

I vividly remember the first time I used a face mask. I was 12, my best friend was coming over for a sleepover and I had practically stalked my mother around the supermarket until she gave in and bought me two little strawberry-scented sachets for under a pound. To my 12-year-old self, this pastel-pink face mask was the height of glamour; the epitome of grown-up grooming. The face mask was all-powerful; it had the ability to transform my heroines in the films that shaped my adolescence (*She's All That*, *Never Been Kissed* and *Clueless*) from average to beautiful. That evening, pyjamas on, we excitedly ripped open the foil, smearing on the synthetic pink cream. Sadly, it didn't transform me into Alicia Silverstone (it irritated my pre-teen skin leading to my first outbreak of spots), yet it was the most grown-up beauty ritual I'd ever indulged in. I was addicted.

Today, the humble sachet has undergone a transformation of its own and Givenchy, ever the innovator, is leading the way. Revolutionising previous conceptions of the face mask, it has created a luxuriously packeted face mask with a haute couture twist. Enter *Le Soir Noir Masque Dentelle* – a delicate black lace veil impregnated with an age-defying black algae sap. Far more fitting for a masquerade ball than the bathroom, this uses hi-tech ingredients to restore and firm the skin. Other brands transforming our retro ideas of the face mask include Dior, with its *Satin Revitalizing Firming Mask* sachet, part of its *Prestige* range, while *Crème de la Mer* relaunches its two-zone *Hydrating Facial* in two weeks' time. And they'll only get better as James Read launches the first ever tanning face mask in a sachet in December.

But why the resurgence of this teenage classic? Superdrug has seen a 70% rise in the sales of sachet masks since last August as consumers opt for quick fixes to skin concerns. The beauty lies in its simplicity – it's not difficult to master. With a face mask, you're in control. There's something satisfying in administering your own treatments. Leading facialist Sarah Chapman agrees: "Sachet masks turn you into the therapist; they're pre-measured so there's no confusion as to whether you're using the wrong amount."

Fifteen years later, my world may be a lot crazier, balancing work with planning a wedding and a busy social life, but the ritual of applying a face mask, lying back and allowing myself 20 minutes with my eyes closed is one of the most indulgent treats I can give myself. No texting, no emailing, no tweeting. Give yourself a moment of calm...

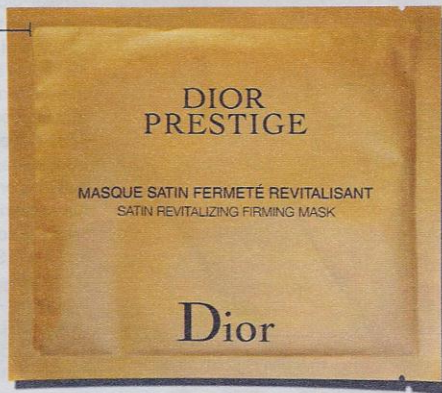
LIE BACK AND
RELAX (STATEMENT
JEWELLERY OPTIONAL)

Leaders Of The Pack

Be your own facialist with eight of the best foil face masks around

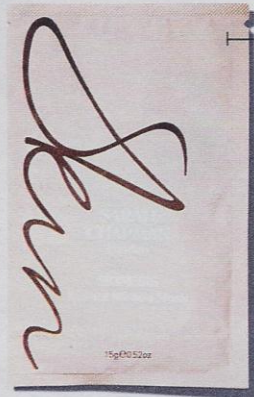
SATIN REVITALIZING FIRMING MASK
£105 (for six masks),
Dior Prestige

A silky sheath infused with rose satine nectar, extracted from a resilient rose that thrives in harsh conditions, boosting the skin's powers of resistance to pollution, stress and sun. My skin looked well-rested, like it had been on holiday without me.



SKINESIS INSTANT MIRACLE MASK
£38 (for four masks),
Sarah Chapman

The perfect remedy to give lacklustre skin a boost, this professional-strength mask is packed with plumping hyaluronic acid and brightening vitamin C. The fun is in the mix – add water to create a rubberised texture, paint it on and peel it off to reveal clearer, brighter skin.



BRIGHTENING FACIAL MOISTURE BOOSTING MASK
£2.05, The Sanctuary

You may find yourself dozing off as this finely blended formula of calming lavender and nourishing shea works on the senses as well as the skin. Quenching rosehip oil also restores collagen levels leaving skin looking tighter. A facial in a packet.

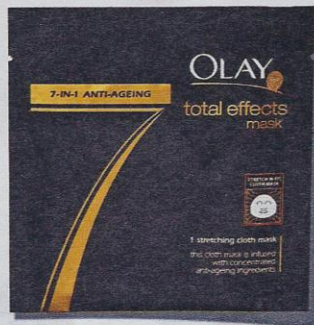


NO 'ZIT' SHERLOCK BREAKOUT-BUSTING RUBBERIZING MASK
£35 (for six masks),
Bliss

Antibacterial tea tree, seaweed and menthol purge pores and absorb any impurities.

THE HYDRATING FACIAL
£190 (for six masks),
Crème de la Mer

Two cotton masks, one for the upper face and one for the lower, perfectly mould to your face. Active ingredients sink deep into the skin delivering a surge of moisture, zapping redness and dry patches.

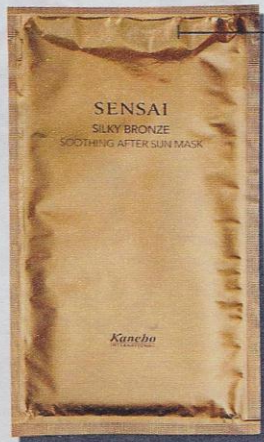


TOTAL EFFECTS 7-IN-1 ANTI-AGEING MASK
£16.99 (for five masks),
Olay

Cloths are drenched in hydrating vitamins that penetrate the skin and plump out fine lines. Provides a month's worth of anti-ageing ingredients in under 15 minutes.

SILKY BRONZE SOOTHING AFTER SUN MASK
£75 (for eight masks),
Sensai by Kanebo

Japanese women are known for their immaculate skincare regimes so we look to Sensai when we feel like a complete skin overhaul. This three-layer paper mask instantly hydrates and refreshes pores. Collagen boosters quickly restore suppleness while apricot and peach extracts enhance and prolong a tan, minimising any peeling. One to pack in your suitcase.



LE SOIN NOIR MASQUE DENTELLE
£220 (for four masks),
Givenchy

The lace weave of this unique face mask clings to the contours of your face, exerting a gentle lifting tension and giving skin a pearlescent sheen.

