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AGING THROUGH THE DECADES

Spa and home care treatments for every stage of life

by Cynthia Price, M.D.

Attaining youthful skin is often a lifelong endeavor that clinicians and clients aim to achieve. Understanding how to address age-related skin concerns with professional treatments and home care regimens through each decade of a client's life can help clinicians provide optimal results, regardless of a client's age.

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INTRINSIC VS. EXTRINSIC AGING

Aging is a twofold process involving intrinsic and extrinsic influences. Intrinsic aging is determined by genetic makeup and heritage. This natural aging process begins in the mid-20s with slowed collagen production, resulting in reduced skin elasticity. Cellular turnover, a 28-day process on average in youth, can take up to 50 days in later life, leaving skin looking dull.

Extrinsic aging is an accumulation of environmental factors, lifestyle choices (smoking, alcohol consumption, diet) and sun exposure. According to experts, nearly 85 percent of visible aging is due to extrinsic factors, which accelerate the aging process.

As such, although some "typical" signs of aging are to be expected with each decade, clients will age differently, making skin assessment and clients' history forms of the utmost importance. Take into account each client's medical history as well as medications (including allergies and food sensitivities), which can reveal significant conditions your client may have neglected to discuss, and could affect the effectiveness of treatments (some medications for example cause photosensitivity that can influence hyperpigmentation treatments). Following the same vein, ask questions concerning your client's profession, as it will reveal stress levels and UV exposure, both influential in deciding the proper course of treatments and products. Broad-spectrum sunscreen should be included in every daily care regimen for clients of all ages.

the 30s

Skin may start exhibiting signs of sun damage by the early 30s. Fine lines may appear around the orbital bone (eyes) and the perioral region (lips). Maintaining collagen is of utmost importance during this period since natural production slows down in the mid-20s. Hyperpigmentation may also begin to develop due to contraceptive use, childbirth and overexposure to the sun. If significant sun damage occurred during a client's younger years, the 30s is a critical decade to stop further damage from developing.

HOME CARE:

Get your clients into a good home care routine. In addition to addressing their personal concerns (dry skin, acne, etc.), have them add antioxidants and retinol into their regimen.

- Potent antioxidants incorporated into the morning routine, such as L-ascorbic acid (vitamin C), tocopherol (vitamin E), glutathione or epigallocatechin gallate (EGCG, found in green tea), mitigate oxidative damage while adding an extra layer of sun protection.

- In the evening, retinol becomes an ingredient of choice to improve collagen production and minimize fine lines around the eyes and mouth. It also aids in the reduction of hyperpigmentation and improves cellular turnover.

- Topical products that include stem cells are also crucial, as these stimulate cells to repair wrinkles and restore firmness and elasticity.

- Quite similarly, peptides, proteins composed of chains of amino acids facilitate cellular communication for skin to repair.

SPA TREATMENTS:

- Chemical peels. Introduce your clients to chemical peels by starting them off with enzyme peels, which are a gentle and effective way to provide smooth and clear skin. Enzymes work at the surface of the skin, speed up cell turnover, promote younger cells and brighten skin. Enzyme peels can be scheduled at frequent intervals safely. Light chemical peels, alpha hydroxy acids or beta hydroxy acids, which promote desquamation, aid in pigmentation and help smooth skin, can be scheduled up to every two weeks.

- Microdermabrasion. Now is also a good time to initiate your clients to professional mechanical peels. Microdermabrasion addresses minimal sun damage, softens fine lines and wrinkles and helps build collagen by removing the uppermost layer of dead skin cells and allowing for better topical absorption. Recommend a series of four to six treatments about two to three weeks apart.



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the 40s

By the time clients reach their 40s, sun damage becomes more apparent. Hyperpigmentation starts appearing on the chest, shoulders, arms and legs, areas that people often fail to protect with sunscreen. Clients may also notice telangiectasias (spider veins) due to sun damage and collagen breakdown. Peri-menopause begins around the age of 47, often resulting in sudden estrogen depletion that leads to increased surface dryness, a drop in sebum production and hormonally induced acne breakouts.

SPA TREATMENTS:

- Chemical peels. If periodical light chemical peels should be kept up, medium peels (trichloroacetic or TCA) may be advisable. Medium peels, which penetrate the dermis, aid in improving moderate sun damage, more pronounced wrinkles and uneven skin tone. Medium peels may only need to be administered once or twice a year.

- Educate your clients about the importance of treating the décolleté area, whether through exfoliation, hydrating masks or facials.

- If treating the skin from the neck down can address hyperpigmentation in that area, laser therapy can not only address spider veins but also remove wrinkles from other neglected parts of the body, including hands, which often give age away (routine hand facials can keep skin rejuvenated and moisturized).

- Microcurrent facials can be a great alternative to those clients who do not wish to go under the knife. By working the muscles underlying the skin, microcurrent stimulation tones, tightens muscle and improves the elasticity of skin, which results in younger looking skin. Treatments can be recommended as a series of 12 up to three times a week, followed by periodic maintenance.

- Radio frequency is yet another treatment that targets laxity of the face and neck. The deep heating stimulates the skin renewal process, which helps tighten existing collagen and form new collagen. Typical treatments consist of series of six at one to two week intervals.

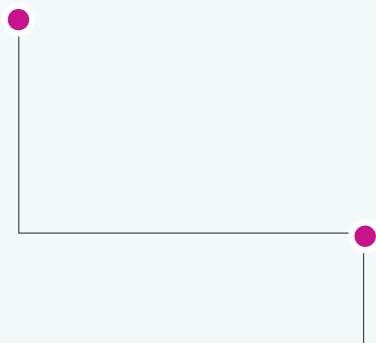


HOME CARE:

- To hydrate peri-menopausal skin, humectants like hyaluronic acid and sodium PCA (a naturally occurring amino acid) should be combined with occlusive ingredients, like jojoba oil or shea butter.

- As a sudden estrogen drop allows androgen hormones to dominate, breakouts are prone to happen. Provide these clients with an acne spot treatment containing salicylic acid in addition to gentle products that support hydration.

the 50s



For most women, menopause will have commenced by the age of 50. The ovaries cease to produce adequate levels of estrogen and progesterone to sustain fertility. Significant changes occur in the skin, including a reduction in sebum production, dryness, more sensitivity, increased laxity, fine lines and wrinkles. As estrogen levels deplete, testosterone remains constant, allowing hormonal breakouts to resurface. This drastic hormonal shift breaks down the support structure of the dermis, collagen and elastin, leading to wrinkles seemingly appearing overnight. Due to sluggish cellular turnover, skin appears dull.

SPA TREATMENTS:

- Microneedling not only allows for better absorption of topical ingredients (copper peptides and hyaluronic acid are needling must haves), but increases cellular communication, cell proliferation and growth. Schedule your clients for a series of four to six treatments at one to two month intervals.



HOME CARE:

- Due to cessation of estrogen production, a heavier moisturizer may be needed to combat persistent dryness and sensitivity.
- Supplement your client's moisturizer with lotions or serums containing at least two types of antioxidants (lycopene, green tea, soy), and advise them to alternate them every other day to address different problems without interruption.

Restoration is a key concern. Post menopause sets in and the hormonally induced breakouts experienced during the 40s and 50s diminish. A lack of estrogen means the formation of fine lines and deep wrinkles are difficult to treat with topical products alone. The dermal layers, the skin's support structure, no longer rebuild as they once did, and collagen and elastin production comes to a near halt. The skin begins thinning and continues to dull due to a slower cellular turnover rate. Moisture loss is also a concern. Sagging of the jaw line, perioral region and neckline require advance correction, while volume loss in the mid-face may leave a hollowed appearance in the cheeks, temples and around the eyes.



HOME CARE:

- A common concern of a client in their 60s and 70s is laxity in the neck area. This area responds well to calcium hydroxymethionine, an ingredient tested specifically on the neck tissue to fortify and restructure thin, fragile skin.
- Advise clients to refrain from using soaps and instead use gentle creamy or foaming cleansers.
- Serums containing potent antioxidants or peptides, which are more easily absorbed than creams and lotions, are now a must.

While working to correct skin damage accumulated throughout a client's life, it is critical to maintain the use of UV-protective products and antioxidants, regardless of age. By understanding the skin challenges inherent in each stage of life, as well as effective treatments to correct them, clinicians can provide daily care regimens and professional treatments to address each client's needs, leading to youthful looking skin. ■

the 60s +

SPA TREATMENTS:

Laser and light treatments will address spider veins and broken capillaries, loose and sagging skin will need treatments such as microneedling, microcurrent and radio frequency, and wrinkles and fine lines will continue to be attenuated via laser, chemical and mechanical peels.



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