



LOOK
YOUNGER
NOW

CAROL AND ROB TROW,
DISTRIBUTORS OF ENVIRON SKINCARE
IN THE US, EXPLAIN THE ESSENTIALS
OF ANTI-AGEING SKINCARE.

We all want to look and feel younger. Skin health is a vital part of the anti-ageing equation. Our bodies, particularly our skin, age in two ways: intrinsically (from the process of chronological ageing) and extrinsically (due to environmental factors ranging from photo-damage exposure to a myriad of pollutants found in the air).

Increasingly, we look to skincare products to help combat the signs of skin ageing. Professional skincare treatments add great value to the repair and prevention of skin health so try to have a facial once a month with a knowledgeable aesthetician. In between skincare treatments, incorporate a home skincare regimen to help combat skin ageing. Manufacturers have become adroit at selling hope in a jar. Most products on the market are really fluff and buff. They might smell wonderful, feel and sound great, but do they actually help? The answer is in the ingredients and packaging...

Packaging

Look for airless jars and pumps that lock light. While crystal-clear packaging in elegant wide-mouth jars may look great, the air, bacteria and light to which ingredients are exposed play a material role in reducing the effectiveness of any skincare formulation.

While selecting the products to include in your beauty arsenal, there are many important ingredients to look for. The following are the critical and most vital ingredients to any anti-ageing product.

Sunscreens

Sunscreens are an integral part of any anti-ageing regime. They are, first and foremost, products to help prevent extrinsic ageing of the skin. Ensure any sunscreen has physical and chemical blockers plus antioxidants. While not perfect, these sun care products are the best we have at the moment.

Antioxidants & vitamins

Antioxidants help prevent tissue damage that could potentially lead to ageing and disease. They are important in photo-damage repair and protection but do not block UVB rays and cannot repair wrinkles or the signs of ageing.

Current literature is replete with news of 'the best' antioxidant. It seems every month we learn of a new best and most effective antioxidant. We believe 'the best' is actually not one single antioxidant but rather products that contain a brigade of antioxidants. The antioxidants and vitamins we describe below are certainly not the only ones.

Antioxidants such as pomegranate, acai berry, coffee berry, grape extracts, idebenone and others have come under recent praise but the jury is still out on how they will ultimately perform. The following vitamins and antioxidants have stood the test of time and independent research.

Vitamin A

We feel Vitamin A is the single-most important ingredient to prevent, restore, normalise and help repair damaged skin. Since our body does not make Vitamin A, our skin becomes deficient over time. For that reason, Vitamin A is a very important and necessary ingredient in all quality anti-ageing product lines. However, in its acid form it may cause redness and irritation. It can also cause a thinning of the skin, which is not a good thing. There are now effective forms of Vitamin A that are less damaging. Look for retinal palmitate, acetate and retinol.

The sun depletes the skin of Vitamin A and this is one of the reasons those who super-expose their skin to sun damage age faster than those who do not.

Vitamin E

Vitamin E is a normal component of the skin, protecting collagen from destruction by UV rays. However, it is extremely sensitive to damage and inactivation when exposed to the sun. One of the important roles of its sister, Vitamin C, is to reactivate it to its original form, enabling it to work again against free-radical damage.

Vitamin C

Vitamin C repairs and rejuvenates the skin. It helps to prevent hyperpigmentation by slowing down the production of melanin. Vitamin C is a normal component in the skin but is utilised first for other bodily functions and is not produced by the body, so the skin is vulnerable for deficiency. We must include it in our diet, in supplements and in topical products. The problem is that the long-proven, most effective form is ascorbic acid, which quickly degenerates with exposure to air and light. We recommend the use of ascorbic acid for maximum delivery of fresh, high-potent Vitamin C. To do so, a 'mix-before-use' product is preferred.

Vitamin C is also now available in effective fat-soluble forms (eg, Magnesium Ascorbyl Phosphate and Ascorbyl

THE FUTURE OF SKINCARE: STEM CELLS?

While it is a bit too early to shout the future in anti-ageing topical skincare with the use of stem cells, it is coming. So far, fruit stem cells (specifically from a particular Swiss apple) show great promise as does the use of adult, healthy stem cells to transform and rejuvenate ageing skin.

Tetraisopalmitate), which work well and remain stable and efficacious for a longer time.

Beta-carotene

Other important antioxidants in formulations include beta-carotene, a botanical form of Vitamin A, selenium, superoxide dismutase and alpha lipoic (thiotic acid), all of which are proven and studied soldiers in the flight against ageing.

Other essential ingredients

Exfoliants are believed by many to be a necessary component to maintain the health of the skin. The outer layer of the skin must be thick and compact, an important protection against the environment, and it best exfoliates naturally. On the other hand, not exfoliating prevents penetration of ingredients and creates a skin that is dull with poor texture and older in appearance. The best policy is a compromise of mild resurfacing. Remember, less is more to remove excess dead cells.

Peptides are one of the newer ingredient groups to hit the anti-ageing skincare scene and many studies have shown significant results. They are highly respected for their ability to penetrate the skin and activate their target – increasing the production of collagen and elastin. Peptides 'turn on' the fibroblasts, which are essential for building and repairing the skin and a basic requirement for anti-ageing success. A natural problem with peptides, however, is that while their results are obvious, they are cumulative in treatment and take time, which is a problem for our I-want-it-now generation. It can take three to four months of twice-daily use for a good skin care product to show results.

Growth factors directly stimulate the proliferation of skin cells. The problem is that epidermal growth factors (EGF) are androgen-dependent and the low level of androgen particularly in peri- and post-menopausal women results in a lack of EGF and this skin ages fast. One of the best growth factors to be found in products is colostrum.

The anti-ageing attack is focused on a brigade of reliable and stable formulations of established and trusted ingredients. The ones mentioned above are synergistic troops in the battle and their effectiveness has a long history of studies and proof that they do assist in the maintenance of healthy and beautiful skin. **acsm**