

# Skincare Tips for the Glow-Up

As I approached my 30th birthday I realized that my skin wasn't (and had never been) exactly where I wanted it to be. I had started exercising regularly (finally) but my skin just seemed to be farther out of my control. I resolved to try some new things which sent me on a year-long journey of discovery and DIY. Skincare, like most things, is so personal. It is all too easy to get caught up in a world of pricey products/treatments, but it doesn't necessarily have to be that way. These are some things that worked for me in response to my specific skin needs/ailments. Hopefully, parts of this will be helpful for you, and feel free to leave what isn't.

In case you want more of me:

I also wrote a guide with some [Financial Tips](#).

I have a [very unobtrusive newsletter](#) where I send out a playlist a month.

Alright, let's do this!

## **\*GOALS\***

Hopefully y'all know by now that I love a good goal. I think it's essential to have clarity on what you're seeking and why. Personally speaking, I was suffering from scars due to hyperpigmentation and occasional acne flareups that led to more scars. I also had never felt that my skin was completely smooth (acne aside - as if the surface itself was covered in tiny bumps) - a thing I didn't know could change until it did! (Spoiler alert: I significantly cut down my dairy intake) My skin is also generally on the oily side and I was phoning in my moisturizing - big mistake!

## **\*THE BASICS\***

I began my journey by reading this amazing book called [Skin Cleanse](#). It's really great and an easy read, but if you can't manage that the main takeaway is that for at least three days she recommends cutting out ALL products and just "washing" your face with water. If you're going to hot yoga everyday, that is an exception and you should be washing that sweat off, but cutting out everything else. It sounds crazy, but it was super helpful for me as a lot of the products I was using to help my skin

were actually hurting it. It also contains a lot of recipes for skincare products that you can make yourself and truly set me on my DIY journey.

I think sweating is also a really important part of refreshing your skin, whether that's through exercise, the sauna/steamroom or both. On days when my skin is feeling dull or my face is puffy from too much salt/alcohol I always hit the sauna and notice the effects immediately. It should be noted though that not washing sweat off your face in a timely manner can lead to even more breakouts.

Exfoliating is also really key, especially as it relates to hyperpigmentation. A lot of exfoliators are too harsh though! I was using a really rough scrub which was actually leading me to more breakouts. Learn from my mistakes.

Another important thing is to accept the things that you cannot change. I will forever have dark circles under my eyes, they are my inheritance and will be with me my entire life. I can do my best to stay hydrated/moisturized to minimize their appearance but they will never fully go away and I am okay with that now because I have to be.

My current routine is:

Cleanse > Tone > Serum > Sunscreen/Moisturizer\*

\*Though in its most pared down iteration even just cleansing followed by moisturizing will do IMO

### **\*PRODUCTS\***

Here are a list of the things that I swear by. Some of them are expensive so I have subbed in some DIY alternatives.

A wise friend asked how to go about trying things. Don't do my way and just buy everything (it's so expensive!) Credo is an amazing all-natural store with tons of locations that will give you samples of ANY product. Birchbox and the like are also nice but can get overwhelming. I imagine Sephora would be a great place for samples as well.

As far as how long to try something I think that's up to you, but generally I go for two weeks - one month. Taking pictures of your face regularly can also be helpful. I recently looked back at pictures of my skin from this time last year and I've already made SO much progress. It can be easy to forget how far you've come without those reference points.

(Soon you will [be able to buy](#) some of the things that I've been making for myself. #ad)

### Cleanser:

- [Indie Lee Rosehip Cleanser](#) - This stuff is amazing (as are a ton of Indie Lee products), but it is also \$32!! This sparked my love with rosehips (really great for acne/scars) and led me to start making my own face wash.
- I started with a recipe from Skin Cleanse and then tweaked it as I saw fit. The current version has castile soap (this is what Dr. Bronners is), vegetable glycerin, jojoba oil, and essential oils that I mix up (right now it's chamomile, tea tree and rosemary). You can get most of these ingredients at somewhere like Whole Foods and do it yourself, or soon you can buy some from me. Get in touch!

### Toner:

- I'm all about the DIY toner. I love to mix apple cider vinegar (ACV is the truth - I use it as a scalp rinse as well) 50/50 with water and a couple drops of essential oil (sage, tea tree). It's so cheap, all natural and will last you for ages. It's also great for when you don't want to fully wash your face but are looking to remove grime. (I started feeling guilty about my cotton ball waste and recently bought these [washable pads](#) - so cool!)
- When I'm feeling luxurious I use this [rose water hydrosol](#) (a hydrosol is the water leftover from extracting essential oils) from Enfleurage\*. This is not the cheapest, but will last for a long time.

\*If you're in NYC Enfleurage is worth checking out, it's way too easy to drop a ton of money there, but they also have amazing classes that are pretty reasonably priced. I took a class about essential oils for skincare and it changed my life. They also make my favorite lip balm (it's rose!) and I'm obsessed.

- “Technically” this [micellar water from Bioderma](#) is a makeup remover (and the best one ever at that), but it will also help remove any residual gunk from your face (hello pollution). (The [La Roche Posay](#) one is also wonderful, but is lightly fragranced if that’s a thing that irritates you.)

### **Serum:**

- Serums are great and can help your skin retain moisture (look for ones with hyaluronic acid - an ingredient that naturally occurs in your skin that holds several times its weight in water), and fade scars/imperfections (look for ones with vitamin c - and be sure to use in combination with a sunscreen!).
- I used to be pretty serum-agnostic until I discovered this [vitamin c](#) one from The Ordinary. It’s a little oily, but still light so I use it at night and don’t follow up with any kind of moisturizer, but that’s just me. The Ordinary is also great because their products are so reasonably priced.
- I also became obsessed with this [lactic acid serum](#) from The Ordinary, it essentially acts as a peel (and comes in two different strengths), I use it every other day at night and in the morning my skin looks noticeably better.

### **Sunscreen:**

- I will fully admit that as a POC I was very lax about my sunscreen use. (My mom told me recently that she never puts sunscreen on her face and she looks amazing, but better safe than sorry I say!) This is especially important as it relates to hyperpigmentation as sun exposure can actually darken scars and set back any progress you make. Vitamin C and other ingredients can also increase the photosensitivity of your skin, not to mention that sun exposure alone can increase the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles. If you have tattoos sunscreen is also essential to prevent fading. The bottom line is that sunscreen is chill.
- I am obsessed with [this one from Coola](#) - it smells amazing and isn’t greasy/chalky and doubles as a moisturizer. \$32 is a lil pricey but it easily lasts me a year and I use it every day. It’s important to remember that sunscreen is a product that expires, so be sure to replace any lingering old ones you have.

### **Moisturizer:**

- During the day my sunscreen is my primary form of moisturizer for my face. At night though, I turn to face oils. Nighttime moisturization is especially important for cellular repair. It also gives you a chance to use ingredients that are too photosensitive to use in the daytime (retinol etc). There are tons of well-

advertised face oils, like [Luna from Sunday Riley](#) that are wonderful, but are so expensive that they are out of reach for the average person. Face oils are really the thing that truly pushed me into the DIY skincare game as I felt confident that they were an overpriced scam. So I started making my own. My current blend involves jojoba oil, marula oil, rosehips and a blend of essential oils designed to reduce the appearance of scars/imperfections and help skin repair itself. (This will also soon be for sale at a reasonable price - but feel free to [hit me up](#) to get a sample in the meantime!)

- On the very basic DIY level though, you could just apply a small amount of unadulterated oil to your face. Jojoba oil is great for this as it most closely matches the sebum (moisture) produced by your own skin. I've even done straight olive oil in a pinch while traveling. Others swear by coconut oil and others swear against it. Everyone is different, just do a test first to see how your skin will react.
- I also make my own body butter for the rest of my body. It's a mix of shea butter, coconut oil, marula oil and essential oils for fragrance. It's super easy, relatively cheap, and lasts for ages. It's solid at room temp which is also awesome for traveling/the gym. [I started with this recipe](#).

### **Exfoliation:**

- I am obsessed with exfoliation. It's a key step in revealing new radiant skin. As previously mentioned I had been using standard drug store scrubs but they were way too harsh and my skin was unhappy. I was miraculously introduced to [these exfoliating pads from Neogen](#). They are my holy grail. They smooth out skin texture, help with acne, and greatly reduce the appearance of scars. They also smell incredible! I can't say enough good things about them. The pads themselves are huge and the person who put me on gave me the pro-tip of cutting them in half so they last twice as long. I use them 1-2 times a week. The liquid-y nature of them makes them not ideal for traveling, so on a recent trip I tested [these out](#). I think they're ok in a pinch, but don't deliver the same wow results and are way more expensive. A lot of people swear by them though.
- Through a work advent calendar I ended up with a scrub glove that I use for the rest of the body. I can't find a link to the exact one here, but do a google. I have super fine body hair which leads to a ton of ingrown hairs and this is amazing for that. Also if you have never had a body scrub at a spa, run, don't walk.

## Masks:

- Another one of my holy grail products is the [Aztec Clay Mask](#) that you have probably seen around. Mixing it with equal parts apple cider vinegar and water is the key to getting it to mix super smooth (use your DIY toner from above - what CAN'T it do??). This literally sucks blackheads out of my face, nips any breakouts in the bud and increases circulation and gets your whole face glowing. I use this whenever I'm about to go out, feeling a breakout coming on, as a spot treatment for a monster zit, or if I am just hungover/tired and not looking my best. It is dirt cheap and will last you for AGES. Everyone has different sensitivity so play around with the amount of time you leave it on. When I first bought it a [mask brush](#) was a suggested add-on item which really changes the game and makes you feel like pure luxury.
- I do my best to embrace my under-eye circles, but when I'm feeling extra puffy/tired or am going out, I pop these [eye masks](#) on for a few mins and they really do the trick. They're super cheap and made with natural ingredients. I like to keep them in the fridge for extra cooling!

## Rituals:

- I've recently gotten into [gua sha](#) - a traditional Chinese medicine treatment that is essentially "scraping"/massaging your muscles (in my case, facial ones) with a stone tool - despite much initial skepticism. People on the internet will have you believe that it will solve all of your skin ailments, reducing wrinkles, puffiness, acne etc. I can't attest to all of that, but it is a hugely relaxing nighttime ritual for me (I do it after I apply my face oil/moisturizer right before bed). I hadn't previously realized how much tension I was holding in my face/jaw and it just plain feels good.

## \*DIET\*

Honestly I think this is a huge area related to skincare that doesn't get enough shine. Switching up products really helped me, but even now I notice how my skin reacts negatively when I eat certain things. Purely anecdotally I notice the largest differences when I consume dairy and sugar. Though I also suspect that alcohol, bread (this could also just be the sugar - as it feels different when I'm eating abroad), caffeine and meat play a factor as well. Not quite related to diet per se, but stress

can also wreak havoc on your skin. Lastly hydration is the key that transcends the individual. If you aren't putting enough water into your body, your skin will never be as happy as it could be.

xx

Selomé

Always listen to your body and good luck!

Feel free to hit me with any questions: [me@selomesamuel.com](mailto:me@selomesamuel.com)