

MODULE II (A): SOLUTIONS TO TACKLE THE CAUSES OF SKIN DARKENING AND A SKIN CARE REGIME

The major causes of skin darkening have been discussed in Module I. Module II deals with providing natural solutions to tackle the cause of skin darkening.

Sun

One of the most common causes of skin darkening, there are both prevention and treatment methods available to prevent and reverse the damages caused by the sun on skin.

Preventive measures to avoid skin darkening due to sunrays

- Try to avoid stepping out when the sun is at its peak. The time between noon to 3 pm is when the sun's rays are at their strongest, hence leading to maximum skin damages.
- Use a sunscreen. Even if it is cloudy outside, you should use a branded sunscreen with a high SPF. Choose a sunscreen that works best on your skin type, if you have dry skin, go for a moisturizer-based sunscreen, but if you tend to have oily to combination skin, a gel-based sun block cream should be your best bet. Sensitive skin tends to react with the ingredients present in even the best branded sunscreen, if you have sensitive skin, look for products that are specific for this skin type. Products for sensitive skin are basically non-fragrance and non-comedogenic.
- When you're out in the sun, use an umbrella to reduce the effect of the harmful ultraviolet rays in the sun. Similarly, wearing a wide brimmed hat will serve the purpose as well.

How to get rid of a Sun Tan

No matter how hard we try to stay out of the sun, it is not always an option for a lot of us who have to either commute to and fro work or are engaged in some sort of a field activity. If you have been spending more than recommended amount of time out in the sun and have tanned a couple of shades darker, here are some tips to reduce immediate sun tanning. These methods work only if you follow them every day, so that it can reverse the damages caused by the sunrays on an almost simultaneous basis.

- Follow a thorough cleansing routine before going to sleep.
- Compare your skin that was exposed to the sun to the ones that wasn't, this gives you an idea of how much you have tanned during the day.

- Scrubbing helps to exfoliate the uppermost dead layer of the skin. It also helps to reduce tanning considerably.
- Use a skin toner specific to your skin type. The pH balance in the tone helps to restore moisture back to the cleansed skin and reduces uneven skin tone.

Hormonal Imbalance

There isn't a natural way to treat a hormonal imbalance. Keep an eye out for symptoms of hormonal imbalance that includes, but is not limited to weight gain, insomnia, lack of libido, hair loss, skin darkening, depression, and a lack of erection or erectile dysfunction. If you notice two or more of these symptoms, you should fix an appointment with your doctor.

Medication would help to keep a check on your hormone level, which in turn would not make your skin darken any further. And to reduce the darkening already caused by hormonal imbalance, our treatment module would prove to be of extreme help.

Ageing

Ageing is not an option, but allowing it to show on your face is. Young people are advised early to start taking care of their skin. As and when you start to grow old and lose your ability to produce new skin cells, your skin tends to darken too. The treatment module will help in lightening your skin, but you should also start to take care of your skin early. Notice any changes in the skin and cater to it right at the beginning without waiting for the condition to worsen.

Hyperpigmentaion

Besides ageing, hyperpigmentation can be caused by acne and sun damages. One way to treat these dark spots is by applying lemon juice on the skin. Lemon juice, with its citric properties acts as a natural bleaching agent and helps to re-pigment the skin back to its natural color.

Acne



Acne scars can leave behind ugly marks that lead to discoloration of the skin. Even before you start with treating acne scars, you have to ensure that your acne isn't fresh. Fresh acne is red (on fair and clear skin) or brown (on medium to tanned skin) and is filled with puss.

Treating Acne:

- Schedule an appointment with your doctor, acne is generally a result of hormonal imbalances. Taking medicines to balance out your hormone level helps in keeping a check on acne.
- Keep your face clean at all times, however that does not mean that you will keep washing your face ten times a day as that would lead to your skin drying out and becoming dehydrated. The idea here is to keep your skin dirt and pollution free, so as to not give the bacteria present inside the acne, a chance to spread out and trigger fresh pimples.
- Do not pop acne; there is a fairly common myth that lends support to popping pimples to heal them faster. Popping acne will only allow the bacterial puss to seep through and trigger more acne. Also, if you prick at zits, it'd most definitely leave behind a scar.
- Buy some ginger roots from your local supermarket and apply the juice on fresh acne. A word of caution, the juice will smell a lot, but this is one of the most effective natural treatments for acne.

- Keep a check on your diet and lifestyle. Fried food, a diet rich in sugar and carbohydrates, and a lack of sleep do not help acne at all.
- If you have an acne-prone skin, look for face washes that have salicylic acid as one of the main ingredients. This helps to heal acne faster and also aid in reducing scars.
- Drink plenty of water as that helps to get rid of the toxins and keep the body and skin hydrated. Avoid sodas and other fizzy drink as the high sugar content in such drinks can be the cause of fresh acne.
- Applying curd on fresh pimples has shown effective results in healing them faster.
- Stress has been debated to be a cause of acne and after numerous experimentations scientists are finally deeming it to be a cause. Try to keep your stress level moderated and engage in mild exercising as that helps to both keep your stress under control and help flush the toxins out of the skin in the form of perspiration.

Treating Acne Scars

- Even though you do not have to worry about painful, red, pustulate-filled acne, the scars that pimples leave behind are enough cause to worry. Treating acne scar might take some time and it is strongly recommended that you first cater to lightening these scars and then start with the fairness treatment program.
- The best way to lighten acne scars is by regularly exfoliating the uppermost layer of dead cells. Regular scrubbing helps in erasing the scars over the years.
- Lemon juice acts as natural bleach and you can apply a few drops of lemon juice mixed with rose water in order to lighten these scars.
- Rubbing tomatoes is a great way to get rid of the scar as tomato contains acid that gently exfoliates the skin and lighten the scar. It is the pulp of the tomato that is most effective and you should continuously rub for at least 10 minutes to see any noticeable changes.
- Similarly, applying the pulp of papaya will also help in lighten scars. You can also make a paste by throwing in tomato and papaya pulp along with some rose water in a blender to make a paste.
- Mix 1 teaspoon of honey and three pinches of cinnamon powder to make a paste. Apply regularly on acne scars.

- Do not pick at the scars or vigorously scrub them to see results faster. Remember patience and perseverance is what will get you through. Picking at scars will only make it worse by either causing new acne or making the skin bleed.
- The next time you are eating fruits, keep some outer peel of fruits like pomegranate and orange away as dried peels can be grinded and made into a paste. This paste is highly effective in getting rid of scars as it contains citrus acid, which helps in skin bleaching.
- Lastly, keep your skin clean because while trying to erase acne scars, you do not want to trigger fresh ones.

SKIN CARE REGIME ACCORDING TO SKIN TYPE



A daily skin care routine is must to keep your skin healthy and forms the very basis of any fairness treatment. Since each skin type is different from the other, the skin care regime too would differ to suit individual skin type perfectly.

Oily Skin

Cleanser- The main duty of a cleanser for oily skin is to tap off extra oil from the face. Also, most people with an oily skin also tend to be acne-prone, hence your concern here is to get hold

of a cleanser that can both wipe away the excess oil and get rid of bacteria to avoid triggering acne.

Cleansers that have a slightly higher alkaline pH level are good for oily skin. Also, go for a gel based cleanser rather than a cream one. Cleansers and face washes that have tea tree oil as one of its ingredients work wonders for oily skin.

Toner- Oily skin benefits largely by using a toner. First off, what exactly is a toner? A toner helps in removing excess dirt, residual makeup and traces of oil from the face. Oily skin in particular, is more prone to leaving behind some oil even after you use a face wash.

For oily skin, the best toner is an astringent. An astringent restores the pH balance in the skin and also removes excess traces of oil. This sets the base perfectly for moisturizing.

Moisturizer- There is a myth that people with an oily skin should avoid the moisturizer completely. Understand that even though your skin produces a good amount of natural oil, which is helpful in keeping the skin looking younger and supple, it does not moisturize the skin. Sebum, the natural oil produced by the skin helps more in lubrication, while moisturizer will hydrate and add moisture to your skin.

As moisturizer contains ingredients that gets absorbed into the skin (unlike Sebum, which oozes out of the pores), applying a moisturizer helps in providing hydration to the deep set pores. A lot of times people with an oily skin start noticing flakes and dry patches on their skin as they age, what happens is that with age, the skin's ability to produce natural oil and collagen reduces. This in fact tends to dry out the skin and cause premature ageing, therefore keeping skin well-hydrated and moisturized since the beginning will prevent the skin from getting dry with time.

Sunscreen- There are two options that people with an oily skin type can follow: one, either get a moisturizer that is high on SPF, so that you do not need to add another layer of sunscreen or get a good sunscreen with the required SPF protection and which does not grease up your skin.

To look for the perfect sunscreen for this skin type, keep in mind that anything that is cream or lotion based will only make your skin greasier and sweat prone. This can also trigger further breakout. A gel-based sunscreen is your best bet and look for ingredients like Meroxyl as that provides a very good protection from ultra violet rays without making your skin shiny.

A tip here is to look for products that are found in pharmacy rather in supermarkets. If along with an oily skin type, you are also prone to acne, avoid sunscreens with avobenzone and benzophenone as it can irritate the skin, leading to infection. For acne-prone skin, sunscreens that come with zinc and titanium oxide are strongly recommended.

Today, you also get face powders with added SPF. Applying the sunscreen powders ensures that you get added sun protection and the powder also mattifies your skin, reducing any visible shine.

Dry Skin

Cleanser- Most cleansers and face washes tend to remove extra oil along with dirt and impurities, from the skin. If you have dry skin, you must consider looking for a cleanser that does not rob your face of excess moisture as that would further dry out your skin. Hyaluronic acid is an active ingredient in a lot of cleanser as it tends to draw water to the surface of the skin and is good for dry skin.

When looking for a cleanser for dry skin, look for the one that is either lotion or cream based. Some cleansers come with added moisturizer to remove dirt and moisturize the skin simultaneously. However, some of the face wash and cleansing lotions recommended for dry skin too can be full of false promises and dry out your skin. To test whether the cleanser does suit your skin type, wash your face with a pea size amount and if after washing your face, you feel tight skin or a stretching sensation, completely avoid using that product as that is not helping your dry skin in the least.

Toner- People with this skin type generally shy away from using a toner as toners contain astringent as one of its active ingredients, and astringent tends to further dry out skin. That is why dry skin can turn red and flaky on using a toner.

However, the main purpose of toner, besides removing excess dirt and oil from the skin, is to restore the pH balance. Washing your face with a strong acidic cleanser can affect the pH balance of the skin and your skin needs extra help to restore it back. For dry skin, look for toners that are cream-based as it moisturizes along with toning the skin.

If you are in your early thirties, you might want an all-in-one toner that exfoliates, restores and hydrates the skin.

Moisturizer- This should be the staple product of every person with the dry skin type. However, most people do not understand the difference between a hydrating moisturizer and a greasing cream. The best moisturizer for dry skin must have oil and oil like substances that can block the evaporation of water through pores.

Look for products that have either one or more of jojoba oil, shea butter, Vitamin E, almond oil, glycerin and sesame oil as the active ingredient. These ingredients help in both moisturizing the skin and hydrating by keeping the moisture locked in.

Sunscreen- A good sunscreen is the one that is photo stable, which means that the ingredients do not break down on being exposed to light. A cream or a lotion based sunscreen is good for dry skin and if you have a sensitive plus dry skin type (you tend to experience skin irritation and redness) use a non-comedogenic product and one that does not make your skin look unnaturally white.

Also, use sunscreen for your body as this would both double up as a moisturizer and prevent sun tanning.

Combination and Normal Skin

It is really tricky to pick up products for combination skin as it has the pros and cons of the other two skin type. Thankfully, today a number of brands have come up with specific products for this skin type so that you do not have to balance between using products for both oily and dry skin types.

Cleanser- A water-soluble cleanser or one that comes with a mild foaming effect is best for combination skin. A gel-based cleanser is also a good option, the idea is to use a lightweight product that can both remove dirt and excess oil and does not dry the skin.

Look for ingredients like Aloe Vera, vegetable glycerin, apple cider vinegar and witch hazel as these are suitable for combination skin.

Toner- For combination and normal skin, use a toner that does not contain any skin irritating agents. A mild toner that is replete with skin-repairing agents and is free of alcohol and fragrance is the perfect toner for these skin types.

Moisturizer- With a moisturizer, you are at liberty to use both the ones that come in gel form and the ones in watery lotion form. Ingredients like Jojoba oil and glycerin provides a hydrating rather than a greasing effect and products with these ingredients are dermatologically recommended for combination and normal skin type.

Sunscreen- Sunscreens that come in a serum form is good for combination skin. These tend to provide the right amount of hydration without making the face extremely greasy.

Sensitive Skin

Sensitive skin is usually of the dry type, but you cannot use skin care products that are labeled solely for dry skin type. There are a number of products available specifically for sensitive and dry skin.

Cleanser- A cream based cleanser that has glycerin, salicylic acid and is non-comedogenic and without fragrance is what you should look for. If your skin tends to get irritated easily, it is recommended that you get yourself tested for ingredients that you might be allergic to. There are numerous dermatological tests that can reveal specific ingredients in skin care and makeup products that you should avoid.

Toner- Never opt for an alcohol based toner as that will inflame and irritate your skin. Water-based, non-fragrance and mild toner that restores the pH balance without irritating the skin is the best type of toner for sensitive skin.

Moisturizer- Like dry skin, you should moisturize sensitive skin as well. Products that contain humectants are recommended for sensitive skin and make sure that you look for gel or lotion based moisturizers.

Sunscreen- Sunscreen for sensitive skin should be non-comedogenic and without any fragrance. Also, the active ingredients should be titanium or zinc oxide as these do not irritate the skin or cause it to break out.

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