



## Seven Keys to Beautiful Skin

By Dr. Sasha Blissett

As the largest organ of the body, the skin has many responsibilities that include but aren't limited to looking good! Our skin protects us from the external environment, excretes toxins through sweat, produces oils, hair growth and allows us to experience touch. Our skin can also be a great reflection of our inner health. There are a few basic rules to abide by to promote healthy, glowing skin. They include avoiding common culprits that lead to premature wrinkling like alcohol, caffeine and smoking, which are all dehydrating to the skin; avoiding excessive sun exposure and sunburns which leads to premature skin aging and increases skin cancer risk. Instead, embrace drinking plenty of water to stay well hydrated and to rid the body of toxins; getting a minimum of seven hours of "beauty sleep" which helps balance your hormones to prevent untimely aging of the skin; eating plenty of fresh vegetables and fruit each day for their rich antioxidant profile and fiber content; and avoiding fried, sugary, and processed foods. If you already have these covered, here are seven additional tips to start you on your path to healthier skin:

1) **Probiotics.** The good bacteria that inhabit our bodies like the numerous Lactobacilli promote healthy skin through the gut by supporting the gut-skin axis. Taking probiotic supplements or eating prebiotic and probiotic rich foods improves the microbiome make-up of the skin. A healthy microbiome supported by nutrition and probiotics provides barrier support, protecting the skin against pathogens and decreases inflammation.

2) **Stress management.** Active and habitual stress reduction helps you feel better from the inside out. Stress reduction helps decrease the formation of the dreaded stress lines on the forehead. Stress also causes an increase in production of the stress hormone cortisol, which promotes fat storage and leads to dehydration. View managing stress as an anti-aging mechanism. Adaptogens are types of herbs that help to reset and rebalance our cortisol levels and in-turn helps with stress management. Adaptogenic herbs like Avena, Schisandra, Withania, Eleutherococcus, and Glycyrrhiza possess robust properties to help fight stress.

3) **Skin care routine.** Cleansing and moisturizing at least twice daily is important for all skin types. For dry, oily, or combination skin types, use cool water and resist over washing to prevent irritation and dryness. Using a non-drying astringent or toner like Witch Hazel will help clean and tighten pores. Avoid toxic ingredients in cosmetics, creams, lotions, soaps and facial products, as many contain carcinogens and hormone disruptors. Toxic ingredients such Teflon, bisphenol-A (BPA) and phthalates, are just a few of the chemicals that can be found in many skincare

products. Infertility, asthma, allergies, atopic dermatitis in children, estrogen dominance, and reduced concentration of testosterone are linked to these toxins. They are everywhere! Keep in mind cosmetic companies do not register with nor report adverse events of their products to the FDA when they occur.

4) **Exercise.** Consistent exercise helps maintain optimal hormones in balance, heightens sense of well-being and helps improve sleep. And of course, exercise helps promote better blood circulation, giving the skin a natural glow.

5) **Facial fitness.** Facial exercises performed daily for twenty to thirty minutes have been shown to improve fullness and decrease fine lines in the face. One exercise is to simply place both hands facing inwards on the forehead and spread all the fingers out between the eyebrows and hairline, then gently sweep the fingers outwards going across the forehead applying a light pressure to tighten the skin, relax and then repeat about ten times. This helps smooth out the dreaded “elevens,” those lines between our eyebrows and hairline, the ones that often make us look angry or perplexed.

6) **Botanical medicine.** Plants are not only rich in skin protecting antioxidants but also are high in compounds that drive the breakdown of toxins through the liver and promote healthy digestion. A combination of Taraxacum, Vaccinium, Arctium lappa, Coleus and Silybum nurtures the skin from within by providing restorative support and helping fight free radical damage.

7) **Antioxidants for your skin care arsenal.** Drink a few cups of organic Green or Turmeric teas each day. They both are super high in powerful antioxidants that provide protection against those youthful skin robbing free radicals. Also, spritz lavender or rose water facial mist to rehydrate and reenergize the skin in the middle of the day. They both help fight free radical damage from the inside out and outside in respectively.

Beautiful skin does take time and care, but by refining your skincare routine with these seven keys, you'll enhance your skin's youthfulness and combat premature skin aging to have the healthy skin you deserve now.