



1
even your
skin tone
THE ENEMIES

SUNLIGHT When exposed to the sun, our body's response is to produce a pigment called melanin that protects our skin by absorbing UV rays. But over time skin cells get overloaded with pigment, resulting in dark, unflattering spots. "New US studies are showing that even exposure to artificial lighting encourages our skin to produce melanin," says Dr Harold Lancer, an LA-based cosmetic surgeon who is on many red-carpet regulars' speed dial.

HORMONES Increased oestrogen levels are to blame for dark patches on your skin, so ask your GP for advice when choosing your contraceptive pill or coil.

INFLAMMATION, which happens when skin is healing, can lead to discoloration, so next time you're tempted to squeeze a pimple, bear in mind that the scar could trigger dark spots. Strong antibiotics such as tetracycline (to treat bacterial infections) can prompt inflammation, so check with your GP before starting a course.

GENETICS are also a factor. An English rose's melanin is different from that of a person with a darker complexion, so discoloration can range from red or yellow to darker spots. "When it comes to hyperpigmentation, your genes are the gun, your hormones are the bullet and light exposure is the trigger," says Dr Lancer.

WHAT YOU NEED
TO DO

Apply an SPF and invest in dark-spot-busting skincare. Over-the-counter creams containing retinol may have garnered a bad reputation in the past, but this vitamin A-derivative is the best way to fade

pigmentation, boost collagen, erase fine lines and zap acne – all at once. "Vitamin A is essential for normal activity of skin cells," says Dr Des Fernandes, an anti-ageing expert and co-author of *Your Skin Factory* (£18.95; yourskinfactory.com). Apply at night (UV rays destroy vitamin A) and, if your skin is dry, top up with night cream.

Those with sensitive skin should opt for creams containing natural brighteners such as mulberry or liquorice, which are less irritating, and decrease melanin production gradually.

YOUR SKIN
PRODUCTS

1. **Even Brighter Spot Corrector**, £14.50, Eucerin (boots.com)
2. **Skinesis Overnight Body Treatment**, £49, Sarah Chapman (sarahchapman.net)
3. **Intense Youth Complex**, £18.99, Hand Chemistry (boots.com)
4. **Age Proof Botanical Lightening Treatment**, £29.50, Trilogy (trilogyproms.com)
5. **Superdefense SPF 20 Daily Defense Moisturizer**, £39, Clinique (0870 034 2566)
6. **Abeille Royale Dark Spot Corrector Pore Minimizer**, £85, Guerlain (01932 233887)

2 get glowing
THE ENEMIES

TEMPERATURE changes as well as a lack of moisture explain why your skin glows in

summer but turns to a greyish tone come the colder months, when it's exposed to the cold, central heating and air con. **SLEEP DEPRIVATION** is also to blame, as your skin repairs itself at night time. Snooze for less than six hours a night and your eyes and skin will start to feel dry and itchy. **POLLUTION** is another source of trouble. Carbon monoxide is known to impair oxygen supply and to slow down skin metabolism, which results in increased dryness and radiance-loss. So it is best to choose greener routes for your daily

jog or bike ride into work.

WHAT YOU NEED
TO DO

Get scrubbing, regularly. "Exfoliating is your highway to radiant skin," says Dr Lancer. "By sloughing off dead skin cells, you boost new-cell production and allow your skin barrier to

strengthen. When the skin's barrier is intact, it is smoother and light reflects better so the tone is more radiant."

Cleansing your skin properly twice a day is also key to keeping it fresh and ready to absorb your skincare. Invest in creams containing ingredients such as ceramides to maintain your skin's natural barrier; retinol (again) to smooth the surface, and hyaluronic acid to boost hydration. If you have sensitive skin, go for soothing ingredients such as grape seed, avocado >

