

The secret ingredients to luminous skin

You'll get more out of your products when you know what's in them, as skincare guru Karen Fischer explains

You wouldn't wash your car with a chemical cleaner that damaged the paint job, would you? So why would you

wash your skin with a product containing damaging ingredients? You might be surprised to learn that many popular cleansing products contain ingredients that studies have deemed harmful to our skin.

You may wonder why, if these ingredients are so bad for you, are they in your beauty creams in the first place? Because they are cheap and increase the prettiness of a product. They make a product smell nice or feel silky, or they make it bubble and foam. Let's look in detail at some good ingredients that are a must-have in your skincare products ...



Almond oil/sweet almond oil

Uses Antibacterial; contains fatty acids and triglycerides to moisturise the skin.

Benefits Soothes irritation and dryness. It's suitable for blemish-prone skin.

Try 1 Weleda Skin Food, \$21.95 (03 9723 7278).

2 Melrose Sweet Almond Oil, \$12.40 (melrosehealth.com.au).

Alpha hydroxy acid (AHA) and beta hydroxy acid (BHA)

Uses Exfoliates; has an anti-ageing effect. Look for names such as "glycolic acid", "lactic acid" and "malic acid" and, in the case of BHA products, "salicylic acid" (at least eight per cent concentration). Cosmetic physician Dr Van Huynh-Park says you can only get products containing more than eight per cent AHA and BHA from a pharmacy or doctor's surgery. Most products sold in department stores have only four per cent or less.

Benefits They improve skin texture by thinning the stratum corneum [the outer most layer of the epidermis (skin)], via a type of acid exfoliation. They also increase collagen synthesis within the dermis and they don't damage the skin's barrier function.

Problems They can make the skin temporarily peel, flake or look inflamed. Plus, the most effective AHA products are unfortunately not naturally derived.

Try 3 MD Formulations Facial Cleansing Gel, \$85 (1800 808 993).

4 John Plunkett's Superfade Face Cream, \$29.95 (plunketts.com.au).

5 Burt's Bees Natural Anti-Blemish Solutions Targeted Spot Treatment, \$19.95 (burtsbees.com.au).

6 Éminence Radish Seed Refining Peel, \$115 (eminenceorganics.com.au).

Beta glucan

Uses It has antioxidant, anti-ageing and moisturising properties.

Benefits Extracted from the fermentation process of yeast, it assists in the reduction of wrinkles and helps with skin repair.

Problems At this point, scientific evidence is limited – and it's quite a pricey ingredient!

Try 7 The Jojoba Company Intense Overnight Renewal Crème, \$59.95 (thejojobacompany.com.au).

8 Bergman Metamorphose Stimulation Mask, \$220 (1800 808 993). ▶



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