy or woody essential oils, like sandalwood or cedarwood. These can also have a calming effect.

3. Consider your ethnicity

Your heritage may affect your skin type and skin care needs. “African-American men tend to have more ingrown hairs, usually related to the natural curl of the hair,” says Kwan, a specialist in ethnic skin. “For these men, I often recommend using a depilatory instead of shaving to reduce razor bumps.”

“Asian and Hispanic men are more prone to irregular skin pigmentation,” he continues, “so they should be careful of sun exposure and perhaps add a skin-brightening product to their regimen.”

Products to try:

- Gigi hair removal cream for face with calming balm
- Nair Hair Remover moisturizing face cream
- Avon Skin So Soft facial hair removal

4. Experiment

“Choosing skin care is often as easy as trial and error,” Kwan says. “If possible, buy products from a store that allows returns, or start with samples.”

If you’re still at a loss for what to put in your medicine cabinet, one way to play around with products is to order a subscription or sample box that sends you a selection of travel sizes based on your preferences.

Products to try:

- Louis Pierre / Men's Set
- Jack Black's Power Pack

Managing skin irritation and eruptions



Bumpy textures are usually the biggest concern guys face when it comes to skin care, Kwan says. He often treats men for razor burn, ingrown hairs, or pimples.

Shaving is one of the most common causes of irritation, but a proper skin care routine in conjunction with shaving can improve skin.

“Start with something simple, like a salicylic acid or benzoyl peroxide wash in the shower daily,” says Kwan. This type of cleanser will help treat most bumps, like folliculitis, ingrown hairs, and acne. “I do recommend electric razors if you get ingrowns or too irritated from shaving. They tend to be a bit easier on the skin.”

Do men really care about skin care?

The market for men's personal grooming products is projected to grow to more than \$60 billion by the end of the decade. That stat should tell you that more guys are giving up outdated ideas skin care and pampering should be left to the gals.

Research shows that skin concerns or disorders can affect self-image, relationships, and performance. But it's never too late to develop a skin care routine.

A master thesis out of Karlstad University in Sweden found that men, from ages 15 to 45, are taking control of their appearance and hygiene and embracing ideas of self-care. Guys are buying products as a way to solve skin issues and boost self-esteem.

Working to solve skin concerns, if any, gives you a bit of control over them and helps you build confidence.

Skin care goes deep

Women have long used skin care habits and products as a way to ready themselves for the day or to decompress at night. Fellas should follow suit, if they aren't already.

Even a simple regimen can become a part of what you do for your well-being. If you think skin care habits are frivolous or vain, then take a cue from f.c., blogger behind Simple Skincare Science. He's a prolific male skin care blogger who battled years of skin issues and now shares his insights regarding various products and techniques.

He writes: "I urge you to remember that part of our skin journey is about practicing self-love." Self-compassion is linked to how we treat and care for others, so you've got nothing to lose by being kind to your skin.

<https://www.healthline.com/health/beauty-skin-care/male-skin-care-guide#takeaway>