



ALIVE BOOKS

Universal skin care

What does your skin say about you?

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Most people are born with good, healthy skin, so why—for the majority of us—is skin care confusing and frustrating?

It's easy to become confused by the concept of "skin types." We wonder nervously, is our skin dry, oily, normal, combination, sensitive or mature? Yes, it is important to

identify where we fit on this scale not because each skin type requires a different type of product so much as the fact that our skin is an excellent indicator of our health and stresses.

No matter where we live or our ethnic origins, our skin is affected by the environment and current patterns of consumption and toxic exposure. It is always adjusting and changing to keep us fully protected. The best way to

Essential and Carrier Oils for Different Skin Types

Skin Type	Essential Oils	Carrier Oils
Normal skin	bergamot, chamomile, lavender, geranium, neroli, rose, rosewood, cedarwood, calendula, chervil, lady's mantle, lemon balm, mint, rose, thyme	any light carrier oil such as grapeseed, sunflower, sesame, sweet almond, apricot kernel, calendula
Oily skin	geranium, rosemary, yarrow, basil, patchouli, lavender, cypress, lemongrass, peppermint, eucalyptus, cedarwood, clary sage, juniper, thyme, sage, lemon, tea tree	grapeseed, sweet almond, sunflower, jojoba and witch hazel make a good base; avoid alcohol bases, which can be too harsh
Dry skin	calendula, chamomile, comfrey, lady's mantle, lavender, parsley, rose, geranium, carrot seed, jasmine, orange, rose, rosewood, sandalwood, frankincense, myrrh, ylang ylang, cedarwood, neroli, palma rosa	sweet almond, wheat germ, cocoa butter, avocado, olive oil
Mature skin	bergamot, geranium, neroli, rose, carrot seed, lavender, cypress, frankincense, fennel, myrrh, orange, patchouli, sandalwood, vertiver, jasmine, palma rosa	avocado, jojoba, wheat germ, apricot kernel, calendula
Blemished skin	tea tree, lemon, rosemary, rose, lavender, palma rosa, myrrh, sandalwood, neroli	sesame, jojoba, sweet almond, calendula, apricot kernel
Sensitive skin	rose, carrot seed, neroli, lavender, chamomile, jasmine	sesame, jojoba, sweet almond, calendula, apricot kernel

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determine skin health and by extension, inner health, is through simple observation. How does your skin look and feel? Dry, oily, patchy? All three?

Normal skin is balanced and all physiological processes—the secretion of oils, blood circulation and sloughing off old cells—occur in perfect equilibrium. Normal skin has a healthy glow with no blackheads or blemishes, a minimum of lines, and wrinkles, though tiny, are uniform in size and barely visible. A universal trait, it is the rarest and most desired of all skin types.

Oily skin is caused by the over-secretion of oil glands located in the deeper layers of skin. This skin type is not necessarily bad and is less prone

superficial debris should be cleansed away regularly; otherwise pores will become blocked, creating an environment for blemishes.

Cleanse skin in the mornings to remove dead skin and oils discharged during the rejuvenation and repair phase at night, then again at bedtime. The less makeup the better; less really is more in terms of anti-aging. Excess products can block pores, hinder the skin's ability to breathe and compromise cells by blocking nutrients and creating free radical damage.

Oily skin requires cleansing more frequently. (Beware of overusing cleansers containing large amounts of bacteria-killing substances, such as hexachlorophene and sodium

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to wrinkling and others signs of aging. However, oily complexions are especially susceptible to clogged pores, blackheads and a buildup of dead skin cells on the surface. Oily skin can be sallow and tends to have large, clearly visible pores everywhere except around the eyes and neck. It is most commonly found in darker-skinned peoples.

Dry skin occurs when the oil glands don't produce sufficient oil to lubricate the skin satisfactorily. It is thin and often flaky, with pores that are almost invisible. Many fine lines are likely to form, even when the skin is relatively young, and there's a tendency for dry skin to be more easily irritated. This skin type is found mostly in fair-skinned peoples.

What is your current type?

No matter which skin type you have, it is absolutely critical that your skin is kept as clean as possible. All

hydroxide, as they can aggravate pimple formation.) Toning is an extension of cleansing and freshens your skin. A toner helps remove traces of makeup and oil, tightening the pores temporarily and stimulating blood circulation.

Moisturizing is important, as your face is constantly exposed to drying elements—sun, wind and cold weather. For skin with oily tendencies, use a moisturizer with pure, natural oils. Oily skin has generally been subjected to harsh detergents, thereby signaling to the sebaceous glands to keep over-producing oil. However, a therapeutic oil (see previous page) applied to the skin will indicate to the sebaceous glands that there is enough surface oil, which, in turn, reduces the amount of oil produced.

Dry skin may indicate dehydration and the need for more essential fatty acids in your diet. Good sources of



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EFA's include purslane herb and oils of fish, flax, hemp and olive. Also try a good organic moisturizer.

Our external mirror

A healthy diet, a fit body and mind, and emotional tranquility will contribute to clearer skin. Stress causes elevated levels of the hormone cortisol, which leads to inflammation and skin imperfection and blemishes. Hydrate with good quality water.

A diet for blemish-prone skin would be consistently high in lean protein and fresh (organic) fruit and vegetables. Avocados are one of the best sources of protein. Overall, protein is a major pimple-fighter.

Stop your intake of coffee and switch to decaf herbal teas; your skin will thank you and you will lose that stubborn weight. Reduce sugars and

starchy foods—white-flour products and ingredients such as corn syrup, glucose, fructose and maltose—these converted sugars damage skin collagen.

All said and done, skin conditions are indicators of our current lifestyle and stresses that can be exacerbated by using second-rate products. You need not use fancy skin-care cosmetics, just pure or—even better—certified organic products when you can find them. Keep a look out for herbal ingredients, and nourish your skin from the inside and out. **F**

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