

before you
give up on
your skin

Expert advice on how to tackle acne, sunburn, hyperpigmentation, uneven skin tone **AND WIN**



Folasade Ekwem

BEFORE YOU GIVE UP ON YOUR SKIN
Expert Advice On How To Tackle Acne, Sunburn,
Hyperpigmentation & Uneven Skin Tone *AND WIN*

FOLASADE EKWEM



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WHY SHOULD YOU TAKE ADVICE FROM ME ANYWAY?

Because Knowledge And Expertise Speak Louder Than Hype.

Hello, and welcome to the world of skin health!

Before we dive into the juicy details of skincare, a little bit about me.

By next year, it will be ten years since I became a pharmacist. My journey as a healthcare professional has been rewarding, as I've been able to help countless individuals in their pursuit of better health and wellness. I'm super honoured by this.

My desire to educate others on the importance of proper skincare and its impact on overall well-being has brought me to this moment. When I heard the pain and struggles of over 400 individuals from a survey we conducted at PillsRx, my online health and wellness store, people who were grappling with acne, spots, sunburn, and dull complexions, I knew I had to do something to help.

The beauty industry is filled with quick-fix solutions and products that do more harm than good, and I'm here to change that. I am dedicated to working back from real problems to create solutions based on experience and expertise. This ebook is a result of that dedication, and I'm here to educate and empower you to make informed decisions about your skincare, without the hype.

So, why trust my skincare advice? Because I'm passionate about educating others, and I believe everyone deserves healthy, radiant skin. I bring a wealth of experience and expertise to the table (no one understands these ingredients you put on your skin better), and I'm here to help you achieve the best skin of your life.

Are you ready to dive into the juicy world of skincare with me?

Let's go!

INTRODUCTION: IT STARTS WITH A CHOICE

We take skincare seriously here.

Let me rephrase that: We take healthy skincare seriously here.

We did research and got responses from hundreds of people.

Our question was simple: “What is your most pressing skincare issue?”

The answers we unpacked are the reason why this book exists.

We take skincare seriously here. The state of the skin has strong links to mental health, self-perception, and many are living stressed out, troubled, EMBARRASSED, because they have troubled skin.

Believe it or not, it’s in the most common things.

For so many, it is acne, unevenly toned skin, sun damage, or dull looking skin.

And we have a legion of people out there heavily weighed down by these specific issues. The saddest part is, they must carry on, and many don’t talk about it, because they don’t feel these issues are significant enough to express themselves about. Many people keep their skin insecurities locked inside, because they don’t want to be seen as vain.

Let me unpack something that would change your thinking and help you feel more comfortable opening up about needing help with your skin:

Your skin is first and foremost an organ, a protective organ that represents your entire outer body. It's the largest organ in your body. It's not merely an ornament, nor is it just a large part of what gives you your unique physical features.

If your skin is troubled, here's what it means:

An organ in your body is troubled. Why on earth would you ignore a troubled bodily organ? Would you ignore your kidneys if you knew they needed medical attention?

Would you ignore your liver if it was in trouble?

No. You wouldn't. You would get the best help for it.

So, why, oh why, should your skin be treated differently?

Let people call you vain. That's fine. Are you living for the opinion of people anyway?

If you're reading this book, it shows that your skin isn't its best self and is crying for help. At the very least, you want to ensure your skin looks better, feels better.

Wanting great skin is not vanity. It's self-respect and self-awareness, and I'm more than honoured to show you how to achieve this.

Most importantly: it's your fundamental human right to embrace clear, healthy skin without sacrificing your health while you're at it.

Wanting it and taking steps to get it are two very different things. It starts with a simple choice to do things differently.

OK, Let's get started.

PART 1

CHAPTER 1

The Reason Why Your Skin Suffers... Is You...?

“EXAMINE YOUR BELIEFS AND BREAK FREE.”

- MARIA ERVING

LET'S TALK ABOUT FELICIA. She is fictional, but her habits, inclinations, and challenges are representative of those of hundreds of thousands of people around the world.

You see, Felicia could admire the results of others in their career, personal growth, work-life balance, **and** the state of their skin (yes, you know I'm going to go there).

But many times, in her heart, Felicia does not believe she could enjoy the transformation she sees happening in and for others.

We are talking about skincare, ladies, and gentlemen. And quite frankly, I have found that deep down inside, Felicia feels she will never achieve clear, beautiful, healthy skin (this book is a result of hours and hours of research, so I know what I am talking about).

Felicia combs through blog upon blog, YouTube video upon YouTube video, Facebook group upon Facebook group, searching for skincare solutions, loading herself with information to get rid of her skin issues. Still, her skin is never better for it.

She gets excited and tries all sorts of things, emulating many skincare experts, both the genuine ones and the downright fakes. A few days, weeks, and months down the line, Felicia is back to square one: wondering why on earth she is still plagued by acne, sunburn, skin tags, spots, etc. She wonders why she, of all people, cannot seem to get a lasting solution.

Look deep. Does this sound like you?

For every new skin product you try, do you tell yourself: "This one may not work, just like the last one, but I'll try it, so it wouldn't seem like I've given up."

What if I told you the journey to great skin does not start with the best skin expert or skincare product?

What if I told you it started with you?

Of course, I'll unpack that statement.

How?

By revealing to you some limiting beliefs - deep-seated, almost unconscious beliefs - you have about skincare. These beliefs keep you from achieving the Skin of Your Dreams. And you don't even know they're there.

It's time to address them.

LIMITING BELIEF 1:

I DON'T HAVE GOOD GENES ON MY SIDE

I get it. You grew up with one or both of your parents battling huge pimples or with darkened patches of skin across their cheeks as they aged.

So, you're convinced that your skin issues are genetic, so they have a strong hold on you and won't let you go.

There's one truth here, as well as one lie

.

The Lie:

Inherited skin challenges don't respond to treatment. You have to outgrow them.

The Truth: Your mum or dad did not get the right solution to their skincare issues. And that's why these issues persisted/ persist. It's a bitter pill to swallow, but it is what it is.

You'll get the right results if you approach the problems with the right solutions. Period.

And guess what I'm here for: to present those solutions to you! We've got this!

LIMITING BELIEF 2:

WHERE IS THE TIME?

You may be thinking:

"Look Sade. This skincare thing is not for me. I'm too busy."

You may be a stay-at-home mum who spends every waking moment keeping things together at home and for your kids.

You may be a corporate executive, a career person, or a business owner with late nights and very early mornings. You just want to do what's necessary and be on your way.

Your concern here is genuine: I do not have time to baby my skin or give it extra attention.

The lie: You need to spend hours and hours on skincare.

The truth: You don't.

All you need is an efficient routine to slot into your day-to-day activities. You'll probably be surprised how doable it is once you get started. It will grow on you.

You should also let this thought sink in: Why do you assume you'll have a magically PERFECT time in your life when taking care of your skin would be convenient?

LIMITING BELIEF 3:

SKINCARE IS TOO EXPENSIVE/ SHOULDN'T I BE SPENDING THIS MONEY ELSEWHERE?

The lie here is you think skincare has to cost a ton to be effective. It doesn't.

While you will spend some money and you should be conscious of the quality of products you put on your skin, you don't need a budget that takes your breath away.

Quite frankly, it is a problem if you are unwilling to spend ANY money at all.

How would you get solutions if you do not acquire them?

Once again, you don't have to spend hundreds of dollars on skincare to get good and lasting solutions.

The Truth: You only need to get products with the right ingredients that target the problems you want to solve.

Many, many affordable brands exist. I will help you unpack them in this book as we go along.

This book isn't about pushing products to you by the way, nor is it an endorsement of any brand. It's about solutions.

I get it that you spend money for just breathing. There's food to put on the table and family to tend to. So many things are pulling at your purse, and you don't know if you can spare extra change on skincare.

The truth is these things will always be there. Bills only increase over time, so don't think they would be less demanding.

So, if you aren't choosing yourself and your well-being, how will you show up as your best self for others around you?

If you cannot spend on your appearance and skin health, a time may come that you may resent the other things/ people you are spending money on.

Don't neglect important people or things. But what's anyone to do if you neglect yourself?

That indicates that you don't consider yourself important enough to get that extra care. No one will treat you better than how you treat yourself. If people KNOW you treat and carry yourself as the Queen/ King you are, they will treat you with the same energy.

LIMITING BELIEF 4:

I'VE HURT MY SKIN TOO MUCH

Have you used products that burnt your skin or darkened your knuckles? All the more reason to embrace EXPERT help. It's a no-brainer!

Your skin has been hurt, yes, but it's quite resilient. While I cannot promise that you'll completely reverse years and years of abusing your skin (knowingly or unknowingly), I can guarantee an improvement.

Just be patient! Most people who hurt their skin using harsh chemicals were impatient to get results that could've happened over a longer, more realistic time frame. We will discuss realistic time frames before you see results later in this book.

LIMITING BELIEF 5:

IT'S TOO EARLY FOR ME:

It's generally a good idea for young people to start taking care of their skin early. This can help prevent issues such as acne and sun damage and can also help establish good skincare habits that will benefit them in the long term.

The specific age at which a young person should start a skincare routine would depend on their individual needs and the state of the skin.

Some young people may benefit from starting a basic skincare routine as early as their teenage years, while others may not need to start until they are in their 20s or even later.

Teenage years: During the teenage years, it's common for young people to experience changes in their skin due to hormonal fluctuations characteristic of puberty.

These changes can result in acne and very oily skin. A basic skincare routine that includes cleansing, moisturising, and protecting the skin from the sun can help address these issues and prevent future problems.

The 20s: In your 20s, you may notice the first (very mild) signs of ageing, such as fine lines and uneven skin tone. A routine that includes exfoliating and using products with antioxidants can help prevent further signs of ageing and maintain healthy skin.

The 30s and beyond: As you age, your skin becomes drier and less elastic, and you may notice more pronounced signs of ageing. Your skincare routine needs to factor all these in to help keep your skin looking healthy and youthful.

Teenagers should be guided by their parents and guardians to keep it basic and ensure their skin is well moisturised and protected from sun damage.

The skin starts to age around 25 years old, and experts in the pharmaceutical industry and dermatology recommend that you start the road to prevention early. It is recommended that individuals in their late 20s and early 30s start incorporating anti-aging skin care products in their skincare because, at this age, our skin slowly starts to lose collagen and elasticity.

LIMITING BELIEF 6:

IT'S TOO LATE FOR ME:

I'm already in my 50s or 60s!

No, it's not too late.

Your skin needs you to take good care of it, especially now.

It is especially important to do so as we age, as the skin's natural repair process slows down and it becomes more susceptible to damage.

The Truth: By following a consistent skincare routine that encourages the removal of dead skin cells and protects against sun damage, you can improve the overall health and appearance of your skin, even at this age.

Supplementing with Fish Oils rich in omega-3 fatty acids is also a good idea to keep the skin moisturised and supple.

LIMITING BELIEF 7:

I DON'T HAVE TIME TO READ THIS BOOK

Yes, you do.

This book has 6 chapters. That's it. Half a chapter a day and you'll be done in 12 days.

Two weeks, tops. A 2-week investment would give you knowledge **for a lifetime.**

Don't like to read? Copy and paste this book into a voice reader (audiobook coming soon!)

You can zero in on the chapters that address your most pressing needs, and then go back to other chapters at your own pace.

Best believe you should read all of it but focus on unpacking the solutions to your most pressing problems first.

So, Felicia, what's your reason for not going after great skin again?

CHAPTER 2

The Good, The Bad & The Toxic (Skincare That's Actually Hurting You)

“YOUR SKIN HAS A MEMORY. IN TEN, TWENTY, THIRTY YEARS FROM NOW, IT WILL SHOW YOU THE RESULTS OF HOW IT WAS TREATED TODAY.”

- JANA ELSTON

NOT EVERYTHING GOES WHEN IT COMES TO SKINCARE.

On the other hand, not everything people claim to be terrible is actually terrible. I'll be revealing skincare practices that are good for you - great actually - (even if people say they're bad), bad skincare practices, and skincare that you should avoid like the plague.

The expert advice you're about to receive can only benefit you if followed.

Let's dive in.

The GOOD: It's not bad to want to lighten your skin.

Skin lightening is a practice that has been used for centuries in many cultures around the world. The goal of skin lightening is to achieve a lighter skin tone, either by reducing the production of the pigment in the skin, called melanin or by removing existing melanin.

It's important to understand that wanting to lighten one's skin is not inherently bad and that the negative associations with skin lightening are not entirely fair.

Firstly, it's important to note that skin lightening is often used to address specific skin concerns such as hyperpigmentation, age spots, and uneven skin tone. These concerns can be caused by several factors including sun damage, hormonal changes, severe acne, and certain medical conditions. For many people, skin-lightening products and treatments improve overall self-esteem and confidence because it addresses specific issues that cause unnatural darkening.

It helps these people to, once again, feel confident and beautiful in their own skin. It's about feeling like they can look in the mirror and love what they see, without feeling self-conscious or embarrassed about their appearance.

For example, take Tolu, a pregnant woman struggling with Melasma, dark and discoloured patches on the face caused by hormonal changes. She may feel self-conscious and embarrassed about her appearance and avoid social situations as a result. Topical skin-lightening products can help reduce the production of melanin and improve her appearance allowing Tolu to feel more confident and comfortable in her own skin. She can look in the mirror and feel proud of her body, instead of feeling ashamed or self-conscious.

Similarly, take Mrs Dara, an elderly woman who damaged her skin when she was younger by using harsh chemicals. She suffered chemical burns, and even though she no longer uses these chemicals, her knuckles, knees, and elbows are much darker than her body. Mrs Dara feels like she is stuck with the consequences of her past choices and may feel self-conscious about her appearance. Safe and regulated skin-lightening products can help her address these concerns and allow her to feel more confident and comfortable in her own skin. She can look in the mirror and feel like she is in control of her own beauty, instead of feeling like a victim of her past choices.

Another example is Obi, who has suffered severe sun damage, which has led to severely darkened patches of skin on his face, age spots, and uneven skin tone. With skin-lightening products, Obi can address these concerns and improve his overall skin appearance. He can look in the mirror and feel like he's taking care of himself, instead of feeling stuck with damaged skin.

Lastly, take Rachel, who has vitiligo, an autoimmune condition that causes loss of skin pigmentation (the skin's colour). She may feel self-conscious and embarrassed about her appearance and may avoid social situations as a result. Safe and regulated skin-lightening

products can help even out her skin tone and improve the appearance of her vitiligo. She can look in the mirror and feel like she is taking control of her condition, instead of feeling like it's controlling her.

The desire for a lighter skin tone is not just about vanity, it's about feeling comfortable and confident in one's own skin. Everyone deserves to feel that way. The practice of skin lightening should be performed under the guidance of a licensed professional and with the use of safe and regulated products. Additionally, it is important to be aware of the potential side effects and risks associated with any skin-lightening treatment and to use these treatments responsibly.

Skin bleaching, on the other hand, refers to the use of harsh chemicals, to drastically change one's complexion. The use of skin-bleaching products is often considered dangerous and banned in several countries. Unregulated skin bleaching products can contain high levels of dangerous chemicals and can cause severe skin irritation, scarring, and damage to internal organs.

THE BAD: Wanting results NOW!

This common skincare practice, or habit, lands many people in hot water, with severe consequences.

Best believe skincare is a journey.

The effectiveness of skin care products can depend on several factors, including the nature of the product and the condition being treated. In general, it can take some time

for the benefits of skin care products to become visible or fully visible because they need to reach the deeper layers of the skin, where skin renewal starts.

The skin renewal cycle is the process by which new skin cells are generated and old skin cells are shed. It takes an average of 28 days (4 weeks) for the skin to complete its renewal cycle, so it's a good idea to give any new product at least that amount of time to see if it's working.

Some products, such as moisturisers, may show an immediate improvement in the skin's appearance, but the full benefits may not be seen for several weeks. Other products, such as those that target specific skin concerns like acne or wrinkles, may take several weeks or even months to show visible results.

The skin renewal process is faster in younger people because new skin cells are produced, divide and mature more quickly. As we age, the process slows down. Skin cells divide and mature more slowly, leading to a longer overall skin renewal cycle.

So, it's important to be patient and consistent when using skin care products and to give them enough time to work.

Here's why wanting results too fast in skincare can be detrimental to your skin.:

1. *Overuse of harsh products:* When people want to see results fast, they use harsh acids or higher concentrations of active ingredients than are considered safe. This can lead to over-exfoliation, skin irritation, chemical burns and even long-term damage (as seen in dark knuckles)

2. *Neglecting the importance of a consistent routine:* Rushing to see results can also mean neglecting a consistent routine. This is when you begin to hear such things:

"What soap should I use to cure my pimples?"

"Can I mix this lotion with this oil for my face?"

All this without embracing healthy habits or truly understanding why you had the issue in the first place.

Inconsistencies in skin care can lead to skin problems or exacerbate existing ones.

3. *Not giving products enough time to work:* Certain skin care products take time to show results, and rushing the process by switching products too frequently can prevent any of them from having a chance to work.

The Toxic:

How so-called skin experts make money from desperation and putting TOXIC chemicals in skincare products.

Have you ever bought a natural skincare product that was unlabeled without an ingredient list?

THIS IS A HARSH REALITY:

There are many untrained cosmetologists in the unregulated "cream mixing" industry. As a way to get side income (nothing wrong with that) many young adults (a number of them unemployed) have found a lucrative business in the making of skincare making.

They make products from glow oils to whitening creams, toners, face scrubs, blemish removers, and all sorts.

For some of them, skincare was crudely learned, and they did not go through any formal training from certified cosmetologists or aestheticians, but "acquired" their "skills"

through 'Do it yourself' videos posted on YouTube pages of vendors who claimed to have gone through training.

The problem with this is:

- They do not understand the skin.
- They do not fully understand the ingredients they're putting together thus; they do not understand their side effects.
- They do not know the right quantities of these ingredients to include in their products. Either that or they simply mix to achieve QUICK RESULTS, without considering long-term adverse effects.

Investigations have found that many contain high levels of toxic chemicals that, AFTER A WHILE, could shut down bodily organs and disrupt metabolism.

TOXIC INGREDIENT NUMBER 1:

One such highly TOXIC chemical is Mercury.

Mercury is used for its Skin Lightening Effects. Exposure to Mercury in skincare - or anywhere- could lead to Mercury poisoning.

So, this is what you should do:

Check the ingredients of your skincare products. Do you see “mercurous chloride”, “Calomel”, “Mercurio” or “Mercuric”? Then it contains Mercury.

If it does, run!

But how do you even know what it contains if no ingredient is listed?

The symptoms of Mercury Poisoning include:

- irritability
- tremors
- changes in vision or hearing
- memory problems
- depression
- numbness and tingling in hands, feet, or around the mouth
- Mad Hatter Disease in chronic mercury poisoning

The worst part is that Mercury from these skincare products could pass from a pregnant woman to her unborn child. Or to a breastfeeding mum to her infant via breastmilk.

PLEASE CHECK THE INGREDIENTS OF YOUR SKINCARE PRODUCT BEFORE PURCHASE!

(POTENTIALLY) TOXIC INGREDIENT 2: HYDROQUINONE

Hydroquinone is 100% safe when used in recommended quantities.

Over-the-counter products are to have no more than 2% hydroquinone.

In some preparations to take care of intense hyperpigmentation, 5-10% is allowed, but it would be recommended by a healthcare professional and its effects supervised, and treatment would be for a limited time.

Many organic skincare products contain as high as 13% Hydroquinone and folks are encouraged to use them indefinitely. Unmonitored use of hydrocortisone, especially when found in unsafe quantities in skincare leads to side effects including skin rashes, facial swelling, and skin discolouration.

SO, WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN YOU SEE AN UNLABELLED “ORGANIC PRODUCT”, I suggest you drop that thing like a hot potato.

TOXIC INGREDIENT NUMBER 3: STEROIDS

Steroids are very potent drugs that can disrupt the body's systems if not handled right. They are to be used sparingly and only for a short time.

Sadly, they have become routine ingredients to “mix cream” now, particularly in unlabeled skincare formulations (skincare formulations without a list of ingredients they contain).

SUPER SAD: Some mums (mainly people of African descent, and some other dark-skinned races) mix their babies' creams with steroids to lighten their baby's skin.

SIDE EFFECTS OF STEROIDS:

- Skin thinning (causes wrinkling),
- Stretch marks
- Multiple skin colours
- Thin and visible veins
- Dark knuckles and elbows

Then the really nasty side effects on the body's systems:

- Cataracts,
- Immunosuppression,
- Kidney failure

WHICH OF THESE SIDE EFFECTS DO YOU FIND PALATABLE???

Creams such as Dermovate, Skineal, Funbact A, Visita, Epiderm, and the like are MEDICINES. They are drugs, prescribed or dispensed to treat specific skin issues like fungal issues, rashes, etc.

The brand names may vary from country to country.

They are applied to the skin when the need arises, and these creams contain steroids.

These are the most common steroids:

3. Clobetasol
4. Hydrocortisone

It's heartbreaking that these steroid-containing creams are added to regular body lotions by MANY, both in the cream-making business or by ill-advised individuals, to promote skin lightening.

Steroids are very potent drugs that can disrupt the body's systems if not handled right. Prolonged use will lead to one or more of the side effects listed above, including chemical burns and funny skin reactions.

Thus, they have NO BUSINESS being used in our skincare. I can't stress this enough. We've already established the fact that it is safe to brighten the skin (not bleaching please, but lifting off areas darkened by disease or environmental factors or to reveal lighter, clearer skin underneath), basically to achieve an even skin tone? There are a

bunch of dermatologist-recommended and pharmacist-recommended ingredients that are safe to use.

They are gentle on your skin, and simply clear off dark spots, leaving you with brighter, healthier skin. Explore products containing these ingredients from credible brands, so you can trust that you are putting only healthy things on your skin and that these ingredients are present only in recommended quantities.

We will go deep into this in the next chapter.

PART 2

CHAPTER 3

A Lifetime Of Beautiful, Glowing Skin

In a world where appearances meant everything, a young man named Shehu was harassed by acne and dark spots from years of having pimples. No matter what he tried, they only seemed to worsen with time.

He was ready to give up.

One day, Shehu took a walk and stumbled upon a wise elderly lady whose skin was aglow with health and radiance.

Amazed, Shehu asked her the secret to her beautiful complexion. The woman smiled and revealed that her secret was a simple, yet consistent skincare routine combined with self-love and self-care.

She told Shehu that over the years, she had learned to listen to her skin's needs and address specific issues with the right ingredients. She also advised him to seek expert advice and not to be swayed by trends or false promises.

The kind lady asked Shehu to resist the pressure to appear perfect and put up appearances, especially with everyone having seemingly perfect complexions on social media.

She encouraged him to focus on overall skin health instead of perfection, since perfection didn't exist.

Encouraged, Shehu's journey to a lifetime of healthy, beautiful skin began....

“BEAUTIFUL SKIN REQUIRES A COMMITMENT, NOT A MIRACLE”

- ERNO LASZLO

LET'S GET REAL: EVERYONE DREADS THE THOUGHT OF LOOKING TERRIBLE IN OLD AGE. The prayer is to live long and fulfilling lives (can I get an amen?)

We'd like to look our best at every age, age gracefully, and eventually cross the rainbow bridge looking good. It paints an amusing picture, but it's true! No one would have baby-radiant skin when they're 85, but you can look fabulous for that age. I mean, look at the Queen of England. She looked great till the end.

You might say: "Of course she did, she was a Queen, with resources at her disposal.

True, true.

But I'm a scientist, and PROVEN methods can yield the best results.

I'm not about unrealistic expectations that have become rampant in the social media age. We are not about that airbrushed, snap-chat-filtered look that you simply cannot achieve in real life.

I'm about skin with blemishes effectively handled. Skin that is encouraged to be at its best, based on knowledge and the tender loving care resulting from this knowledge.

The issues that currently plague your skin are real. That's why you're reading this book. The solutions I present here are equally real. And effective. You are about to read WHAT these solutions are and HOW they can be applied.

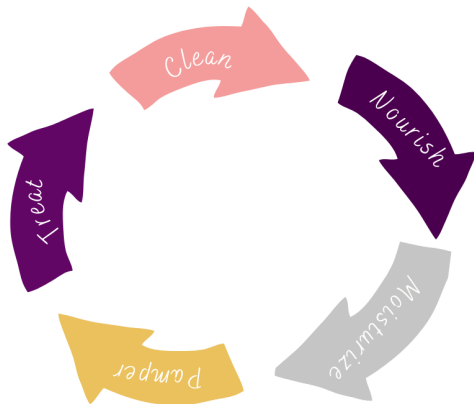
A SKINCARE ROUTINE FOR A FOR A LIFETIME OF BEAUTIFUL SKIN, GLOWING SKIN.

There is magic in routine.

Repetition and structure help reduce the perceived stress that comes from skincare and help us become fully immersed in the task at hand: getting beautiful, glowing skin.

Here's the routine that would make all the difference:

CLEAN, NOURISH, MOISTURISE, PROTECT, PAMPER, TREAT



That's it. That is a summary of the science-backed skincare routine that your 85-year-old self would thank you for.

It's in the simple things.

I implore you: Drown out the noise. Mr. X said this, Mrs. Y did that, and Ms. W recommended this.

No. Drown out the noise.

I don't know who Mr. X and his counterparts are to you, but if you're holding this book, you are seeking solutions. I can talk till I am blue in the face. Without your consent, I can teach you nothing.

Allow me to teach you methods that science & research, pharmacists, and dermatologists agree over. Are we in agreement?

Ok, let's get detailed.

1. CLEAN

Cleaning Step 1: Using A Cleanser

Washing is part of everyone's skincare. Cleansing is the first step in any skincare routine. Many do not understand why cleansing is so important.

What you cleanse with is the most important factor here.

For Facial Skin:

Please avoid any wash or cleanser that contains SLS (Sodium Lauryl Sulphate) or SLES (Sodium Laureth Sulphate, also called Sodium Lauryl Ether Sulphate). These ingredients help cleansers and soap to lather. They however dry out the skin and make it prone to irritation, allergies and breakout. They are quite common in bar soaps, so you

may want to avoid bar soaps altogether or check the ingredient list to ensure these ingredients are absent.

Use facial cleansers. These are simply washes that are specific to the face.

CLEANSERS ACCORDING TO SKIN TYPE

It's important to note that, for maximum results, not all skin types should use the same kind of cleanser.

As a rule of thumb:

For Dry Skin, use Milky Cleansers. These don't dry out the skin further.

For Oily Skin & Normal Skin: Use Foam Cleansers (cleansers that lather).

Using a toner as part of the cleansing step:

Also called a **double-cleanse**, using toners helps to further open up the pores to receive your serums/ facial nourishment. They may offer some hydration to the face as well.

The Koreans swear by this step. But it's not super essential if you don't have the patience for the extra step.

BREAKING DOWN THE DOUBLE CLEANSE.

The double cleanse is a cleansing method that involves cleansing *twice*.

This method of cleansing the skin has Asian (Korean) origins and is commonly done at night/the end of one's day.

It involves washing the face with a cleanser as the first step. This removes make-up, sunscreen, or whatever else was applied to the face earlier in the day, and the dust and

grime from the environment and sweat. You want to remove the layers of product and dirt sitting on the skin.

The second cleanse usually involves using a toner for a more intimate cleanse since layers of product are no longer in the way. This method guarantees that your pores are unclogged and cleaned thoroughly.

In summary, the first cleanse helps to remove product and grime. The second cleanse ensures your pores are unclogged.

Clogged pores are the main cause of blackheads, whiteheads and dull skin. So, if you're acne-prone, it would be a good idea to double-cleanse.

Rule of thumb: If you must use a toner, use an *alcohol-free toner*. Alcohol is a drying ingredient. It strips the skin of its natural oils and moisture, causing an imbalance in the acid-base makeup of the skin.

Other variants of the double cleanse:

1. Cleansing twice with THE SAME cleanser. The first step is to remove junk and gunk. The second step is to ensure the skin is clean.

2. Micellar Water as the first step, then using a regular cleanser (according to your skin type) as the second step

3. Using two cleansers: An oil-based cleanser (the rationale here is that waterproof make-up and products would easily be dissolved in this), followed by a regular cleanser,

chosen according to your skin type. Using the oil-based first-step cleanser is quite convenient because the need to vigorously scrub off makeup and products is greatly reduced since makeup easily dissolves in the cleanser. This protects the delicate face of the skin from harsh scrubbing that removing make-up could require.

Double cleansing this way is excellent for dry skin but is not recommended for acne-prone skin

Overwhelmed?

Don't be. If you choose to double-cleanse, you can use a cleanser as the first step, and then a toner as the second step, if the variants described above are a little hard to wrap your mind around.

Cleaning Step 2: Exfoliate

Exfoliation is the process of removing the topmost layer of dead skin cells on your face and body. Think of it as cleaning your skin to reveal the newer, fresher skin underneath.

As you get older, your skin's natural process of shedding dead cells slows down, which can cause your skin to look dull, rough or uneven. By exfoliating, you are helping your skin to shed these dead cells more quickly, revealing brighter and smoother skin.

Putting it simply, it's cleaning the top layer of your skin, only that the goal is not to remove dirt or products, but dead skin cells.

For your skin to look and feel its best, it's IMPORTANT to exfoliate because, as you age, your skin does not turn over or shed the top layer of dead skin cells as quickly. The skin turnover process takes four to six weeks in younger skin and ten to twelve weeks (sometimes more) in older skin.

This results in a buildup of these dead cells on the skin's surface and can cause the skin to appear dull, rough and uneven in texture.

BENEFITS OF EXFOLIATING

- It reduces fine lines and wrinkles
- It helps to treat pigmentation
- It unclogs your pores
- It leads to the reduction of excess oil formation

You can exfoliate in one of 2 ways:

- *Physical (also known as mechanical) Exfoliation*

Physical exfoliation involves using physical means, such as scrubs containing granules or beads or using tools/devices such as brushes or a washcloth to remove dead skin cells.

- *Chemical Exfoliation*

This method, on the other hand, uses acids or enzymes to dissolve dead skin cells and oils. Chemical exfoliants are alpha-hydroxy acids (AHAs) and beta-hydroxy acids (BHAs).

AHAs include – Glycolic Acid, Lactic Acid, Citric Acid, and Mandelic Acid.

Salicylic Acid is the recommended BHA.

You're probably looking at the word "acid" with suspicion.

Relax.

Chemical exfoliants are considered the gentlest and most effective method of exfoliating. They go deep into the skin to decongest and remove oil buildup.

They work more evenly; thus, they give your skin a better tone than with physical exfoliation.

Please perform a patch test on your skin to be sure your skin will tolerate the product well before you use it all over your face.

Exfoliate just once or twice a week. You risk drying out and irritating the skin if you over-exfoliate.

Pro Tips:

- Patch Test before you use your chosen exfoliant all over your face
- Use once a week for a gentler effect on the skin. Chemical exfoliators are not to be used daily.
- Use at night to minimise sensitivity to the sun (still, protect your skin with sunscreen during the day)

Cleaning the skin in summary:

5. **Daily: Wash your face with a cleanser. Double cleanse (optional)**
6. **Weekly: Exfoliate**

This begs the question:

If I haven't been exfoliating, does it mean I haven't been cleaning my skin properly?

I'll leave that for you to answer.

2. NOURISH

This step in your routine involves infusing your skin with nutrients to provide it with essential protection against molecules called " free radicals".

These molecules are formed from internal metabolism, environmental toxins and stress. They drastically speed up the ageing process. The nutrients to combat the effects of these molecules are called antioxidants. Antioxidants work to neutralise these free radicals, improving skin texture and preventing the formation of fine lines and wrinkles. They also improve skin health by reducing inflammation and protecting the skin from sun damage.

The gold standard for skin nourishment is topical vitamin C (Vitamin C applied directly to the skin).

Vitamin C is a very effective antioxidant, which, honestly does not get the respect it deserves, particularly because EVERYONE knows vitamin C, and it is quite affordable, relative to other antioxidants.

Vitamin C is great for the skin, both as a supplement and as an ingredient in skincare products.

Vitamin C Serum is a popular and effective way of applying vitamin C. To be most effective, Vitamin C must be in the form of L-Ascorbic acid or derivatives of it.

VITAMIN C SERUM (or whatever topical form you choose) ISN'T JUST HYPE. IT'S A SUPER IMPORTANT PART OF SKINCARE

The following are worth considering when choosing vitamin C serum:

Choose Vitamin C in the form of L-ascorbic acid: L-ascorbic acid is the most biologically active form of Vitamin C. This means that it is easily absorbed by the skin, so it can penetrate deeper layers. L-ascorbic acid is more stable when exposed to light, air, or heat.

Packaging: Ensure to pick one that is packaged to prevent breakdown by heat, light and air (vitamin c is delicate and could be damaged by these). Tubes or dark-coloured bottles are ideal forms of packaging for vitamin c and they must be stored in a cool dark place.

Don't Forget Your Diet

It is also super important to consume antioxidants through a balanced diet that contains fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds, and whole grains.

Nourish your skin with supplements

A simple multivitamin goes a long way over a long period. Multivitamins are important because they provide the body with essential vitamins and minerals that may be missing from the diet.

If you want to add something more skin-specific, add Omega-3 oils or Evening Primrose Oil, Vitamin C, CoQ10, Evening Primrose Oil, Omega 3 Oil, Collagen, Zinc.

3. MOISTURISE

Poorly hydrated skin is itchy, flaky and wrinkly. Well-hydrated skin is plumper, more supple, and stands the test of time much better than skin that hasn't been well moisturised over the years.

Moisturization is the process of adding water to the skin. It is a critical aspect of maintaining healthy and radiant skin and ensuring the skin functions properly as the body's barrier against germs and environmental factors such as heat, Cold, wind, and pollution. They introduce moisture and create a barrier on the skin's surface that helps lock in moisture.

The top layer of your skin, called the epidermis, has special cells that make a cocktail of ingredients called natural moisturising factors (NMF), the skin's natural moisturisers. These include **hyaluronic acid** and **glycine**. These NMFs keep your skin hydrated and protected by holding onto water and forming a barrier to keep out germs and pollution from the environment.

NMFs are easily depleted by environmental factors and even dissolve in soaps and cleansers. They are also depleted by prolonged contact with water (now you understand why your skin could feel extra dry after a very long bath). All these weaken the skin's barrier function, make it more susceptible to damage, and lead to a less supple, more shrivelled appearance.

This is exactly why we moisturise! To retain and keep moisture locked in, and ensure that the skin surface is smooth, soft and at its best appearance. Improperly hydrated skin will wrinkle faster than well-moisturised skin.

HOW TO EFFECTIVELY MOISTURISE THE SKIN

Effectively Moisturise: Using Skincare Products

Moisturisers should be chosen based on two things: their formulation (how they're made) and their ingredients (what they contain).

Choosing Moisturisers According To How They Are Made

Moisturisers are formulated as lotions and creams. Different skin types require different types of moisturisers.

Lotions tend to be lightweight and are best for normal, oily or combination skin. Creams are thicker and are best for dry or sensitive skin.

Choosing Moisturisers According To Their Ingredients

Below are ingredients that function as moisturisers:

Glycerin

Hyaluronic Acid

Urea

Sorbitol

Dimethicone

Ceramides

Panthenol (Vitamin B5)

Cetyl Alcohol
Propylene Glycol
Lactic Acid

These ingredients create a barrier on the skin's surface that helps to lock in moisture, thus reducing water loss and keeping the skin hydrated.

Effectively Moisturise: Water is your friend

This is common knowledge. Drink loads of water to hydrate your skin and your entire body.

It is recommended that we drink 2-3 Litres of water daily. This helps flush out toxins from the skin and restores moisture to the skin to maintain its pH levels.

Consume fruits and vegetables with high water content as well.

4. PROTECT

This part of skincare is so easily glazed over. Most people are reactive when it comes to their skin, instead of being proactive. They don't focus on consciously caring for the skin every day. Their approach to skincare is to frantically look for solutions when issues arise.

This section will prove that many people don't protect their skin, because they feel no need to protect it.

When it comes to skincare, using sunscreen is one of the most important steps you can take to protect your skin.

The sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays can have significant and lasting negative effects on our skin. Let's explore these damaging effects:

PREMATURE AGEING

The sun emits UV rays that can penetrate the skin and cause damage to the skin cells. The first effect of this is premature ageing, which leads to a quicker appearance of wrinkles and age spots. This is because the sun's rays break down collagen and elastin. Collagen and elastin are two essential proteins in our skin. They play key roles in maintaining the skin's structure, elasticity, and youthfulness.

Collagen is the skin's most abundant protein and provides it with strength and support. It helps to keep the skin firm, smooth, and resilient.

Elastin, on the other hand, provides the skin with its elasticity. It allows the skin to stretch and bounce back to its original shape, giving it a youthful appearance.

Together, collagen and elastin help to maintain the skin's overall structure, keeping it healthy and youthful. It is true that, as we age, our bodies produce less of these proteins, Exposure to the sun's UV rays however causes very rapid damage to collagen and elastin, breaking them down faster than is natural and contributing to premature ageing of the

skin. The result is skin that is less firm, less elastic, and more prone to wrinkles and sagging.

That's why it's important to protect our skin from the sun and to maintain a healthy lifestyle that supports skin health.

SUNBURN

Sunburn is another reason why sunscreen is so important. Sunburn occurs when the skin becomes red and painful due to exposure to UV rays. In addition to being painful, sunburn increases the risk of skin cancer and causes premature ageing.

Prolonged exposure to the sun is the leading cause of hyperpigmentation. To protect itself from the sun's harsh rays, the skin produces more melanin than it normally would. Melanin is the pigment that gives our skin its colour.

This overproduction of melanin causes dark patches of colour to form in areas that are exposed to the sun, particularly the face, neck, chest and arms.

By using sunscreen, you can reduce the risk of sunburn, premature ageing and hyperpigmentation which are the 'Big 3' of sun damage.

I cannot overemphasise the use of sunscreen. If you are on a tight budget and cannot afford a whole routine (we'll discuss this a little later), ensure that you have sunscreen as part of your skincare. Your older self would thank you.

When choosing sunscreen, it's important to look for one with an SPF of 30 or higher, to apply it liberally and reapply it every two hours when spending time outdoors. You can also consider using a moisturiser or lotion with SPF for daily use.

5. PAMPER

This step in your skincare routine has the potential to take years off your skin. Skin pampering (don't you just love the sound of that) ensures you age gracefully, and your skin maintains a youthful appearance for much longer.

With this step, you'll be loving up on yourself to smooth fine lines and reduce wrinkling.

Please note: AGEING IS A BEAUTIFUL, GOD-GIVEN PROCESS.

Ageing is a thing of pride and honour. Nothing wrong with it. Is it not comforting to know that you could grow old in style, and grow old gracefully? Who would not want that?

You pamper your skin by using an anti-ageing cream/ serum.

Retinoids are the gold standard for anti-ageing.

Retinoids are a form of vitamin A commonly used in skincare products. They are also great for treating acne, skin tags and hyper-pigmentation.

If you truly want to age gracefully, *DO NOT SKIP THIS PART OF THE SKINCARE ROUTINE!*

Retinol is the most common retinoid used in skincare. It is known for its ability to improve the appearance of fine lines, wrinkles, and uneven skin tone. Retinol works by

increasing cell turnover and stimulating collagen production, which helps to improve the overall texture and tone of the skin. Additionally, it can help to unclog pores and reduce the appearance of acne. Retinol is often found in anti-ageing and acne-fighting skincare products and is available in various strengths and forms, including creams, serums, and liquids. It is recommended to start with a low concentration of retinol and gradually increase the strength as your skin adjusts to the product.

PREGNANT WOMEN MUST NOT USE RETINOL AND OTHER RETINOIDS. Women trying to conceive should stop using retinoids at least a month before trying to conceive.

6. TREAT

TREATING SPECIFIC ISSUES

A super important part of your skincare routine is treating specific skin issues if you have them.

For those with non-problematic skin, lucky you!

For folks dealing with acne, spots, sunburn, skin tags and hyperpigmentation, help is here!

We will tackle these issues in-depth in the next chapter. Let's handle them the expertly way.

CHAPTER 4

Specific Skin Issues: Acne, Spots, Hyperpigmentation, Sunburn

“WHATEVER THE PROBLEM, BE PART OF THE SOLUTION. DON’T JUST SIT AROUND RAISING QUESTIONS AND POINTING OBSTACLES.”

- TINA FEY

LET'S TAKE CARE OF THESE DISTRESSING SKIN ISSUES, SHALL WE?

ONE IMPORTANT THING YOU MUST KNOW

The Skincare Routine For A Lifetime Of Beautiful Skin is quite underrated. Staying faithful to this routine can significantly improve your overall skin health. Many of the issues we will address here would be prevented or even treated to a degree with this routine.

If anyone ignores this routine, it should not be you.

To deal with acne, spots, hyperpigmentation and sunburn, tweak your routine to **include actives, sometimes at specific concentrations**. Actives are ingredients that manage or treat specific skin issues. We will approach treatment using actives that can be purchased over the counter (without a prescription).

Let's dive in.

1. ACNE

Acne includes whiteheads, blackheads, pimples, nodules and cysts.

Here are quick descriptions of the forms of acne.

Whiteheads: small, round, and white bumps on the skin

Blackheads: small, dark-coloured bumps that look like they're filled with dirt

Pimples: red or inflamed bumps that can be filled with pus

Nodules: large, painful, and hard lumps that are deep within the skin

Cysts: similar to nodules, but filled with pus and can cause scarring

While treatment can vary from person to person, you can generally follow a simple guideline to treat acne. We will focus on the following goals:

- **Treating the acne itself**
- **Treating the spots and scars from acne**

- **Maintaining healthy skin after acne clears.**

TREATING THE ACNE ITSELF

Black heads, white heads and pimples can be addressed using any of these actives:

Benzoyl Peroxide

A Retinoid

Azelaic Acid

Salicylic Acid

Nodules and cysts:

Treatment may consist of:

- A Retinoid such as retinoic acid or Adapalene to be applied to your skin and an antibiotic to be taken orally (consult a healthcare professional or reach out to us [here](#))
- Hormonal therapy (women only), prescribed by a doctor/ your dermatologist.

Your Daily Treatment, Step-By-Step:

Step 1: Clean: Wash your face with a cleanser (morning and night)

Step 2: Nourish: Vitamin C Serum

Step 3: Treat: Benzoyl Peroxide/A Retinoid/Azelaic Acid/ Salicylic Acid

Step 4: Moisturise: Use a non-comedogenic moisturiser (a moisturiser that would not block your pores). This is extra important because the acne treatment could be drying on the skin.

Step 5: Sunscreen

TREATING THE SPOTS/ SCARS FROM ACNE

This can help smooth out the texture of the skin, reduce the appearance of scars, and improve skin tone. It's important to use gentle exfoliating products and techniques, especially if you have sensitive skin or active acne.

Exfoliate using chemical exfoliants only. Do this once a week. Products containing glycolic acid or lactic acid are a good choice. They are gentle and effective.

Do not use physical exfoliants when you have acne, to avoid further irritation that would worsen your breakout.

Patience is key in acne treatment. Treatment won't show results instantly, so it's important to be consistent. You are expected to see significant improvements within 4-6 weeks, with only a few acne breakouts occurring in this time.

Fewer breakouts: 4 to 8 weeks

Clear skin: 16 weeks after starting the medication.

If all fails, then a visit to the dermatologist would be necessary to access an oral drug that attacks bacteria, clogged pores, excess oil, and inflammation (redness and swelling). It's super effective, but you would receive it only at the discretion of your dermatologist. It cannot be accessed without a prescription.

It is used only for very severe acne, especially if it hasn't responded to any of the methods above.

MAINTAINING HEALTHY SKIN AFTER ACNE CLEARS

I hate to break it to you, but acne does not have a permanent cure. If you've had it before, you are prone to having it again.

The good news is you can ensure your skin remains clear AFTER successfully treating acne. This is maintenance to keep the acne at bay.

Here is what you should do to maintain clear skin:

- Stick to a consistent skincare routine. Yes, routine keeps coming up because that's where the magic is! It doesn't have to be complicated. Stick to the following at least:
- Keeping your skin clean is key to preventing breakouts. Wash your face twice a day with a gentle cleanser and use non-comedogenic products (be proactive about using products that don't clog your pores).
- Protect your skin from sun damage: UV rays can worsen acne and age your skin, so be sure to apply a broad-spectrum sunscreen with SPF 30 or higher.
- Focus on a healthy diet: Eating a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins can benefit both your skin and your overall health.
- Avoid excessive face touching: Your hands come into contact with a lot of bacteria and oil, so try to avoid touching your face throughout the day.
- Continue using your actives: Now you've found active ingredients that effectively treat your acne. Continue to use these actives regularly.

2. SPOTS & HYPERPIGMENTATION

Hyperpigmentation is the darkening of an area of skin due to an increase in pigment (melanin) production. This can be caused by various factors such as sun exposure, hormonal changes, and skin injury or skin irritation.

Hyperpigmentation includes the following:

Spots: Small, usually circular, patches on the skin that differ in colour from the surrounding skin

Melasma: This is a common form of hyperpigmentation that is characterised by dark, symmetrical patches on the face, usually on the cheeks, forehead, and upper lip.

Melasma is often triggered by hormones, sun exposure or sun burn, and skin irritation.

Post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation (PIH): This type of hyperpigmentation occurs after an injury or inflammation to the skin, such as acne or a cut. PIH is caused by the overproduction of melanin in response to the skin damage.

TREATMENT

Here is a simple treatment plan for hyperpigmentation:

Topical lightening agents

Chemical Peels

Sun Protection

Topical lightening agents:

These are lightening ingredients applied directly to the skin in the form of creams or serums to the skin. Here are few effective ingredients to tackle spots and other forms of hyperpigmentation:

Vitamin C:

Vitamin C is very effective in treating hyperpigmentation. For the best results, it should be the in the form of L-Ascorbic Acid, (the most stable, water-soluble vitamin C), and a concentration of at least 10% (this means that whatever form of vitamin C you choose should contain at least 10% vitamin C). Serums are most commonly used because they are easy to apply, and absorb well, especially if you layer your skin products.

Products with Vitamin C combined with Ferulic Acid and Vitamin E are also recommended because these ingredients enhance the stability and antioxidant properties of Vitamin C and increase its penetration into the skin.

Hydroquinone

This is used extensively for treating hyperpigmentation. It is available over the counter in 2% concentrations. This is safe to use for self-treatment.

Dermatologists however use higher concentrations (5-10%) if they find it necessary. Such concentrations of Hydroquinone are not available without a prescription.

To remain within safe levels and avoid side effects, use 2% Hydroquinone for no more than 5 months, before giving your skin a break from hydroquinone. Using hydroquinone for too long could worsen the hyperpigmentation being treated. Hydroquinone should be applied only in the areas with hyperpigmentation. The surrounding skin should be avoided.

Hydroquinone is better tolerated in normal and oily skin than in dry or sensitive skin.

Niacinamide:

Niacinamide, (vitamin B3) works by inhibiting melanin production, and is great in treating acne and in hydrating the skin.

Licorice Root Extract:

Licorice root extract has been shown to have skin-lightening properties and may be helpful in reducing hyperpigmentation. This is because it contains glabridin, which has been found to inhibit melanin production. Licorice root extract is great for sensitive skin, because it is generally well tolerated and it has anti-irritant properties.

A concentration of 10% licorice root extract is effective for hyperpigmentation.

Azelaic Acid: It's very effective for hyperpigmentation. A 10% concentration is recommended. Has an anti-ace and anti-inflammatory effect

Alpha Arbutin: This is well tolerated and can be used at a concentration of 2%

Kojic Acid: Quite effective for hyperpigmentation, but may not be well tolerated by sensitive skin.

Retinoids: These include Retinoic acid, Retinol & Adapalene. It's great to use in older people who would benefit from its anti-aging effects.

Chemical Peels:

These are superficial peels and help to improve cell turn over (they remove the top layer of the skin **over time**, taking away the hyperpigmented area with them), and reveal clearer skin below. Glycolic acid (an Alpha Hydroxy Acid) is a gentle, effective chemical peel that can be used for this purpose.

Concentrations of 10-30%, applied once weekly for 10 minutes only and then rinsed off, would be effective in treating hyperpigmentation.

It's best to start slow

Lower strengths would help the skin's texture, but may not be effective in treating hyperpigmentation.

Chemical peeling is drying to the skin, so please use a moisturiser right after using chemical peels.

SUN PROTECTION

Sun protection is highly important and **CANNOT** be skipped in treating hyperpigmentation, because it's crucial in reducing **and** preventing hyperpigmentation. Even without any of the actives above, there would be an improvement in your hyperpigmentation from the use of sunscreen alone.

This is not enough to completely clear it up, but it's powerful enough to see a clear difference.

Your Daily Treatment For Hyperpigmentation, Step-By-Step:

Step 1: Clean: Wash your face with a cleanser (morning and night)

Step 2: Treat with Vitamin C/Hydroquinone/ Niacinamide/ Licorice Root Extract/ Azelaic Acid/ Kojic Acid/ A Retinoid (Retinol or Adapalene) – *You can combine 2 of these after ensuring that each ingredient is well tolerated.*

Step 4: Moisturise: Use a non-comedogenic moisturiser (a moisturiser that would not block your pores). This is extra important because the acne treatment could be drying on the skin.

Step 5: Sunscreen

Step 6 (Done Weekly or Twice A Week): Chemical Peel: Glycolic Acid / Lactic Acid/ Salicylic Acid

(For best results, please use the ingredients in the recommended concentrations).

TIMELINE FOR HYPERPIGMENTATION TO RESOLVE

The amount of time it takes for hyperpigmentation to disappear varies based on several elements, including:

- Degree of hyperpigmentation
- Source of hyperpigmentation
- Skin tone and type
- Age of the person affected
- Type of treatment being used

Typically, light hyperpigmentation can start to fade within a period ranging from a few weeks to several months with consistent use of topical treatments, such as skin lightening creams and sun protection. On the other hand, more severe hyperpigmentation may take several months or even up to a year or more to fully disappear.

It's important to be patient and follow a consistent treatment plan, as rushing the process or stopping treatment too soon can cause the hyperpigmentation to worsen or

reappear. Consulting a dermatologist can provide a more accurate timeline and a personalised treatment plan tailored to your specific case.

3. SUNBURN

Sunburn is a type of skin damage caused by overexposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun. It results in red, painful skin that may peel and is a risk factor for skin cancer.

To treat sunburn, the following can help:

- Take a cool bath or shower to soothe the skin
- Apply aloe vera or over-the-counter hydrocortisone cream to reduce redness and swelling. Use hydrocortisone for no longer than two weeks.
- Drink plenty of fluids to stay hydrated
- Avoid tight clothing and further sun exposure until the sunburn has healed
- Over-the-counter pain relievers such as ibuprofen or acetaminophen can also help relieve pain and reduce swelling.

If the sunburn is severe or covers a large area of the body, it is recommended to see a doctor.

Sunburn is best prevented. It can cause skin damage, which can lead to rapid skin ageing, as well as an increased risk of skin cancer. In dark skin particularly, sunburn can result in hyperpigmentation, which can take a while to treat.

Most forms of hyperpigmentation are as a result of sunburn or are worsened by sunburn. Acne spots stay longer, or are worsened by over-exposure to the sun. Sunburn is very easily avoided by

We've discussed extensively on how to treat hyperpigmentation.

CHAPTER 5

Beneath The Surface: The Hidden Skin-Mind Connection

“I AM NOT MY HAIR, I AM NOT THIS SKIN, I AM THE SOUL THAT LIVES
WITHIN.”

- INDIA ARIE

THE LINK BETWEEN SKIN PROBLEMS AND MENTAL HEALTH IS A STORY THAT OFTEN GOES UNTOLD. While we may see our skin as just a physical layer, the reality is that it can have a deep and lasting impact on our emotional state.

The skin is our most visible physical feature. It's simply everywhere. Except you cover up from head to toe for personal reasons, your skin is easily seen by everyone. As a result, it can be a great source of insecurity. The condition of our skin can be profound on our mental health, and it's important to understand the connection between the two

The connection between the skin and mental health is complex and often underestimated.

Acne, spots, and hyperpigmentation are just a few skin issues that can affect our mental health. For many people, these conditions can be more than just a cosmetic concern - they can be a source of physical discomfort (itchiness, pain), as well as less seen psychological distress, anxiety, and even depression. The psychological impact of skin problems can be especially devastating for teenagers and young adults, who are at a crucial stage of development and are more likely to be concerned with their appearance.

This in no way means that older adults in their 30s, 40s, 50s and even 60s are immune to their effects, especially because, at this stage, the effects of chemical damage to the skin become quite obvious.

We are bombarded by images of perfect skin in the media, which could lead us to compare ourselves and feel inadequate. People with challenging skin issues often face stigma and discrimination from others who don't understand the true impact of their condition. Recently, someone associated acne with bad hygiene. Amazing, and very wrong.

Unsolicited advice, particularly from those who are not knowledgeable about health and skin, can be damaging to the self-esteem of those affected by skin issues. It's important to be kind and understanding to those struggling and to recognize that they are more than just their appearance.

Remember that our skin will have its good days and bad days, and that doesn't define us or our worth.

We are not our skin. Our skin is a part of us, but it's not all that we are. We are complex beings with unique personalities, talents, and experiences that make us who we are. In a world that's so focused on appearance, it's easy to be discouraged by negative comments from others or even by our own self-criticism. But it's crucial to remember that your worth is not determined by your skin. You are worthy of love and respect, no matter what your skin looks like.

If you have skin issues that are affecting your mental health, please take steps to protect yourself. This can include:

- Seeking treatment for your skin condition.
- Talking to a mental health professional about your concerns, and
- engaging in self-care activities that can help you feel good about yourself. It's also helpful to reach out to friends and family for support and to find a community of people who understand what you're going through.

It's important to remember that everyone's journey with their skin is unique. You don't have to feel ashamed or embarrassed about your condition, and you are not alone. With the right support and treatment, it is possible to improve your skin and your mental health.

I hope I've been able to offer that support with the knowledge shared in this book.

When it comes to the delicate balance between our skin and mental health, it's easy to focus on what's visible to the naked eye, but the true connection runs much deeper.

Let's not forget that.

OUTRO

AND IT'S A WRAP!!!!

Who's the real MVP?? YOU!

You're more knowledgeable now about your skin. I'm excited to hear about the changes putting all that knowledge into practice would surely bring.

Feel free to tell me and my team about it by shooting me a DM on [Instagram](#). We share tips, advice, and inspiration for skin health and general health and wellness. We'd LOVE to connect with you.

Additionally, we are available for [one-on-one sessions](#), where we can work with you to create a customised plan that meets your unique needs and goals.

Thank you for joining me on this journey, and I wish you all the best on your path to radiant health and happiness.

Before you close this book, would you do me a little favour? Please encourage a friend, a colleague who would benefit from all we've learned together, to purchase this book.

It's so easy to send them your copy, but encouraging them to actually make that purchase would be honouring the time and effort it took to make this book possible **AND** you'd be encouraging a small business.

They can purchase it right [here](#).



**All my love,
Folasade Ekwem
Founder, [PillsRx](#)**