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Beauty Serums

These potent formulas can work wonders on your skin // BY SHERRIE STRAUSFOGEL

Take the time to add a serum to your skincare routine, and you will see results. Concentrated serums target your main skin concerns, delivering potent ingredients that penetrate deeper than moisturizers. Unlike moisturizers that sit on the surface, serums are formulated with smaller molecules, so they are easily absorbed. In fact, a few drops of serum applied 3–5 minutes before a moisturizer can actually improve the absorption of your moisturizer.

Formulas vary, but most serums are designed to smooth, soften, and hydrate skin, which diminishes wrinkles and fine lines. They may also brighten your skin tone and fade discoloration. Or they may firm skin, boost collagen, soothe irritation, or stimulate circulation for a natural glow.

Depending on their specific purpose, serums may include vitamin C, plant stem cells, and peptides to help stimulate collagen; alpha hydroxy acids and vitamin A (retinols) to help increase cell turnover; hyaluronic acid to hydrate and smooth skin; bearberry and licorice extracts to brighten skin and fade brown spots; and/or sea buckthorn to reduce inflammation and repair skin damage.

“The best antiaging serums are packed with plant stem cells and vitamin C,” says Nancy Neet, esthetician at The Allison Inn & Spa in Newberg, Ore. “They help stimulate collagen and elastin—the strands of tissue that give the skin its strength and flexibility.”

The Allison’s Herbal Infusion Facial relies heavily on a plant stem-cell booster serum to help rejuvenate skin and smooth fine lines and wrinkles. Echinacea stem cells stimulate new collagen, plump and firm skin, and improve elasticity. Stem cells from the butterfly bush (a plant native to Eastern Asia that is traditionally used for wound healing) help protect the skin against sun and environmental damage and increase lipid barrier protection. Vitamin C and other antioxidant vitamins reduce inflammation, boost collagen production, and also protect skin.

“Plant stem cells in this facial work so well because they come from plants that are intentionally stressed,” says Neet. “When the plant defends itself, the cells that are extracted are stronger and more effective. Use a serum every morning and night and you really can improve the health of your skin.”

Did You Know?
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