

**M**ost new anti-ageing serums, gels and lotions are formulated in a laboratory, using cutting-edge science to target pigmentation, lines and sagging. But according to a growing number of dermatologists, beauty therapists and facialists, the key to plump, hydrated and healthy skin is not to be found in the test tube but in natural face oils.

It's a beauty regime that Susan Harmsworth, the founder of luxury skincare range ESPA, has long been championing. "I've been applying oil to my face twice a day for as long as I can remember," she says. "I honestly believe that it is the only way to truly nourish your skin."

Susan is a powerful argument that we should not dismiss face oils in the fight against ageing. One pinch of her very firm cheek proves her point – in her sixties, she has skin with the bounce back of a woman in her thirties.

"You can use serums but the simple truth is that only an oil can truly penetrate your skin, taking active ingredients with it," says Susan. "And don't think that an oil is heavyweight or clogging – a good face oil should be lightweight and absorbed in a minute so that you can quickly use other products on top. In fact, many women use a face oil as they would a serum, morning and night under a cream."

It's true that even the active ingredients in high-tech anti-ageing serums have either a fat molecule added to them or are encased in a microscopic fatty capsule called a liposome to enable them to penetrate your skin. So why not go direct to the source and try the new generation face oils? Spa therapists and facialists have long used them to massage and treat skin.

"Face oils have always been part of my customised facials," says Sarah Chapman, facialist to stars including Naomi Watts and Queen Rania of Jordan and the founder of Skinesis skincare range, which includes an overnight face treatment oil. "The secret to getting my clients to use them is to make them super lightweight so they go into the skin leaving it feeling velvety soft."

Here, we feature the lightest, most potent face oils around. Use them as you would a night cream on freshly cleansed skin before you go to bed, while the lightest can go under your moisturiser in the morning to add some extra protection during these cold, winter days. You can also use them straight after a shower, when you're still slightly damp, and blend with the water to create a milky lotion that sinks into skin in seconds. Find one you like and soon you too could be on the way back to baby-soft skin. **■**



# Well OILED

*As skincare becomes increasingly high tech, some experts are saying that the way to healthy, baby-soft skin is by going back to nature*

# BEST BUYS

## FOR DRY SKIN

CHOOSE A SLIGHTLY HEAVIER OIL THAT CAN REALLY HYDRATE AND LOCK IN WATER

1. Suti Rejuvenate Organic Face Oil, £28, visit [nutribautyproducts.com](http://nutribautyproducts.com).
2. Darphin Aromatic Jasmine Face Oil, £61.
3. Pai Rosehip BioRegenerate Fruit & Seed Oil Blend, £20.
4. Bobbi Brown Extra Face Oil, £40.



## FOR ANTI-AGEING

CHOOSE AN OIL RICH IN ANTIOXIDANTS AND VITAMINS TO NOURISH YOUR SKIN

1. ESPA Replenishing Face Treatment Oil £53, visit [espaonline.com](http://espaonline.com).
2. Aromatherapy Associates Fine Line Face Oil, £41.50, from Space NK.
3. Sarah Chapman Overnight Facial, £45, visit [sarahchapman.net](http://sarahchapman.net).
4. Viridian Ultimate Beauty Skin Repair Topical Oil, £15.15, from health food stores.



## FOR CLEANSING

CHOOSE AN OIL THAT RINSES CLEAR AWAY WITH WATER

1. Shu Uemura Premium A/O Cleansing Beauty Oil, £28, visit [shuumura.co.uk](http://shuumura.co.uk).
2. Dior Instant Gentle Cleansing Oil, £23.50.
3. Micheline Arcier Fleur Face Cleansing Oil, £24, visit [michelinearcier.com](http://michelinearcier.com).
4. Origins Clean Energy Gentle Cleansing Oil, £17.



## FOR A HEALTHY GLOW

TRY AN OIL FORMULATED TO BOOST CIRCULATION AND HYDRATE

1. ILa Face Oil For Glowing Radiance, £56.40, visit [ila-spa.com](http://ila-spa.com).
2. A'kin Pure Radiance Rosehip Oil, £16, from Holland & Barrett.
3. Clarins Lotus Face Treatment Oil, £28.
4. Neal's Yard Remedies Rose Facial Oil, £20.50.

