

THE BIG CLEANSE

FACIAL CLEANSERS HAVE EVOLVED FROM SIMPLE SUDS TO BECOME PART OF A SOPHISTICATED SKINCARE RITUAL WRITES JULIETTE WINTER.

CLEANSERS HAVE SERIOUSLY cleaned up their act. Once upon a time it was a simple choice: harsh soap or just plain water. Old school suds definitely achieved a squeaky clean result but, in the process of washing away grime, they also dried out the skin and left it prone to irritation.

In recent years, things have become a lot more complicated in the cutting-edge world of cleansing as skincare scientists come up with ever-more clever ways to remove make-up and dirt without stripping skin of natural oils or disturbing the delicate pH balance.

"Our skin's microbiome is made up of an invisible, carefully balanced collection of trillions of microbes that live on our skin and help keep it clean, clear and healthy. An estimated 1 million bacteria inhabit every centimetre of your skin!" says Katy Bacon, Murad education manager. "The future of skincare is all about looking after the microbial balance."

Achieving that fine balance means carefully considering the surfactant (detergent) in your cleanser. Most facial cleansers are soap-free these days, but even the synthetic detergents that replaced traditional suds (think sodium lauryl sulfate and sodium laureth-sulfate, or SLS) can still compromise skin integrity.

"SLS has an alkaline pH so, in higher percentages, it can disrupt the slightly acidic, protective barrier of the skin," says Zoe Devine, skin expert at Skinstitut. "In the last 10 years many skincare companies switched to more gentle surfactants, such as ALS (ammonium lauryl sulphate), which is much more well-tolerated."

Next generation cleansers use milder surfactants, including gluconates and isethionates, derived from fruit sugars or the fatty acids in coconut oil. Cyclic

peptides are deemed the new 'it' ingredient for cleaning complexions. "They are 300 times more efficient than traditional surfactants, delivering high-efficiency cleansing with low irritation," explains Katy. "They work by trapping oil and debris in a micelle-like bubble, enabling impurities to be more easily rinsed from skin without stripping natural facial oils."

Modern cleansing formulas are not only gentler, they have also become increasingly sophisticated, boasting active ingredients that can improve

It's no longer just about cleansing the skin, but it's an opportunity to enhance our wellbeing and wash away the emotional 'pollution'...

skin texture while you're cleansing — think bioflavonoid-rich citrus extracts to fight free radicals, prebiotics to help keep the skin's microbiome in balance, kaolin clay and charcoal to purify pores, aloe for its anti-inflammatory benefits, and super-hydrating ingredients such as squalene that leave skin plump and soft.

Your cleanser choice is also partially influenced by geography. In France, micellar waters are popular because it avoids rinsing with the mineral-rich water, which can be irritating to skin. While in Korea, it's all about the double cleanse, a ritual that is rapidly gaining traction in Australia too.

"The first cleanse is with a plant-based oil to remove the pollution, dirt, dust, smoke, heavy metals, make-up, and sweat that settles on your skin

during the day," says Dr Tarj Mavi, founder of Australian skincare brand, La Mav Organic Skin Science.

When you emulsify a pre-cleansing balm with water, the oil attracts the positively charged toxins, which then easily rinse off. "The second cleanse should be based on your skin type, to deeply clean the surface of the skin and pores so that the bio-actives in your serums and moisturisers get a proper chance to be absorbed into the deeper layers of the skin," says Dr Mavi.

Choosing that second cleanser is dependent on the skin issue you aim to treat, something that can change over time depending on environmental, diet and lifestyle habits. For really dry skin, sometimes a good oil-based balm is enough. "Some people may notice increased congestion in summer months if their skin is oilier, so you might then need a cleanser with salicylic acid, which breaks down the intracellular glue that holds dead skin cells together," says Zoe. "If your skin is looking dull or lacklustre, a product with glycolic acid will help speed up cell turnover and draw impurities out of the skin. Both of these ingredients offer additional benefits above and beyond simple cleansing."

According to Dr Mavi, going "above and beyond" is something we increasingly expect from skincare routines — it's no longer just about cleansing the skin, but it's an opportunity to enhance our wellbeing and wash away the emotional 'pollution' of the day. "These daily rituals do wonders to your health, healing and wellness," says Dr Mavi. "It can become the time to connect to yourself and listen to your body, which helps to reduce stress by releasing good hormones. Our beauty routine has become more than just cleansing — it's a self-care ritual." *CS*

CLEVER CLEANSERS

Clean up your act with one of these cleansers, from left:

- Teaming up against pollution, make-up and the daily accumulation of dirt, **La Mav Marula Face Cleansing Oil** (\$39.95 for 80ml) has a beautiful blend of nourishing oils including marula, camellia, jojoba and raspberry seed.
- Mixing skincare, cleanser and exfoliant, **Cremorlab T.E.N Cremor Eau Thermale Cleansing Balm** (\$67 for 100ml) is infused with mineral-rich thermal spring water to nourish, Moroccan clay to buff away dirt and dead skin cells.
- A great travel companion, **Ere Perez Ginkgo Micellar Water** (\$32 for 200ml) will keep your skin clean and calm sans water with aloe vera and ginkgo biloba that tackles free radicals, while boosting with antioxidants.
- Wash away your day with the relaxing scent of rose in **Natio Rosewater Hydration Gentle Cream-Gel Face Cleanser** (\$16.95 for 100ml), that uses a trio of sweet almond, apricot and sesame oils to cleanse and hydrate.

- Simply massage **Edible Beauty No.1 Belle Frais Cleansing Milk** (\$59 for 200ml) into dry skin to remove all traces of make-up and purify the skin with nourishing coconut oil, apple extract and wattleseed that's an antioxidant.
 - Australian wellness brand, Yora, nourishes your skin from the inside out with skincare and supplements. Try the **Yora Rebalance Face Cleanser** (\$95 for 120ml) based on soothing aloe vera, hydrating avocado oil and purifying caviar lime.
 - Swipe your skin with **Skinstitut Microbiome Micellar Water** (\$39 for 200ml) to gently remove pollution and make-up from your face, eyes and lips, while rebalancing your microbiome with prebiotics, aloe vera and coconut water.
 - Using the latest cyclic peptide that's up to 300 times more effective than regular surfactants, **Murad Prebiotic 4-in-1 Multicleanser** (\$58 for 147ml) also has hemisqualane from sugar cane to remove make-up (even waterproof), prebiotics and hyaluronic acid to leave your skin super soft.
- For stockist details, see page 137.

