

Smooth as silk

You can't turn back time – but you can slow down its effects on your skin, says Beauty Editor Amy Packer

Have you been peering in the mirror lately, examining your skin and convincing yourself that the cracks and crevices are increasing by the day? If you're over 25, the bad news is you might not be imagining things... but don't panic just yet.

"Women often confuse dehydration with the start of fine lines and wrinkles," says Elisabeth Bouhadana, Global Scientific Communications Director of L'Oréal Paris. "The easiest way to see whether you need a targeted product or simply a hydration boost is to apply a moisturiser to the area. If the lines disappear it was dehydration, which means you're lucky, as any good product suitable for your skin type will banish the new arrivals almost instantly.

"If, however, they linger after the cream has soaked in, you

have the first signs of ageing. And I have to be honest, that's something that will be an issue for most of us once we reach our mid-twenties."

The reason? Once you hit 25 your collagen levels start to deplete. "Collagen accounts for 30 per cent of the protein in your body and is the magic ingredient to perfectly smooth skin," says Elisabeth. "But UV rays, pollution and stress all cause your body to produce free radicals, which attack your collagen. When this happens at a time when your body has started to slow its production, you will begin to see the early signs of lines and sagging. You lose one per cent of your collagen each year from your mid-twenties onwards, and I'm afraid it quickly takes its toll. Luckily though, advances in skincare mean it's possible to fight the signs of ageing. I've been working on the development of a cream that has proved, after two months of use, to be almost as effective as laser

procedures at reducing crows' feet and banishing the fine lines. The future really is promising when it comes to looking younger for longer."

Another way to boost your collagen levels is with a dietary supplement. Choose one that is packed with antioxidants, zinc and vitamin C, which are essential for skin health and collagen production, as well as fighting free radicals. You have to be in it for the long haul, however. If you want to see results, you need to be popping the pills daily for a minimum of three months – and the supplements worth taking don't fall into the "bargain" category. Personally, I think they're well worth the investment.

If you want a quicker fix, it's time to think about faking it. Foundations and concealers are clever things these days. They don't just even out the colour of your complexion and hide imperfections, they're also packed with microscopic, reflective particles that are designed to play

tricks with the light, bouncing it away from your cracks and crevices to keep everyone dazzled with your youthful radiance. And who among us is averse to a little sleight of hand if it means you can look fabulous in no time?

From left: L'Oréal Lumi Magique Touch of Light Highlighting Pen (£8.49; 0800 030 4032)

Sarah Chapman Age-Repair Serum (£47; 020 7589 9094)
Radical Skincare Peptide Infused Antioxidant Serum (£105; 020 7730 1234)

Garnier UltraLift Serum + Cream (£11.99; nationwide)
Maybelline New York Instant Anti-Age The Eraser Foundation (£9.99; nationwide)

Soap & Glory Make Yourself Youthful (£20; 0845 609 005)
Imedeen Derma One (£35.99; 0845 070 8090)

Perfectil Platinum (£23.95; 0845 070 8090)
L'Oréal Revitalift Laser Renew Day (£19.99;

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