TIME after TIME

Hands up if you’re still using the same moisturiser or cleanser as you were 10 years ago? It could be time to get an age and skin-specific regime in place.

Words: Sally Hunwick

While actual time reversal would be great, there are other more feasible ways to stall the effect time has on our complexions. With the help of the right skincare, regular facials, and a bit of effort on our part, it’s now possible to ward off a lot of the by-products of ageing for a lot longer.

But we need to stay realistic. Skincare has come a long way but ‘forever young’ is still the stuff of fairytales. The tick of time is a matter of rock-solid theoretical physics so it’s impractical to believe that a cream (or an injectable for that matter) is going to make us look the same in our 50s as we did in our 20s.

Growing old gracefully, in many respects, still applies, but thanks to skincare improvements, these days we can look a lot better for our age.

Spa Secrets asks three top UK facialists what’s going on at skin level throughout our 20s, 30s, 40s and 50s (and beyond), and how we can slow down the ageing process. Your time starts now. ➤
20S SKIN

Post adolescence, life tends to take on a lot of changes and that can have a knock-on effect for our complexions. Study, a new career, moving out of the family home and an active social life are all cornerstones of our 20s — rewarding yes, but often the end result is unbalanced, dull skin that’s prone to spots. But there is good news: spots can be dealt with and 20s’ skin is usually line-free and plump.

“Skin is still firm in the 20s,” says top facialist Emma Hardie at Michaeljohn in Mayfair. Hardie says the usual issues in this age group are generally “pores, oiliness and congestion.”

Keeping spots at bay with over-zealous cleaning is not the answer though, says Marylebone-based facialist Vaishaly Patel. “Acne is the most common complaint,” Patel says. “This is often due to the lack of a good skincare routine or products that strip the surface of the skin, causing oil glands to overproduce and form pimples.” To keep dry skin looking luminous, Patel suggests an oil-based cleanser, while skin prone to oiliness should enlist a soap-free gel cleanser “without sodium sulphate as this ingredient produces bubbles — the more bubbles the more drying it is,” she says.

A lack of real skin issues at this age can make setting aside time for a diligent morning and evening skincare routine tricky for women in their 20s, says Hardie. “It’s harder for them to make time for skincare because they don’t see their skin ageing,” she adds. But heed this: instilling good habits now will set you up for better skin long-term.

Leading high-tech facialist, Sarah Chapman agrees, “A lot of women don’t start thinking about a proper routine until their 30s when they notice the signs of ageing.”

In terms of ageing, the sun is hands-down skin’s worst enemy when it comes to lines and pigmentation. Even more disturbing is the fact that most of the damage is done during our teens and 20s. So, regardless of the taut, line-free skin staring back at you in the mirror, now is the ideal time to set up good skin habits.

“Prevention is a far better choice and I would recommend a good moisturiser and SPF during your 20s,” says Chapman.

Dullness, due to late nights and a poor diet, is also an issue for some of Hardie’s younger clients. “They want luminosity — a glow and a brightness back to their skin,” she says.

A facial once a month will bring real skin benefits long-term but it’s not always practical for a time- and cash-strapped 20-something. For a quick-at-home solution Hardie suggests steaming the face over a bowl of hot water with a drop of rosehip oil to remove congestion (if you must extract, Hardie encourages you to do it post steam — “never extract on dry skin,” she warns).

Multitasking products are key in this age group and Hardie recommends her Amazing Face Natural Lift and Sculpt Moringa Cleansing Balm, which is not only great for cleansing the skin and getting rid of eye makeup, it’s equally good as a face mask and spot clearer.

KEY PRODUCTS:

CLEANSER: Amazing Face Natural Lift and Sculpt Moringa Cleansing Balm, £34. This cleansing balm thoroughly cleanses and doubles as a spot treatment. Use it with the range’s accompanying microfibre cloths for even more impressive complexion results.

MOISTURISER: Murad Anti-Ageing Moisturiser SPF20 PA++, £46.50. This moisturiser is a true timesaver thanks to its blemish-control, hydration and sun protection abilities.

FOUNDATION: Clinique Moisture Surge Tinted Moisturiser SPF 15, £20. An oil-free formulation that pulls triple duty with heavy doses of hydration, SPF 15, and sheer, buildable coverage for a natural look.

STAR PRODUCT: Alpha-H Liquid Gold Smoothing & Perfecting Mask, £46. Jam-packed with AHAs this mask lifts off dulling dead skin cells and boosts skin luminosity in a flash.

30S SKIN

If you’ve let nature take its course during your teens and 20s, this is the decade to start paying closer attention. Skin in its 30s is generally still in pretty good condition in terms of firmness, but according to the experts, this is the decade where the first signs of ageing crop up.

Chapman notes that key issues during our 30s are “pigmentation, lines and the start of a loss of elasticity”. You may also notice some fine lines around the forehead and eyes, says Hardie.
In our 30s, we're likely to be juggling kids, career and marriage, which can often mean high stress. And chronic anxiety can cause unwanted spots, says Chapman — even in women who haven't had issues with acne previously. “The stress of lifestyle can cause breakouts, which, combined with ageing concerns can be a challenge for skincare treatment,” Chapman says. Harsh teen acne treatments are not the answer for this age group. To treat the conflicting issues of ageing and spots simultaneously, Chapman recommends visiting a facialist or aesthetician who can give you individual treatment and at-home care.

Now is the time to up the potency in terms of the sort of skincare you use. “It's time to switch to repair,” says Chapman. “So incorporate high levels of vitamin A and peptides into your routine to support the collagen structure and repair cell damage. I'd recommend using a serum underneath your moisturiser for best results.”

And to shield skin from sun-induced pigmentation and cell degeneration, sun protection, with both UVA and UVB inhibitors, should also be a skincare mainstay everyday, says Patel.

Toxic build-up is another by-product of a 30-something's busy lifestyle. Daily facial massage will “stimulate drainage, get rid of toxins and plump and tone the face,” says Hardie.

Enlisting a professional facialist during this decade pays rewards later — a facial every four to six weeks is a good aim, especially if acne is an issue — but just 30 seconds a day at home while applying night cream will reap anti-ageing rewards. Diligent massage also allows skincare ingredients to penetrate better, which means better results, more quickly.

**KEY PRODUCTS:**

**CLEANSER:** Aesop Parsley Seed Facial Cleanser, £23. This clarifying gel-based cleanser contains lactic acid to thoroughly cleanse, soften and exfoliate the skin.

**MOISTURISER:** Sarah Chapman Overnight Facial, £39.50. Packed with peptides, vitamins and antioxidants, skin glows by morning.

**FOUNDATION:** Jemma Kidd Mineral Skin Nourishing Tint SPF 20, £28. Blended with skin conditioning magnesium, potassium, sodium and zinc, this treatment foundation is gentle enough to use on pimple-prone skin.

**STAR PRODUCT:** Estee Lauder Advanced Night Repair, £54. This cult favourite repairs cell damage while you sleep, and protects skin against future stressors.

40s SKIN

During our 40s, things are starting to slow down internally, and that can result in the outward signs of ageing becoming more obvious.

“The Lymphatic system starts to slow down, which can result in puffiness around cheeks and under the eyes,” says Patel, who believes in keeping skincare simple and natural. “Oestrogen levels reduce so skin is less pert and

bouncy, resulting in sags and wrinkles around the neck and chest,” Patel adds.

“By the time women reach their 40s, their main concerns should be more effective anti-ageing and combating dryness which happens through hormonal changes,” says Chapman. “During your 40s you may also notice a change in the décolleté area, pigmentation, vascular damage and roughness.”

To keep skin looking its peak during this decade, Chapman suggests regular facials. “They make a big difference,” she says. “Treatments such as collagen induction needling can also be beneficial to trigger your fibroblasts to produce collagen.”

Between sessions with an expert, keep skin functioning at its best with an at-home routine that includes daily facial massage. Circular movements over the face will help drain away puffiness, reduce facial tension that can build up with age, and boost radiance says Hardie. And recruit potent, more hydrating creams designed to target the signs of ageing. “A richer night cream plus a serum under your night and day cream will make a difference,” says Hardie.

Serums are a must during our 40s as they penetrate ingredients deeper into the skin than creams. “Keeping skin hydrated is crucial, so use a serum in the evening then add a night cream on top,” says Patel who also recommends cleansing with an oil-based cleanser to keep skin clean without stripping it of natural oils. And if there isn't an eye cream in your routine yet, this is the decade to recruit a peptide-based eye cream in order to keep deep-set lines to a minimum.

As well as deeper hydration, regular, gentle exfoliation is also key. “Cell renewal slows down so it's important to exfoliate religiously once a week,” says Patel.
Chemical rather than grainy exfoliants are best on skin that has started to thin. "Exfoliating helps speed up cell renewal and keeps the complexion glowing," says Chapman. "I prefer gentle acid exfoliants such as lactic acid." Enlisting either AHAs such as lactic acid, or BHA salicylic acid, helps anti-aging ingredients to penetrate better into the skin. If skin is fragile, enzymes do a similar job but can be gentler. "Enzymes have a buffing action on the skin," says Hardie.

And here's a great tip for now and into the future. "Don't neglect the back of your neck and even behind your ears when applying any creams and serums," says Chapman. "This is the area where skin can start to sag."

**KEY PRODUCTS:**

**CLEANSER:** Vaishaly Cleansing Balm, £69. This arnica, ginkgo and calendula-spiked formula emulsifies with water to cleanse skin without stripping it of natural oils.

**MOISTURISER:** Elemis Pro-Collagen Marine Cream, £76.60. With collagen-boosting marine extracts including Padina Pavonica, this anti-ageing cream works on minimising wrinkle depth and boosting hydration.

**FOUNDATION:** Chanel Vitalumièrè Satin Smoothing Fluid Makeup SPF 15, £33. With marine extracts and light-reflecting pigments, this moisture-rich foundation revitalises dull, dry complexions.

**STAR PRODUCT:** Sarah Chapman Age-Repair Concentrate, £80. This day and night concentrate contains potent vitamin A and buzz ingredient Renovage, which acts directly on cell DNA to slow down ageing.

50+ SKIN

During our 50s the brakes are applied to collagen and elastin production. That means skin is thinner, dryer and prone to deep-set lines, wrinkles and sagging.

Pigmentation and redness can also be an issue in this age group, says Hardie. "You might notice more redness in the skin or perhaps spider nives, tiny red spider veins that often appear on the cheeks," she says. "Pores also become more open and skin can appear dull and lose its radiance due to the collagen fibres sticking together from lack of hydration."

Highly nourishing creams and serums are a mainstay by the time we hit our 50s. "Look for skincare containing higher levels ofcosmeceutical actives," says Chapman who recommends ingredients such as peptides, hydrators, antioxidants and ultra-potent vitamins.

Hyaluronic acid is one ingredient in particular that should be on the skincare hit list during this decade. Naturally occurring in the dermis, hyaluronic acid both shields skin against environmental aggressors and gives the complexion a plumped, healthy look thanks to its unique ability to hold up to one thousand times its weight in water. Recruiting Vitamin A or retinol into the skincare routine also makes good skin sense due to its ability to smooth out pigmentation, roughened skin and lines.

Regular anti-ageing facials focusing on boosting levels of hydration and collagen will help slow the progression of ageing during this period so try booking in with a professional facialist every six weeks. And, just as the experts suggest facial massage on a daily basis in our 20s, 30s and 40s, it's even more important during our 50s and beyond in order to keep skin stimulated — and calm.

"Use a really nourishing cream and massage skin everyday," Hardie says. "It will reduce stress and loosen the connective tissue in the skin."

Simply using a facelocloth on skin will help keep things looking tighter. "A microfibre cloth buffed over the face will tone up the underlying structure of the skin," says Hardie who suggests her Amazing Face Natural Lift and Sculpt Dual Action Professional Cleansing Cloths.

**KEY PRODUCTS:**

**CLEANSER:** REN Ultra Moisture Cleansing Milk, £18. Perfect for dry skin, this rosehip and olive oil dosed milk cleanser, leaves skin clean without any tightness.

**MOISTURISER:** NuBo Cell Dynamic Overnight Recharge Totale, £120. Designed for mature skin types, this night cream is charged with peptides, pro-collagen and hyaluronic acid to boost elasticity overnight.

**FOUNDATION:** Lancôme Teint Rénénové Lift R.A.R.E., £35.25. Not just a makeup, this radiance-inducing foundation contains an anti-ageing complex to firm skin and reduce wrinkles.

**STAR PRODUCT:** Emma Hardie Amazing Face Natural Lift and Sculpt Skin Plumping Serum, £44. With biophoton marine extracts to counteract the loss of DHEA hormones, this am and pm serum relaxes lines and wrinkles and gives skin instant hydration and radiance.