

*nail*  
DESIGNS

# DAY BY DAY BEAUTY

**SIMPLE TIPS**  
TO GET THE  
BEST HAIR,  
SKIN & NAILS



A S P E C I A L R E P O R T



# INTRODUCTION

**B**eauty, as is so often said, is in the eye of the beholder. Sadly, a lot of women look into the mirror each day and don't see the sort of beauty they were hoping for. This is not because they are not lovely and beautiful to "behold", but because they focus on some of the flaws in their skin, hair, or nails.

Skin that seems a bit dull or a face with overly dark circles under the eyes. Hair that is a bit lifeless or frizzy. Nails that are a bit too short, unappealing, or worn down.

Are these really flaws?

Again, that is something that tends to be the opinion of the individual - some people love their freckles while others hate them, some people love curly hair while others crave perfectly straight hair, and so on. However, there are always things you can easily do to change or improve anything you view as a "flaw" in your face, hair and nails.

## **HEALTH BRINGS BEAUTY**

Your goal, though, should always be to get the healthiest hair, skin or nails. When you have glossy and healthy hair it tends to look great no matter how it is styled. When your nails are healthy, they usually add that gorgeous pop of healthy color to the tips of your fingers, and when your skin is healthy, you tend to glow too.

Naturally, these issues become a source of frustration

because too few of us know how to achieve and then maintain the healthiest and most appealing hair, skin or nails. And yet, in most cases, improvements can be made right away.

In this guide, we'll look at the ways you can begin to improve the look and feel of your hair, skin, and nails right away. We'll break down the easy to use tips into things to get started on right away (today), things that you'll want to do weekly, monthly, and then all year long.

You will see some lifestyle changes that we'll cover in the "Basics" of each category, and most of them are also things you can start today. Such as? Drink more water, avoid prolonged sun exposure, and so on. Most of us know these simple steps, and so we cover them right away and move on to the more advanced or easily overlooked tactics.

When you commit to a regular regimen of quick fixes, lifestyle changes, and ongoing upkeep, you will enjoy long-term results. In almost no time you will get the skin, hair and nails you have been dreaming of, and soon you will look into the mirror and smile at the new and more radiant you that appears there.

So, if you are ready for a step-by-step plan for healthier hair, skin, and nails, let's get started...

# CHAPTER ONE: HAIR

## **BASICS**

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Did you know that a dermatologist is the medical expert to consult about your hair? This is because hair is really just an extension of the skin, or more properly, the epidermis. Though it is actually “dead” tissue, it still responds to changes in the environment and chemical changes in the body - just like skin.

So, that gives us an immediate clue about the best way to take care of our hair - we should treat it a lot like our skin. Washing it gently but often, paying attention to seasonal challenges, and using products that offer it protection are just a few things to consider. However, we can get a lot more bang for the buck where these things are concerned when we know how to do them on a daily, weekly, monthly, or annual basis.

For now, let's just focus on the very basics. Naturally, hair is not identical to skin, but when we are thinking about the most basic of the “basics” for improving the condition and feel of our hair, we need to use many of the same rules we'd apply to improving the overall conditions of the skin too.



- Avoid prolonged exposure to the sun. Yes, hair gets damaged by the sun just as easily as the skin. It will dry out your hair and cause everything from bleaching and color loss to split ends. Wearing a hat is the first step, but if you are not the hat type, make sure to find a light hair spray with SPF protection.
- Be careful with medications. Just as you might suddenly develop a rash in response to a new medication, your hair can also react badly to chemical changes in the body. It may get brittle, fall out, change in texture, and more. If you begin a new medication and notice hair changes, contact your

physician at once.

- Your diet can impact your hair tremendously. If you get oily skin and breakouts after a few days of junk food, your hair may behave in a similar way. The opposite applies and that “cleanse” or starvation diet that deprives your body of essentials can also create the same problems in your hair as it does in your skin.

Watching what you eat is a key tactic for healthier hair, and if you want to really maximize your impact, “Load up on salmon and nuts! Their protein and omega-3 fats help create a healthier scalp. Leafy vegetables, beans, and carrots are also good for your tresses.”

([WebMD, 2014](#)) Another source indicates that flax seed oil, milk, and protein are essentials for healthy hair, as is a diet high in vitamins B-6, B-12, and folic acid. If you cannot obtain ample amounts in the diet, be sure to supplement with a complete vitamin. ([WikiHow, 2014](#))

If you want a list of the top ten foods for good hair, it would include salmon, walnuts, oysters, eggs, spinach, sweet potatoes, Greek yogurt, lentils, blueberries and poultry.

Hydration is a key to good hair as well, and drinking plenty of fresh water each day is a top beauty tip all around.

Now, these are just the most basic lifestyle changes to consider making if you want to improve the condition and appearance of your hair. You can also take more direct action every day of the week. Let’s look at the things you can do today and then over time.

## TODAY

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### WASH YOUR HAIR IN THE BEST WAY POSSIBLE

You may have thought that you were doing it right all along, but a lot of people are surprised to discover that they have been doing more harm than good.

Firstly, you don’t have to wash your hair every day, and in fact you should actually stop doing that right now. This is because daily shampooing will strip any hair of its natural oils and cause it to be dull, lifeless, and even make it fragile.

Be sure that you are choosing a shampoo (and conditioner) for your hair type. There are many options for curly, straight, color treated, oily, and so on.

When you do wash your hair use the coolest water possible. Don’t use cold water alone, but tepid water is likely to be the best. This is critical during the final rinse since it is when the hair cuticles are sealed, and it is cool water that really helps to lock in moisture and give hair a lot of healthy shine.

When washing your hair, focus on shampooing the scalp. Don’t bother lathering up the actual hair strands and instead massage the scalp with the shampoo. Give it a count of thirty before you stop massaging and rinse. And do what the bottle says - “Shampoo, rinse, and repeat.”

Why? When you shampoo the scalp properly, meaning that you massage it, you are increasing

circulation to the scalp. This eliminates dandruff and stimulates follicles.

What about the conditioner? That is for the actual hair strands and not the scalp. Rub it in from the tips to the roots and leave it for a few minutes. Then use that cool water rinse to lock in the glorious shine.

And under no circumstances should you allow any hair care product to remain on the hair for any longer than recommended. There are scalp treatments and hair conditioners that indicate a specific length of time before they should be rinsed away, and leaving them on longer may not do the hair or scalp any good. In fact, it could be irritating or damaging.

## **DRY YOUR HAIR IN THE BEST WAY POSSIBLE**

If you are the “wrap the head in a towel, twist it together, and flip” type, you could be harming your hair. This is because it could be wringing the hair and causing the strands to stretch and break. Of course, many people use a wringing motion with their bare hands and wet hair, and this too is going to damage it.

When done washing the hair, allow the water to fall from the hair, but do not wring it or twist it to get the water out.

Simply wrap your head; do it gently and don't use any rubbing movements or super tight wraps. A preliminary blotting method followed by a very loose wrap is best. And as you can imagine, simply allowing your hair to become



nearly dry before doing any styling is a key.

What if you need to use a dryer? You may have been avoiding a blow dryer in fear of harming hair. However, when used properly they can actually improve the health and appearance of your hair. The key is to use cool air.

Hot air actually evaporates the water (essentially boiling it) and this easily causes damage. Avoid this using the coolest setting and then dry the hair until around 90% of the moisture is removed. As one expert says, “Most people falsely believe they must use a hair dryer until their hair is bone-dry. Not true. The style should fall into place if your hair is healthy and well cut.” ([Stealth Health, 2014](#))

And a surefire way to provide optimal protection to the hair when using a blow dryer is to rely on a heat protection spray. This works well when you use a flat iron or hot rollers too, but you should never use these devices on wet hair. [Roopal V. Kundu](#), MD, Associate Professor of Dermatology at Northwestern University has this



to say, “Wet hair is more vulnerable to breakage. Either air dry or blow dry out soft, with a low setting, and then put the flat iron on. You shouldn’t put a flat iron on wet hair.”

## **STYLE YOUR HAIR IN THE BEST WAY POSSIBLE**

A lot of the damage done to hair is through daily styling. This can occur when we overheat the hair or even when we pull it too tight, stretching the strands and putting too much pressure on the scalp. While you can do a serious up-do and tight bun, it shouldn’t become your daily look, and you should let your hair rest (as well as giving the scalp a break) as soon as possible at the end of a day.

Some of the best guidelines for styling or manipulating hair are:

- Don’t brush wet hair as this stretches and snaps it. If combing wet hair, do it only with a wide-tooth comb.

- Use a natural bristle brush for straight hair as it helps distribute natural oils, and for those with straight hair a large, flat paddle brush is best (those with curly hair should not use a brush at all).
- Don’t use daily heat styling and opt for a braid or up-do instead of exposure to daily heating and styling products.
- Comb or detangle hair “from the ends up” and never from the roots down. This will, basically, prevent you from ripping through the hair. If you have a lot of tangles, work through the hair with your fingers first, and then apply a detangler before using a comb on wet hair.
- Be cautious when tying hair with bands or styling tools. Tying it too tightly can stretch and snap hair, and pulling it up or back when wet stretches it as well. Opt for looser styles, and always take hair down for sleeping.

You can start doing each of these things today to begin enjoying better-looking hair.

## **FAST FIXES?**

If you need an immediate fix you can always use these top tips:

- Split ends and frizzy hair making you look like a wreck? If you have only a few minutes to spare today, just get your hands on the best olive oil in the house, put a dollop on your palms and rub them together. Then, quickly move your hands from the tips of the hair and upward. This tames split ends and frizz

while giving your hair a subtle shine.

- No olive oil? Swap this out for hand lotion that you use in the same way to smooth the ends, give a bit of shine, and tame flyaways.
- Flat hair making you look worn down? Just flip your hair over, give the under layers of the hair three good hits of hair spray and work this into your hair. Flip your head back over and you have far more lively hair without harsh chemicals or treatments.

## ***THIS WEEK***

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After improving your daily hair regimen, it is time to look at your weekly upkeep. There are a few very simple things to do on a weekly basis that will give you the look and feel you want.

- Use leave-in conditioner a few times each week or use a spray on detangler after a shower.
- Swap out your usual “do” and allow your scalp to rest. If you use an up-do each day, let your hair hang loosely today. If you part to one side, give it a flip to the other.
- If you haven’t changed your diet, add one to three 250 mg capsules of borage oil, flax seed oil, or evening primrose to your daily diet. These are amazing for hair and nails. ([Wilson, 2014](#))
- Use styling products four times or less per week. These products are very drying to the scalp and should be applied only to the strands.

Even then, you might still damage hair if you overdo it with styling products in general.

- Start monitoring the drain in the shower. Once each week take a look at how much hair you have lost during a regular shower. Making a habit of monitoring this one issue can often help you see if your hair and scalp are healthy or struggling a bit.

Typically we lose, “50 to 200 hairs a day (out of 80,000 to 120,000 hairs on the head). So it’s normal to have a very small clump of hair left on the drain after washing. But if that amount starts increasing, see your doctor.” ([Wilson, 2014](#))

## ***THIS MONTH***

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A month is a good window of time to use where hair care is concerned. Daily and weekly activities are significant, but when you program a few special hair related activities into the monthly calendar they really pay off over the long term.

- Kick some habits that lead to unhealthy hair - stop smoking, cut out the caffeine, and improve your diet. Don’t do them all at once, but do pick at least one challenging habit to kick. It takes around 21 days to make new habits or break old ones, so find one to eliminate each month.
- Invest in a deep conditioning treatment at a salon or at home. Whether it is a homemade mask or a high-end salon treatment, giving your hair a special “bath” of nurturing and



healing compounds is going to make a big difference in the health and texture.

- Make plans for seasonal care - turn on the humidifier this month if heating season is beginning; start wearing a hat if you are going to be out in the sun for many hours; and consider swapping to a new shampoo and conditioner if your hair changes with the seasons (i.e. your scalp gets dry in the winter or your hair needs extra conditioning in the summer).

## **THIS YEAR**

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And annually? What sort of tactics can you use over the course of any given year?

- Get a trim every six to eight weeks to remove all of the dead and split ends. You can keep hair long and yet take off the one to two inches needed through the use of “layering”. Talk to a stylist about this and get the initial

cutting done by an expert and then follow up on your own or back with the professional.

- Let at least one month (four full weeks) pass before you do single process coloring and at least eight weeks between the high or low light treatments.
- Consider your hair before swimming in chlorinated water. The [American Academy of Dermatologists](#) says, “Protect your hair from the damaging effects of chlorine by wetting and conditioning your hair before swimming. Wear a tight-fitting swim cap and use a specially formulated swimmers shampoo and deep conditioner after swimming to replace lost moisture.” Whether at the gym or on vacation, make sure you update your hair care tactics when swimming.

Now, that is a long list of things to add to your “to do” list, but each and every one of them will repay you with gorgeous, silky, and healthy hair. Whether you let it hang freely while doing household tasks or you want it to “wow” when you have a meeting or get together, these tactics will get you there day by day.

What’s next? Well, you don’t want your hair to steal all of your thunder. So, that means that it is time to move on to your skin care and how to get a complexion that is radiant and gorgeous.

# CHAPTER TWO: SKIN

## BASICS

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Skin is a major organ of the body and it serves a lot of purposes. It is a protective shell that ensures that our organs, fluids, and bones are kept free of contaminants and pathogens, but it also provides insulation, helps to maintain the proper amount of water in the body, regulates the temperature and even helps in the production of essential vitamin D.

Clearly, this means we really should take excellent care of such a vital organ, and not just the skin on our faces, hands, and legs, but every square inch of it! This gives us a clue as to the most basic things we need to do to achieve and then keep the best skin possible. Basically, it begins with good maintenance habits. And maintaining anything means:

- **Keeping it clean** - With skin that means using mild soaps to wash the skin on a daily basis, and moisturizers to help seal the skin and maintain it in top condition.
- **Protecting it** - This involves a lot of steps because there are so many things in the environment that can harm or endanger the condition of our skin. For instance, you want to avoid too much exposure to the sun, and defend skin against UV rays. You'll need to wear sun block and protective clothing, and eliminate habits that hurt the skin. Smoking, excessive sugar (including alcohol) in the diet, and stimulants can all harm the condition and health of the skin. Even keeping a low stress lifestyle will improve your skin as well.



- **Feeding it with all that it needs** - The skin needs water, lots of it, so those eight glasses each day are important. It also means that the skin needs the right nutrients, and these come from a healthy diet.

Clearly there are no shortcuts to good skin care. It is a daily activity, but some of the steps for obtaining the best skin possible require weekly, monthly, or annual activities too.

## TODAY

What can you do to start getting healthier skin today?

- **Drink water!** The first thing to know is that your skin is made up of the dermis and the epidermis. The outermost layer is the epidermis, and it is around 30% water. When you don't drink enough water, the very first place it shows up is your skin. Make sure that you are getting adequate amounts of water and a lot of the dullness (including dark circles under the eyes) will begin to go away quickly. A good rule of thumb is "drink even if you are not thirsty."
- **Sweat! Yes, it's true.** Circulation and sweating are two things that change your skin from the inside out. Makeup was designed to copy the healthy flush from physical activity and as long as you wash properly after any workout your skin will benefit tremendously. Plus, you'll really "glow" and people will notice. Sweating also purges the skin of debris, and when you

sweat and then bathe, you are guaranteeing that your skin is in top shape.

## CLEAN SKIN PROPERLY AT LEAST ONCE A DAY

Water is great, but on its own it cannot cleanse the skin completely. Most people need a bit of something extra to get oil and residue off the skin. Left there these things will create breakouts and skin problems. Of course, you cannot go from one extreme to the other and so you don't want any harsh cleansers either.

[Paul M. Friedman, MD](#), a published author on skin care says: "the products needed for beautiful skin are a simple cleanser, sunscreen, moisturizer, and a retinoid or retinol."

What's a simple cleanser as the doctor mentioned above? Well, another expert indicates that you want to skip "soap" (so, don't reach for the nearest bar of Ivory or any other standard bar of soap) and instead go with "liquid cleansers and cleansing creams with natural ingredients like beeswax and mineral oil to dissolve dirt...vegetable and fruit oils and less-irritating surfactants such as coconut oil (cocamidopropyl), amphoteric surfactants, alkyl ether sulfates and alkyl glyceryl ether sulfonate." ([HealthyWomen, 2014](#)).

In other words, go for a liquid cleanser that uses more natural ingredients and which describes itself as removing surface debris but which also maintains skin moisture. Feeling tightness in the skin never means it's clean, but instead means it has been stripped of surface and sub-surface oils. You don't want to do this to the skin, and the

gentler natural products are really the way to go for healthier skin.

And right here we need to emphasize one word: GENTLE. Everything you do to your skin should be gentle. Don't scrub, don't rub too hard, and don't overexpose it to chemicals or super hot water. The skin may seem tough, and it can be, but if you want the best looking and healthiest skin, gentleness is a major tactic for getting there.

Remember that these tips apply to the skin all over the body. You want to be sure that you bathe daily, give skin a gentle cleansing, and start to use any rough "exfoliating" tools with a gentler hand - even the natural sponges made of loofah. When used wrongly, these can instead irritate skin, increasing unpleasant textures.

Today is also the day to cool it down in the shower and at the sink. You don't need to wash with hot water and should always use warm to tepid water instead. And washing your face more than twice each day may lead to more problems with the skin, so take it easy there, too.

And never use a towel to rub the skin dry. Blotting the skin dry, and applying moisturizer will always leave you with supple and comfortable skin.

## **MOISTURIZE THE SKIN PROPERLY**

If you are dedicated to giving yourself healthier and more appealing skin, today is also the day to start protecting it a bit better. As you already learned, you can stop using the hot and steamy showers and start taking cooler ones instead. Limit your time to ten minutes or less to ensure you are

not removing beneficial oils from the skin.

Moisturizing the face and body is best done when the skin is still a bit damp from the shower. Start today to make post-shower moisturizing a priority. Use a moisturizer appropriate to your skin type, AND for the season. If today happens to be the day you bust out the air conditioner, transition to a lighter moisturizer with higher SPF protection. If it is the day the winter sweaters come out of mothballs, make sure you are using a heavier moisturizer that meets the challenges of the heating season.

And always - as in ALWAYS - use a moisturizing product with SPF protection. The sun never takes a break, and even on overcast and/or wintry days you still need protection.

So, apart from the water, exercise, and cleansing/moisturizing regimen every day, what else is there to know? Actually, there is a lot you can do to improve and then maintain better skin.

## **FAST FIXES?**

However, you do need to accept that you cannot create instant changes in the skin in the same ways you can with hair or nails. While you can

- Use concealer to reduce the appearance of dark circles,
- Shower and moisturize just before an event, or
- Turn to the classic "cucumber slice" compress to reduce puffiness...
- To truly improve skin means a dedication to an ongoing regimen. Of course, there are



a few things you can do right this moment that will start to improve your skin's feel and appearance.

- Don't rub your eyes. The skin around the eyes is very delicate and rubbing them is only going to worsen any dark circles or puffiness. Make a habit of using compresses at home rather than rubbing your tired eyes during the day.
- In fact, make your face a "hands off" location. Touching everything in your world, and then touching your face brings all kinds of contaminants to the skin. This can cause breakouts, but it can also lead to ongoing irritation, infection, and more.
- "Use a spritzer with rose, sandalwood or bergamot essential oils mixed with water. These oils are great for hydrating the skin... whenever your skin needs a little boost."  
([BestHealth, 2014](#))

- "Ditch the toner". If you are using a pH balanced cleanser, a toner is actually "overkill" and leaves your face stripped of natural oils. Since almost all cleansers are now pH balanced, you can eliminate any harsh products described as "toners" from your regimen.

## ***THIS WEEK***

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What sort of improvements can you begin to make this week? A gentle, daily wash along with proper moisturizing gets you off to a great start. And then you may want to start looking at the specific "problem areas" that make you unhappy when you glance at your face in a mirror or look at your body from head to toe.

Below are some easy to use tips for making improvements this week, but before we get into those, we suggest you do one major thing to ensure the health and beauty of your skin, and that is to find a dermatologist.

Whether you book a visit or not, it is a very good idea to have the name of at least one reputable professional in your area. This is someone who can help you with any major concerns, but who is also a key resource for remedying the individual problem areas we'll look at below.

- **Face** - Apart from maintenance, you can find products targeted to the specific issues you feel you face. The most common are dark circles under the eyes, pigmentation issues (including freckles and age spots), combination skin, wrinkles, and loss of elasticity.

While you keep in mind that simplicity is the

best way to skin health and beauty, you can also consider [WebMD's](#) suggestion for good skin, which is to “consider Retinoids.” Essentially, these are a good all-around solution for facial complaints. “Retinoids unplug pores, help clear up acne, reduce fine lines, boost collagen production, lighten brown spots and freckles, and improve skin texture. They can even help treat precancerous lesions.”

Available as a prescription, they can prove to be a major foundation for a simple and effective skin care regimen done on a daily basis. This week can be the week when you begin your anti-aging and skin improvement regimen relying on a retinol formula.

Also remember that the skin on your neck and upper chest is as delicate as the skin on the face. Use the same gentle cleansers and deep moisturizing products on these areas. While general “body” lotions are okay, the skin here benefits most from the more targeted ingredients found in facial moisturizing and anti-aging products.

- **Hands** - Moisturizing the skin on the hands is really the key to keeping them attractive and healthy. However, dehydration can cause a lot of visible problems here, so make sure to moisturize the hands after washing them and to always protect them seasonally (SPF in the summer and warm gloves in the winter).
- **Limbs** - Dry skin on the limbs is unattractive, and whether it is thick skin on the elbows or flaky skin on the shins, it is easy to address

the entire issue with a high quality moisturizer. However, some people have conditions that need specialty remedies (the common keratosis pilaris is a prime example of this, and it usually needs a prescription strength moisturizer to eliminate the tiny white bumps it causes), and this is a time to visit a dermatologist to address any such issues.

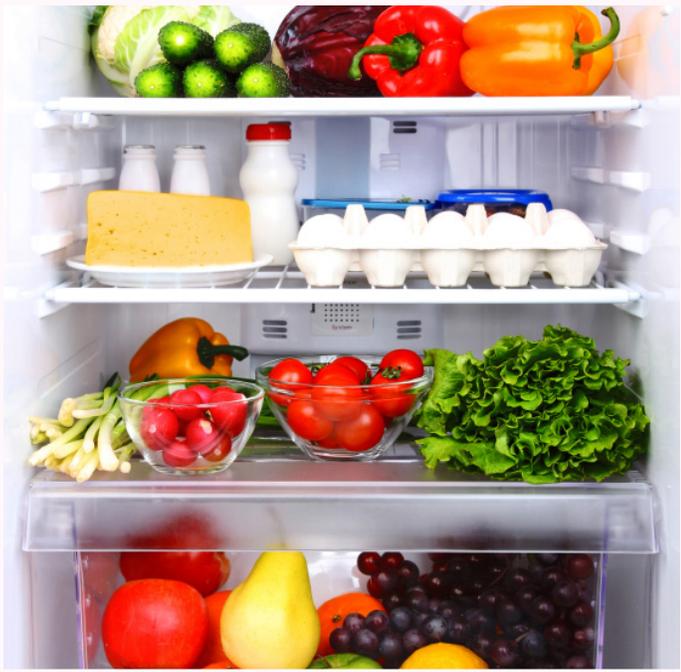
- **Feet** - We tend to ignore this skin until it is sandal season. However, it easy to care for feet and improve their condition. Invest this week in a special pumice stone to get rid of callouses and then simply use a foot moisturizer or a heavier moisturizer after you have bathed. A beeswax-based formula is usually going to be the most effective. Wearing socks after applying moisturizer to the feet is also a good idea.

One of the simplest things you can do is begin reducing your skin’s exposure to unhealthy foods or environments.

## UPDATE THE DIET

You most definitely “are what you eat”, and this is proven over and over again with our skin. Eat a diet of oily and greasy foods and your skin rebels with breakouts or acne. But skin does not do well when you eat too many processed ingredients either. Sugar, as an example, is particularly tough on the skin and can deprive it of essential magnesium.

Lots of fruits and vegetables are a major key to good skin health (in addition to lots of water). You’ll also want to eat a lot of nuts and fish since



these have those omega-3 fatty acids that combat aging in the skin.

You can follow the [Mayo Clinic's](#) recommendations for the best “healthy skin diet” by taking this advice, “Eat plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains and lean proteins...a diet rich in vitamin C and low in unhealthy fats and processed or refined carbohydrates might promote younger looking skin.”

However, a major shortcut is to cut alcohol, caffeine, and processed foods - especially sugar - entirely from the diet.

## **IMPROVE YOUR SURROUNDINGS**

This week is the time to consider the environmental conditions you subject your skin to, and one of the biggest issues is smoking.

Whether you smoke, or you live with a smoker, you need to know that smoking is a major hazard to good looking and healthy skin.

It has been proven to cause wrinkles, narrow blood vessels and deplete the skin of oxygen (meaning that you won't enjoy any sort of healthy glow) and it damages the elastin and collagen fibers that make your skin youthful.

If smoking is part of your life, make a point of initiating a “quit smoking” strategy this week.

Though you won't see the difference in a week, in just a matter of a month or two you will notice how much healthier your skin looks and feels.

Interestingly enough, you do need to consider whether or not you are outdoors enough each day. That means you actually need some time in sunlight in order for the body to make enough vitamin D for good health, and yet you can't expose the skin to too much. Each week you should make sure that you give yourself around three hours of time in the sun.

Finally, you need to look at your bedding.

The experts say that you should change your pillowcase(s) every nine days to ensure that oils from the head and face are removed and not redistributed to your face as you sleep.

## THIS MONTH

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Thirty days is a nice chunk of time to make plans and implement healthy changes. This month could be the one that gets you started on a brand new skin care regimen that ensures you enter the coming seasons with a healthy glow. To do that means taking some bigger steps than those already provided above, but none of them are overwhelming or radically difficult.

- **Cut back on salt** - Sodium likes to remain in the body and it can cause puffiness and swelling. Make a point of cutting down on salt if you want to improve the health of the skin.
- **Make plans for seasonal care** - Turn on the humidifier this month if heating season is beginning; pop some aloe vera in the fridge if it is summer, start applying moisturizer to your feet and hands before bed and put on socks to ensure the moisturizer does its magic while you sleep.
- **Kick some habits that lead to unhealthy hair** - Just as we advised for good hair care, you should stop smoking, cut out the caffeine, and improve your diet. Don't do them all at once, but try to erase one habit this month. It takes around 21 days to make new habits or break old ones, so find one to eliminate this month.

- **Purge your cabinets of any products with a lot of fragrance** - [Health Magazine](#) indicates that, "Fragrance is the most common cause of skin-care-related allergic reactions. If you're sensitive, be sure to choose products that are labeled 'fragrance-free.'"
- **Start considering your lifestyle and the impact it is having on your skin.** Did you know that the amount of sleep you get (or fail to get) will show up in the appearance of your skin? It isn't just that your eyes appear tired, it is also the fatigue is actually preventing your hormones from working properly. This causes slower cellular turnover and this leads to dull, lifeless, and even problem skin (eczema and acne are two issues related to fatigue and stress).

If you are not sleeping, or you feel that your life is a bit too stressful, you must take steps to turn things around. This month you can make a point of building a bit of exercise into your day, meditating to control stress and stress-related hormones, and making sure you get more sleep.

HINT: If you struggle with dark circles under the eyes or puffiness, try sleeping on your back. It is common for stomach sleepers to

have darker eye circles because blood pools there during their sleep, leaving dark circles that only slowly fade during the day.

## **THIS YEAR**

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What can you do to improve the health of your skin this year? Are there really steps that take a full year to show results? Fortunately, your skin is going to react to positive changes very quickly. Nothing takes a full year to show improvements, but the following tips are essential for those who want to cultivate the healthiest skin possible:

- Invest in a professional spa experience. You can give yourself an annual or even a twice-annual boost by enjoying a head to toe skin care routine. Make sure that the spa uses the same kinds of natural products that you do at home, and make sure that you get everything from a pedicure to a scalp massage - head to toe!
- Find a dermatologist and have at least one visit. People over the age of 40-45 are advised to have a full exam with a dermatologist on an annual basis. This is to uncover any problems or address ongoing complaints, but why not get a head start today? If you are even as young as someone in your 20s it is never too early to start being proactive about skin health and care. An expert can help you identify any problems and provide work-



able solutions when an over the counter or homemade remedy won't do the trick.

- Find an allergist and have at least one visit. Why? Many issues that people associate with their "skin" problems, such as puffy eyes or dark circles relate to allergies. It is best to have this out of your way before you pursue remedies for difficult skin issues.
- Invest in some good hats and garments that offer excellent sun protection and which let you also express your style. Then, make sure you wear them when you know your face and body are going to have to be out in the sun for extended periods of time.
- Experiment and explore the different cosmetics. We did not even touch on makeup because an entire book can be written about

it, but also because you do not need makeup to have healthy and good looking skin.

Cosmetics are designed to mask certain issues, and though a bit of carefully applied concealer can help you to reduce the appearance of circles under the eyes, it can also harm the skin.

How? When you remove makeup, it has to be done with products that take all of the oils from the skin. This can lead to a lot of challenges. You should spend time getting your skin in good shape, and if you are someone who wants to wear makeup, you'll need to experiment with methods and formulas to gauge the effect of it on your skin. Be sure to apply moisturizers before makeup and use the gentlest formulas to remove makeup too. And never leave makeup on the skin for any length of time!

Are we saying never, ever wear it? No. The key is to experiment, and give your skin time to respond and reveal which cosmetics work best with your particular skin type and conditions.

- Give new products time. [Jeanie Leddon](#), MD, PhD, a dermatologist in Boulder, Colorado says, "Give them a chance, finish the entire tube or bottle of a skincare potion before you decide how well it works...and adjust your beauty



regimen seasonally, swapping, say, the oil-free moisturizer you use in the summer for one that's more emollient during the winter..."

Healthy skin can be due to genetics, but everyone can get a good, healthy glow no matter what their challenges. It boils down to keeping things simple with a gentle cleanser, moisturizer, and an appropriate retinol product. When partnered with a good diet, exercise, and anti-stress routine, these steps will give you the best looking skin ever. If you are already doing these things and still have specific problems or concerns, it is likely time to visit a professional dermatologist to address that one hiccup in your otherwise flawless complexion.

That leaves us with one last area to give attention, and though we look at it every day, and use it constantly, we may forget that this part of our body needs just as much effort and care...



## **CHAPTER THREE: NAILS**

### ***BASICS***

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You might crack up when you read a technical definition of a nail because it is described as being like a “horn”. However, it is identical in its makeup to the horns and hooves of many animals. So, you could jokingly say that you have horns on your feet! Of course, you don’t want them to ever get the looks of actual horns, and that means that basic nail care is required.

Since we have them on hands and feet, though, it means there are a few different steps required for each set of nails. Interestingly enough, many animals have nails similar in appearance to our own, and there are endless debates as to why we should all have them on both hands and feet. The nails on human hands, scientists agree, were once put to use to fight, climb, and even use as tools.

But the toenails? Most agree that we now have very little actual function from nails except as a sort of extra protection to the tips of the fingers and toes, and yet we like to give attention to them all.

And we really should because they can actually be a good indicator of general health and wellbeing. Regardless of their intended use, nails can grow with dents, discoloration, ridges, and with other “flaws” and most of these things are signs of something going on in the body. It could be a sign of infection,



malnutrition, or some other illness or disease.

And as surprising as it sounds, it is once again the dermatologist (skin doctor) who we should visit with concerns about our nails. In fact, the American Academy of Dermatologists indicates that roughly ten percent of all dermatological conditions relate to the nails.

Because we take our nails for granted, however, it can be easy to overlook them or to give them all of the proper care and attention they need to look and feel their best. Of course, some of us go to the other end of the spectrum and fuss over our nails too much. This puts them at risk for bacterial infections and more.

So, let's first take a look at the basic needs of your nails, and then we'll explore the things you can do today, this week, and in the coming months and year to improve nails and make them beautiful.

- **Clean them** - If you wash your hands enough, you should be keeping the nails relatively clean. And yet you don't want them to be wet all of the time. This is why it is always recommended that you wear gloves if your hands will be in water or other fluids for any length of time. Even a cleaning fluid can harm the nails and leave them open to bacteria.

Additionally, if you are someone who has to wash their hands often during the day, it can make your nails prone to infection. This is usually why it is best to wear gloves rather

than putting hands and nails through a constant cycle of washing and drying.

If you do work that forces debris under the nail, or you walk somewhere without shoes and see a lot of debris in the nails, use a gentle nailbrush to slough the debris away. Keep gently rubbing and rinsing until the nails are clean. Then dry right away.

- **Trim them** - While lengthy nails are viewed as glamorous, the healthiest way to maintain nails is to cut them straight across with a slight roundness in the center. Why? It prevents a condition known as "ingrown" nails and strengthens them. Under no circumstances should you bit nails as this damages the nail bed and introduces bacteria to the nails. And if you have thick nails that are a challenge to cut, do what the [AAD](#) advises, "Soak in warm salt water (one teaspoon of salt per pint of water) for five to 10 minutes, then apply urea or lactic acid cream. This softens the nails, making them easier to trim."
- **Moisturize** - The point of maintenance is not nail growth but nail strength and health. This requires a bit of moisturizer to the "nail bed" and the "cuticle". The nail bed is the general body of the nail and the cuticle is the rounded area at the bottom of the nail where it connects to the digit. There are special cuticle oil products made for those who want

to strengthen the entire nail, and this can be applied daily.

## FAST FIXES?

Nails are slow growers and will take a month to grow around 1/8th of an inch. Because of this there are not a lot of fast fixes for damaged or torn nails. However, we can tell you that the Mayo Clinic advises wearing a thin coat of nail polish to protect fingers and even improve their health. This should be good news to those who feel their fingernails are not appealing or need a bit of a cosmetic boost.

Do keep in mind that one of the best tips for healthy nails is to actually skip the salon. Though you may want to rush out for a mani-pedi before a big event, WebMD indicates that, “Those who indulged regularly were the most likely to suffer from dry, brittle nails...women who get manicures frequently suffer from chronic nail bed infections, evidenced by puffy, reddened areas around the base of the nail”.

Salons also use acetone based removes that harm the nail, and the professionals doing the work may use equipment, such as emery boards, that also do further harm to the condition of the nail.

So, instead of using a professional service for nails, you may want to do most of your care yourself. It can all begin with the basics above, and then you can start to use the tips and tactics over the coming weeks and months.



## TODAY

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What can you do today to begin the journey towards healthier nails?

- **Start taking biotin.** This is a supplement from the B vitamin group and has been shown (in several studies) to increase thickness and to prevent splitting. A dose of 2.5 milligrams daily improved nails in 91% of the test subjects. Additionally, other tests were done using MSM supplements, and these two revealed benefits to nails.
- **Consider your shoes.** Dermatologists say that most ingrown toenails are the result of shoes that fit too tightly. Additionally, wearing shoes that are too tight, and with nails even a tiny bit too long will cause the nails to lift. This usually results in an infection in the nail, and this is something very difficult to eliminate.
- **Stop walking barefoot.** This applies only to public locations because so many of them

are covered with bacteria, fungi, and even viruses. Locker rooms, public pools, and even shoes stores can expose you to tremendous risk. Stop going barefoot in such locations today and you'll be on your way to much healthier nails.

## ***THIS WEEK***

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And this week? Are there any steps that can be done within the next few days that can make a difference?

- Switch shampoos. Many people don't realize that their chronically dry cuticles and nails are related to their shampoo. If you use a shampoo for oily hair, you are especially at risk for this problem. Switch to another and watch your nails for changes.
- Start using nail hardeners or nail polish. If your nails are a bit too thin or soft and you have yet to figure out how to make them healthier, you can ensure that they remain in the best shape for now with a bit of nail hardener or a single coat of fortifying polish.
- Visit a dermatologist. If you have one nail that is a bit funky or you believe is infected with bacteria, this week is the time to book some time with an expert. Have the doctor look at all of your nails and let you know of anything you should be doing to improve them. Remember that your nails may also

show evidence of another, unrecognized, health issue. And your dermatologist could be a much more informative expert than you realize now.

## ***THIS MONTH***

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What sort of goals can you set for yourself and your nail health in the coming months? This is the time to start mastering the maintenance of your increasingly healthy nails, too. So you will want to make a point of gauging the changes in your nails ever four weeks. You can begin by taking a quick photo of your nails and jotting down some thoughts about their problems or conditions.

After your first month, take another close look at your nails. Do things seem to be going better? What about any issues uncovered by the dermatologist? Within one month you will see changes, and if they are not for the better it is important to get yourself back for a visit with the dermatologist.

If you follow these steps, within the next year you should have stronger, healthier, and more attractive nails. And though you don't want to get a mani-pedi on a regular basis, once your nails are as healthy as possible you could treat yourself to an attractive French manicure or a dazzling set of painted nails for a special event!

# IN CONCLUSION

**T**hough you now have three different sets of “to do” lists, you can see that none of the activities are complicated or even time consuming. Perhaps you are already doing a lot of these things in your daily routine, and maybe you have just discovered a list of things you have never considered before.

Either way, these are the most solid solutions to common beauty challenges. You don’t have to invest in a cabinet full of miracle cures when you understand that so many of your beauty basics can be handled with some small lifestyle changes.

Eat better, get a lot of sleep, exercise, drink water... this is not all that difficult, but you may have not been making these things a priority. Warm to cool water for washing your hair, liquid cleansers for the skin, and looser shoes may never have occurred to you as remedies for some of your beauty challenges.

Now you know all there is to know about the essential steps for day-by-day beauty. It won’t all come together in a few days or weeks, but it will come together! Using these steps will get you the healthiest hair, skin, and nails of your life. Not only



will you notice the difference, but everyone around you will notice too.

“Did you change something?” a friend will ask.

“You look so pretty today,” another will say.

“What’s different about you?” still another will wonder.

And you can smile knowing that you have done all of this yourself. With your persistence and attention to some simple details you will have nurtured your body to a gorgeous and healthy condition, and you will be able to keep it that way for years and years to come.

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