

clearly basics
**Guide to
Clear Skin**

clearly basics
skincare for the acne prone

Welcome to Clearly Basics Guide to Clear Skin!

Our goal with this guide is to empower you with the knowledge and tools needed to overcome acne. Whether it's hormonal acne, "common" acne or acne look-a-likes, this guide will help you understand your skin and how to get it looking and feeling its best. Remember no one's skin is ever completely perfect and it's about knowing what to do when it acts up and getting it back to a place where it is calm and healthy again.

We are here for you. Rest assured that whatever state your acne may be in right now, it is not permanent and you are not alone. We are here to help.

Please pass this guide along to family, friends, neighbors and acquaintances. Knowledge is power when it comes to maintaining healthy and happy skin. If you choose to repost some of our content – awesome! Reference our work by the title: *Clearly Basics Guide to Clear Skin*. Do note, while this guide is intended to educate, it is not personalized medical advice. Please consult your physician for any changes in your health needs.

So without further ado, let's get started!



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Getting the Most Out of This Guide

Just as an encyclopedia is not designed to be read cover-to-cover, use the links below to jump around this guide based on your immediate skin concerns:

Chapter 1: Understanding Types of Acne

Anatomy of a Comedone	Chest Acne
Acne Vulgaris	Acne Mechanica
Hormonal Acne	Acne Pomade
Closed Comedones	Blackheads
Adult-Onset Acne	Causes: Oily Skin
Back Acne	Causes: Lipid Barrier

Chapter 2: Acne Look-Alikes

**Look Alikes such as Rosacea and Dermatitis
Sebaceous Filaments**

Chapter 3: Tools in Your Toolkit

Clear Out for Acne and Acne Scars
Clear Out Extra Strength for those who need more
Lighten Up for Post-Acne Red Scars
Dark Mark Defense for Post-Acne Brown Scars
Protective Moisturizer to Strengthen Your Lipid Barrier
Matte Hydrator for Oil-Free Hydration
Balancing Cleanser for a shot of AHA+BHA
Clarifying Toner for Hydration and Refinement
Application Order
Managing The Purge
Medical-Grade Ingredients
How Much? Getting the Most Out of Skincare

Chapter 4: Dealing with Scars

Chapter 5: Health and Lifestyle Habits

Chapter 6: When to Call in the Derm

Chapter 7: Your Skincare Journey

Chapter 2:
UNDERSTANDING
THE DIFFERENT
TYPES OF ACNE

[Return to Menu](#)◀

The Anatomy of a Comedone

The first step to fighting acne is to understand how acne is formed.

At the center of every type of acne is a comedone. Each-and-every pore is lined with skin that will die and shed off over time. Typically, these dead skin cells are carried away by oil excreted by the sebaceous glands (figure 1).

However, if the dead skin starts to accumulate, it will mix with sebum to form a microcomedone (figure 2).

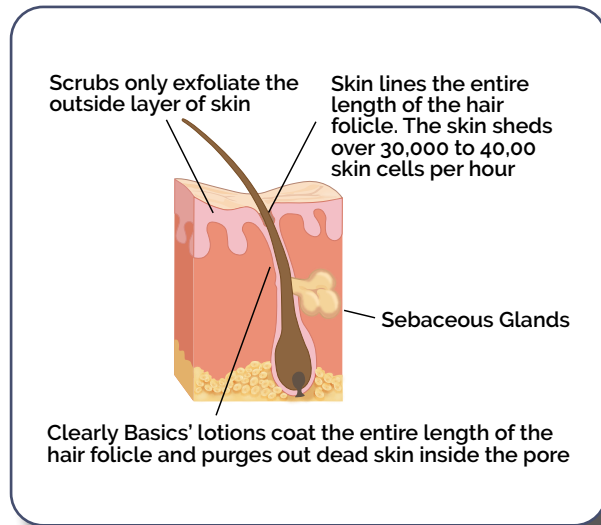


Figure 1

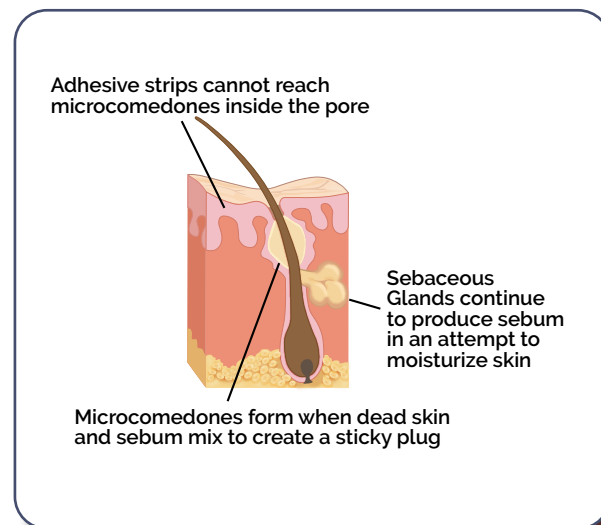


Figure 2

C. acnes bacteria, which feeds off sebum, begins to flourish in the build-up. The acne-causing bacteria creates a biofilm that triggers the immune system to send blood to the tissue surrounding the pore (figure 3).

Pro Tip: The best offense is defense. Use Clear Out to perpetually flush out dead skin from inside your pores so that they do not have a chance to build up into a clog (figure 3).

Note that clay masks, scrubs and pore strips are not left on the skin long enough to penetrate into the pore to reach this accumulation.

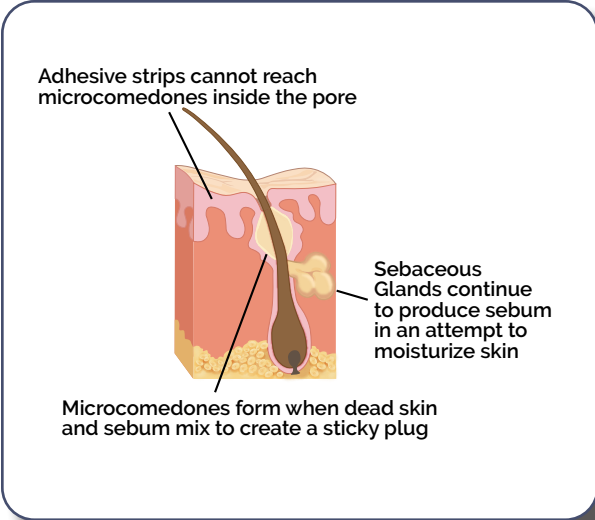


Figure 3

As the immune system kicks into full gear, inflammation around the pore accelerates, leading to the dreaded red zit. Enzymes produced by *C. acnes* bacteria may eventually break the pore wall. If the rupture penetrates into the deeper dermis layer, local tissue destruction and scar formation become an issue (figure 4).

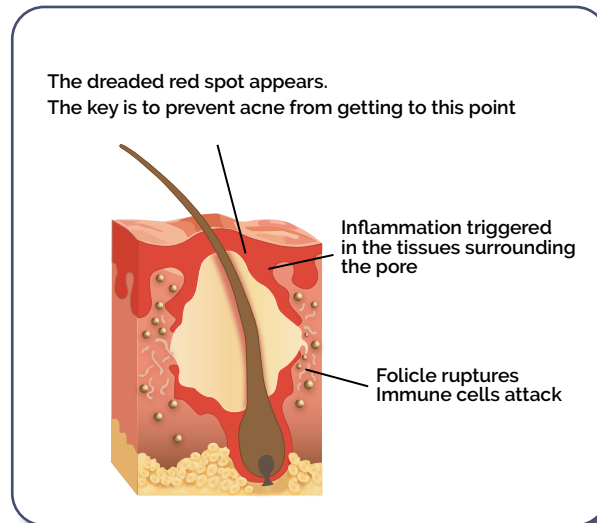


Figure 4

At Clearly Basics, we are often asked how to handle acne when the red spots have already appeared. Since the inflammation chain reaction has already set in motion, little can be done to alter its course. Reducing the inflammation may help, but the body needs to kill off the bacterial infection.

Resist the urge to squeeze or pop the pimple! A zit is just the tip of a struggle happening deep inside the pore as the skin fights off infection. ***Squeezing or popping may force the infection deeper into the tissue. It may also cause damage to the surrounding tissue and introduce new bacteria, complicating the healing process.***

The main priority is to break the acne cycle by perpetually flushing out the dead skin so that it does not accumulate and form a clog. The Clear Out is designed with this purpose in mind!

While there are too many factors which can cause acne for this guide to cover, here are the most common forms of acne and underlying triggers that we see at Clearly Basics:

Acne Vulgaris



Vulgaris. Sounds scary, right? In reality, it is just the opposite. *Vulgaris* is the Latin word for "common;" so despite how terrifying it may sound, this type of acne is normal and treatable.



Acne Vulgaris is most pronounced in people with combination skin. Breakouts usually occur in the dry area (not the oily areas where most would assume). The papules are small to regular sized (less than 5mm in diameter).



Solution Step 1: A simple bottle of Clear Out will do the trick for acne vulgaris. This formulation is left on the skin all night so it has sufficient time for the retinol and azelaic acid to get to work inside the pore. 98% of users who use Clear Out see significant improvement after a single bottle.

Escalation Step 2: If breakouts persist after three months, continue with Clear Out and apply benzoyl peroxide onto the general areas breakouts continue. Cut out harsh cleansers or acids which may be weakening your lipid barrier.

Escalation Step 3: Consult your dermatologist if breakouts persist.



Hormonal Acne

Hormonal acne appears the week leading up to a woman's period. It is typically found on the lower part of the face—on the jawline, chin and cheeks. Scarring is a big issue as new pimples surface every month before the scar from the last wave has faded.



Particularly in those with dry/combination skin, hard lumps underneath the skin tend to build on the chin and cheeks. These are closed comedones and are very large, stubborn clogs that take up to five months to flush out. If you have these, continue with Step 1 for five months.



Solution Step 1: Use Clear Out + Lighten Up to help flatten existing pimples as well as fade the appearance of scars. If you get larger/deeper closed comedones on your chin or jaw, add benzoyl peroxide to work alongside the Power Duo during the day.



Escalation Step 2: If acne persists, drink 5 g of dried spearmint tea boiled in 250 mL water for 5-10 minutes, twice a day. Consider reducing the intake of dairy, refined carbs and sugars. Eat foods high in zinc such as almonds or walnuts. Consult your doctor for recommendations on medications that influence hormones.

Escalation Step 3: In extreme cases of hormonal acne and hirsutism (male pattern hair growth), consider speaking to an endocrinologist, as it may be a sign of a more severe problem.



Adult-Onset Acne

Technically defined as acne after the age of 24, adult-onset acne often rears its ugly head due to changes in lifestyle, environment and stress. There is a big overlap with hormonal acne since changes like the use of oral contraceptives, pregnancy and menopause often happen during adulthood. Distinguish between the two based on the timing: hormonal acne tends to correspond with a woman's period, whereas adult acne is more sporadic across the month.



Solution Step 1: Many people with adult-onset acne use a wide range of skincare products. If your acne is persistent, simplify your night time routine to a gentle cleanser and use Clear Out + Lighten Up to flatten existing pimples as well as fade the appearance of scars.

Oil production decreases with age allowing skin to become more sensitive and easily irritated. Use the Protective Moisturizer to nourish and repair sensitive skin.

Escalation Step 2: If acne persists after three months of using the Clear Out + Lighten Up, augment by applying a benzoyl peroxide gel in the mornings to the general area where breakouts occur.

Escalation Step 3: Consult a dermatologist if acne persists.



Closed Comedones

Commonly called blind pimples or under-the-skin pimples, these stubborn clogs start as hard lumps underneath your skin and take up to five months to finally surface. When they surface, they often come up as large cysts.

Closed comedones associated with hormonal acne usually occur on the cheeks, the chin and the back. Those associated with diet triggers often occur on the inside of the neck.

In each step, allot 5 months in order to see through an acne cycle. Resist the urge to pick at cysts since they can easily cause tissue damage.

Solution Step 1: If you get more than five closed comedones per month, skip to Step 2. Otherwise, use Clear Out + Lighten Up for five months in order to work out all of the stubborn clogs. Augment by applying benzoyl peroxide gel in the mornings. Look for non-comedogenic makeup options to discourage clogs.

Escalation Step 2: Be diligent about using Lighten Up after the cysts have flattened to help fade away the red scar. Also, make sure to use sunblock when going outdoors. A red scar will collect melanin and turn brown when exposed to UV. Once it has turned brown, the acne scar can last up to two years!



Blackheads

Blackheads are clogs whose tip has been oxidized due to air exposure. These clogs are often stubborn and may take months to clear out.

Clay masks and scrubs do little when it comes to blackheads (they also do little when it comes to acne) as the clog is situated deeper into the pore where these products do not reach.

Occasionally, a pore strip may be able to pull out a clog but more often than not, it will only pull out the tip and leave the rest of the clog intact.

Resist the urge to squeeze out or steam out a blackhead as that will irritate your skin, potentially turning a blackhead into a full-on pimple.

Solution Step 1: A simple bottle of Clear Out will do the trick to flush out blackheads. Do note that it may take up to 5 months to flush these stubborn clogs out. *Patience is key!*



Back Acne

Back acne, or “bacne,” can be just as frustrating as acne that is located on more visible areas like your face. In fact, it may be even more frustrating because it is harder to reach, therefore, it's harder to treat.

If the breakouts are itchy, relatively small and spread over a large area, it is possible that this is folliculitis (commonly referred to as fungal acne). However, if the breakouts are not itchy and they become larger than 4mm in diameter, try the following steps:



Solution Step 1: Check your skincare and haircare products. Products for the body should also contain the phrases “non-comedogenic” or “does not clog pores” on the label. Common clog-inducing culprits are oils in hair conditioners, creams, tanning products and sunblocks. Be especially wary of products that contain coconut butter/oils.

Escalation Step 2: Use a wash or leave-on toner that contains salicylic acid or benzoyl peroxide. Clear Out is equally effective with acne on the back as it is on the face.



Bacne can also extend down the back of the arms.

Chest Acne

While there is a high concentration of oil glands on both the back and chest, the skin on the back is very thick while the skin on the chest is very thin. This means that bacne products may be formulated differently as compared to products for chest acne.

If the breakouts are itchy, relatively small and spread over a large area, it is possible that it is folliculitis (fungal acne). However, if the breakouts are not itchy and they become larger than 4mm in diameter, try the following steps:



Solution Step 1: Apply Clear Out across the area of the breakout. As the skin on your chest is thin, only apply the Clear Out every other evening and follow up with the Protective Moisturizer as needed.

Escalation Step 2: Use a wash that contains salicylic acid or benzoyl peroxide. For some, clothing may irritate their skin and cause breakouts. Put away suspect items of clothing and change your detergent or fabric softener to see if it makes a difference.



Acne Mechanica

Acne Mechanica refers to a variation of acne caused by friction, sweat or enduring pressure on the skin. Common culprits include: facemasks, backpacks, bra straps, casts, chairs, sleeping on one side of the face and even mobile phones.



If acne occurs only on one side of the face, look to see if you use your phone on this side of your face. When your phone is pressed up against the face for a prolonged period, bacteria transferred from your phone may cause breakouts.



Solution Step 1: Make changes at home such as swapping to a silk pillowcase. Use a wireless headset when talking on the phone.

Escalation Step 2: Use Clear Out so that clogs are harder to form. For scars, use Lighten Up to fade the appearance of post-acne red marks.



Acne Pomade



Oils from hair care products can transfer directly from the hair or via your pillowcase and cause clogs. Breakouts usually happen on the hairline, but can also occur on the cheeks or on the neck.



To isolate what product is causing acne pomade, cut back on all products and then slowly introduce them back one at a time until the acne-causing trigger is isolated.

It is a good practice to change pillowcases once per week and skip the use of dryer sheets since the wax in these fabric softeners are often comedogenic.



Underlying Causes

Dealing with Oily Skin

If you are having issues with oil control on acne-prone skin, here are five steps to take in order to reduce oil production:

Step 1: Break the oil production cycle by decongesting your pores. Clear Out is very effective in flushing out existing clogs. Furthermore, it uses medical grade retinol which directly decreases oil production.

Step 2: Get cleansing right by choosing the correct cleanser and only washing twice per day. Using a cleanser that is too strong or washing too often will force skin into overdrive to make up for lost oil.

Step 3: Get moisturizing right by choosing a high-quality hyaluronic acid serum. This is another way of breaking the oil production cycle—by moisturizing the skin so that it does not need to produce as much oil.

Step 4: For some, cutting down on dairy as well as foods that have a high glycemic index (GI) rating can be effective in decreasing oil production.

Step 5: Use a leave-in toner that contains salicylic acid. This ingredient breaks down sebum. If salicylic acid is too strong as a leave-in toner, use it in the form of a face wash instead.



Underlying Causes

Impaired Lipid Barrier

If your skin gets easily irritated or flushes readily, it is possible that you have a weak or impaired lipid barrier. It is important to prioritize the repair of your lipid barrier as an impaired lipid barrier may lead to more severe inflammation in pimples as well as risk of bacterial complications.

Simplify your skincare routine and make sure that every product that you use is gentle. Look for “non-comedogenic” or “does not clog pores” on the label.

Opt for a gentle face wash that does not strip off natural oils. Use lukewarm water and gently pat skin dry with a towel.

With breakouts, it's important not to throw everything at it. Stick with one solution and give it time to work.

Solution Step 1: Use the Protective Moisturizer daily to help repair and strengthen the lipid barrier. Begin using Clear Out once every three evenings. As your skin adjusts, gradually increase the frequency until you are able to apply Clear Out every evening.

Escalation Step 2: Heavier, cream-based ceramide moisturizers may be necessary to give skin a further boost. Use these cream-based moisturizers at night while using the Protective Moisturizer during the day under makeup.



Chapter 2:

ACNE LOOK ALIKES

Sometimes what appears to be acne is not acne at all. Acne look-alikes require different types of management and treatment.

[Return to Menu](#)◀

Here are the imposters that we frequently see at Clearly Basics:



Dermatitis/Eczema is a broad spectrum of skin reactions that causes rough patches and red bumps to form. It is commonly triggered by an impaired lipid barrier, overwashing, use of products that cause irritation or foods which may trigger a reaction on your skin. Many people with dermatitis/eczema find Clearly's Protective Moisturizer helpful in calming down their skin.



Folliculitis occurs when hair follicles become inflamed due to fungal infection. Clusters of small red bumps or whitehead-like pustules appear over a larger area of the skin. The key identifier? Small, itchy bumps. Switch to a shampoo or soap that contains zinc pyrithione like Head & Shoulders. Work up the shampoo and leave the lather on the affected areas for one minute. If this doesn't calm down the outbreak, consult a dermatologist regarding topical medication.



Rosacea is another acne-imposter that is common to people with fair skin of Celtic descent. Like acne, rosacea most frequently appears as red papules and pustules on facial skin. Unlike acne though, rosacea can appear as large areas of facial redness (typically on the nose and area under the eyes), skin warmth, itchiness, skin irritation and skin thickening. Many people with rosacea find Clearly's Protective Moisturizer helpful in calming down their skin. Also, a high dose of azelaic acid applied directly to your skin may shrink the blood vessels in your face, thereby reducing flushing.



Pseudofolliculitis Barbae is commonly referred to as razor bumps and is an inflammatory reaction triggered by shaving. To prevent razor bumps, ensure that you are shaving in the direction of the hair growth rather than against the growth. Replace your razor frequently. Use a non-irritating shaving cream and moisturize afterwards.

Sebaceous Filaments

When people complain about visible pores due to blackheads, they are often referring to sebaceous filaments. These structures occur naturally within pores in order to allow sebum to flow to the surface of the skin.

To the untrained eye, sebaceous filaments look identical to blackheads. An easy way to find out if your skin is sporting sebaceous filaments rather than blackheads is to gently run a (clean!) fingernail over the spot. If nothing comes out, it is likely a blackhead. If a bit of oil or yellow sebum comes out, it is a sebaceous filament.

Solution Step 1: Apply toner that contains salicylic acid both morning and evening. If the toner is too strong, use it only 2 or 3 times per week or use a facewash that contains salicylic acid instead.

Do note that sebaceous filaments are a natural part of your pore and they will come back within 2 to 3 weeks. This is why, at Clearly Basics, we prefer toners over mask. Toners are left on the skin longer and applied as part of a routine, so they have much more time to do their work!



Sebaceous Filaments (left) vs. Blackheads

Chapter 3: TOOLS IN THE ACNE TOOLKIT

GET TO KNOW CLEARLY BASICS PRODUCTS

Dive into the details on the solutions Clearly Basics offers to help to fight acne *for good*. From cleansers to toners and moisturizers to spot treatments, Clearly Basics has a complete toolkit.

[Return to Menu](#) ◀



Clear Out for Acne and Acne Scars

This product checks all the boxes—no exaggeration. It flattens existing pimples, makes future clogs harder to form and fades the appearance of scars.

The unique formulation combines medical grade retinol and azelaic acid into a single lotion so you don't need to figure out how much retinol and azelaic acid you need to apply every night. Clearly Basics' research teams have balanced the concentrations of each ingredient in order to maximize effectiveness while minimizing side effects.

So why did we choose retinol and azelaic acid? Retinoids are the dermatologists' #1 choice to decongest your skin and reduce oil production while azelaic acid (AZA) is the second choice for most types of acne. AZA has the power to calm redness and improve skin texture. It also has anti-bacterial and anti-microbial properties.

During the first few months of using Clear Out, a “purge” of dead skin trapped in pores will appear. This will look like flaking or low-level breakouts, but it is a necessary process to flush out the clogs that would have formed future pimples.



Rated 4.9 out of 5

**Clears clogged pores
Flushes out closed
comedones
Removes whiteheads/
blackheads
Improves texture & tone
Refines pores
Reduces redness**

One bottle = 3 months.

Clear Out Extra Strength for those who need more

Looking for *even more* power to fight acne? Clear Out Extra Strength is a step-up from Clear Out that will help knock-out the acne that keeps coming back.

Formulated with retinol and azelaic acid (AZA) to flush out dead skin cells, reduce redness and flatten existing acne, the key difference in the extra strength version is an increased concentration of retinol and the inclusion of salicylic acid (BHA) in place of pracaxi oil.

Salicylic acid is effective in breaking down sebum oil and improving the tone of the skin. This trio of ingredients works over-time to get rid of the acne that just won't seem to go away.

Pro-tip! For a further antimicrobial boost during the day, apply a benzoyl peroxide (BP) gel to the general areas where you break out. Opt for a lower concentration at 2% to 5% strength.



New Formulation!

Added strength to clear clogged pores
Flushes out closed comedones
Removes whiteheads/blackheads
Improves texture & tone
Refines pores
Reduces redness

One bottle = 3 months.

Lighten Up for Post-Acne Red Scars

One of the most frustrating and emotionally-tolling aspects of dealing with acne is scarring. Red acne scars persist long after the pimple has flattened due to residual blood and dilated blood vessels left behind.

Clearly Basics' Lighten Up is designed to target this post-acne irritation. Crafted with calendula oil, an antioxidant from marigold flowers that not only calms the skin, but also improves its texture and tone; bisabolol, a soothing oil extracted from chamomile flowers that works to lighten and heal the skin; and pracaxi oil, a long-used tea tree oil used to fade the appearance of hyperpigmentation, as well as to heal and hydrate the skin, Lighten Up is jam-packed with everything needed to soothe and calm acne redness.

Lighten Up works better when used in conjunction with Clear Out. Clear Out sloughs away dead skin cells so that Lighten Up can more readily absorb into the skin.

Pro-tip! If your skin is prone to flushing/blushing, the blood sent to the area when the skin is flushed will thwart the efforts of Lighten Up. Use the Protective Moisturizer to reduce the chances of flushing/blushing in your skin.



Rated 4.75 out of 5

Fades the appearance of post-acne red scars/marks
Reduces the chance of collecting stubborn brown pigmentation
Fosters healing

One bottle = 3 months
(varies based on need)

Dark Mark Defense for Post-Acne Brown Scars

If a red post-acne scar is exposed to UV, it will quickly collect melanin and turn brown. Once an acne scar has turned brown, it can last up to two years. Clearly Basics' Dark Mark Defense (DMD) will help to fade the appearance of these stubborn brown marks by up to 4x faster.

The DMD is formulated with 4nBR, an anti-pigmenting agent; tranexamic acid (TXA), an amino acid derivative that brightens the skin and fades the appearance of hyperpigmentation; and Vitamin E, an antioxidant that protects against UV damage, calms and hydrates the skin. This unique combination of ingredients is a powerful force against the dark mark!

Why not just use Lighten Up to work on dark spots? Lighten Up is specifically formulated to target residual blood and blood vessels whereas DMD is specifically formulated to target melanin. They also target different layers of the skin.

DMD works better when used in conjunction with Clear Out. Clear Out sloughs away dead skin cells so that DMD can more readily absorb into the skin.

Pro tip! Even though the DMD was designed to target post-acne brown scars, it is also very effective against sun spots, age spots and melasma.



Rated 4.25 out of 5

Fades the appearance of post-acne brown scars
Improves skin texture
Reduces the chance of collecting stubborn brown pigmentation

One bottle = 3 months
(varies based on the number of brown scars)

Protective Moisturizer to Strengthen Your Lipid Barrier

Despite many misconceptions, it is absolutely *essential* to moisturize. Oily, dry, combination or anywhere in-between, Clearly Basics' Protective Moisturizer repairs, renews and rejuvenates all skin types.

Formulated with resveratrol, an antioxidant that relieves redness and protects the skin from UV damage; peptides, which are essential in repairing, rejuvenating and strengthening the skin, as well as boosting collagen; and aloe vera, a powerful antioxidant that absorbs free radicals, harmful UV radiation and fosters healing of the skin, the Protective Moisturizer is jam-packed with ingredients that repair and nourish.

For those with sensitive or combination skin, the Protective Moisturizer is particularly essential. Weak lipid barriers and an accumulation of dead skin cells are one of the biggest triggers of acne. More severe breakouts occur on dry areas.

The Protective Moisturizer is designed to strengthen the lipid barrier; a critical step in stopping future breakouts.

Pro tip! By strengthening the lipid barrier, the Protective Moisturizer reduces the skin's sensitivity, thus reducing the tendency for your skin to flush/blush.



Rated 5 out of 5

Reduces general redness, blushing, flushing
Brightens skin tone
Evens out skin tone
Improves texture
Long lasting, dries with a matte finish
Reduces sensitivity
Non-comedogenic
One bottle = 3 months.

Matte Hydrator for Oil-Free Hydration

The Matte Hydrator is an oil-free serum containing only the good stuff: 100% Ultra Low Molecular Weight (ULMW) Hyaluronic Acid.

Why moisturize if you have oily skin? Moisturize proactively so that the skin does not need to produce as much oil to serve the same function.

Hyaluronic acid (HA) is a natural component in skin. This amazing ingredient holds 1000x its weight in water and keeps tissues hydrated.

A regular-sized HA molecule is too large to absorb into the skin, so it must be micronized in order to penetrate into the skin where it is useful. Without doing this, the HA never penetrates into skin and forms a sticky film on top instead.

At Clearly Basics, we have taken no shortcuts. With only 5 ingredients included in the Matte Hydrator, this is the purest formula composed of only the good-stuff that will get penetrating results for hydrated, matte skin.



Rated 5 out of 5

Reduces oily sheen
Serum Formula
Easily absorbs into the skin
Clean, matte finish
100% ULMW hyaluronic acid
Medical grade
Five ingredients Only

One bottle = 3 months.

Balancing Cleanser for a shot of AHA+BHA

Clearly Basics' Balancing Cleanser is a soap-free formulation that contains AHA+BHA. It is effective at breaking down oil, yet gentle enough for even the most sensitive skin types.

What's AHA+BHA? This formulation contains 2% glycolic acid, an alpha-hydroxy acid (AHA) that focuses on skin renewal by breaking down dead skin cells, regulating melanin and stimulating the production of collagen. It also contains 2% salicylic acid, a beta-hydroxy acid (BHA) that break down oils. BHA's have anti-bacterial and anti-inflammatory properties.

While most high-end cleansers may contain either an AHA or a BHA, the Balancing Cleanser is unique in that it contains both an AHA+BHA.

Even with these power-packed ingredients, it's not too strong. It even works for those with sensitive skin because it is loaded with botanical complexes that minimize irritation.

Pro tip! Leave this formulation on for 30 minutes for a gentle peel.



Rated 5 out of 5

**Soap-free formulation
(gentle yet effective)
Improves skin tone
Refines pores
Contains 2% salicylic acid
and 2% glycolic acid
Readies skin for use of the
Clearly Basics' lineup**

One bottle = 6 weeks.

Clarifying Toner for Hydration and Refinement

Toners have gotten a bad rap for containing drying alcohol. However, not all toners are the same. Clearly Basics' Clarifying Toner is mostly comprised of rose water and cucumber water which serve to hydrate and clarify the skin. witch hazel is also added as a natural astringent to minimize the visibility of pores.

So...what is a toner? A toner primes your skin's pH to allow for better absorption of other products in your skincare routine.



Rated 5 out of 5

Readies skin for use of the
Clearly Basics' lineup
Softens & conditions
Refines pores
Tightens pores
Restores hydration

One bottle = 6 weeks.

Application Order

With so many tools available, how do they work together? Here's a general guide. Move a product up if you want to put more emphasis on a specific formulation. Skin will most readily absorb the formulation put on immediately after cleansing.

The Morning Routine

Cleanse

Tone (optional dependent upon skin type and need)

Spot Treat (Lighten Up or Dark Mark Defense)

Moisturize (Protective Moisturizer for drier/combo skin; Matte Hydrator for oily/combo skin)

Apply SPF (minimum SPF 35, non-comedogenic and broad spectrum)

Wait at least 3 minutes for the sunblock to settle, apply makeup, if desired!

The Evening Routine

Cleanse

Tone

Spot Treat

Clear Out (evening only)

Moisturize

Do note the Lighten Up goes on red scars while the DMD goes on brown scars. There should be little overlap between the two even though they are in the same step.



Medical-Grade Ingredients

As every formulation in the Clearly Basics' lineup contains medical grade ingredients (US Pharmacopeia or British Pharmacopeia certified), it is important to give skin time to adapt to our formulations.

For **Lighten Up** and **Dark Mark Defense**, initially use only 1x per day in the evening. Once skin becomes more accustomed, apply these two formulations both morning and evening.

For **Clear Out**, start off with a small, pea-sized drop every other night or every three nights. As skin adjusts to the strength of the formulation (typically 7 to 10 days), gradually increase to every night usage. Avoid application near parts of the face where the skin is particularly thin—the edges of your eyes, nose and mouth.

For other Clearly Basics products (as well as any other skincare product), spot test behind the ear or on the collar of the neck to ensure that there is no negative reaction. As always, if irritation persists for more than 5 minutes, wash off the product and space out application to every other evening. Applying a moisturizer before applying any product will also reduce the absorption and give skin time to adjust. After 7 to 9 days, skin should no longer react.

Lastly, give the products time to work. It's easy to be eager to see immediate results, but meaningful, lasting results take time. All Clearly Basics' formulations are designed to follow the skin's natural cycle, so allow three to five months before determining results.



Managing the Purge

As the name suggests, Clear Out will force out the clogs currently trapped inside pores. This “purging” peaks at week 5 with a second smaller peak at week 8. By the end of week 10, skin has turned over a new layer that is less acne prone.

It’s natural to fear the purge initially, but this process clears the clogs that would have surfaced later as even larger pimples if they were left in your pores.

Make sure to diligently apply Lighten Up once the pimples have flattened. Lighten Up was specifically designed to fade the appearance of post-acne red scars so that skin can quickly get back to its original tone.

With closed comedones or extensive purging, apply Clear Out every other evening for the first month of use. This will draw out clogs slowly and lessen the intensity of the purge.

A further way to reduce the intensity of the purge is to apply benzoyl peroxide (BP) gel in the mornings. Although more irritating than Clear Out, BP will help to further kill off bacteria and dry out pimples that have surfaced.



How Much? Getting the Most Out of Skincare

A little goes a long way with medical-grade ingredients. Use only as much product as is directed on the bottle. Using more will not produce faster results.

In order to get an even spread, pump out a small pea-sized amount and then make 5 to 7 dots on the face. Then spread each dot evenly around its area.

If the need to shelve Clearly Basics products arises, put them in your refrigerator to extend their shelf life.



Chapter 4:

DEALING WITH SCARS

One of the most frustrating aspects of acne is the scarring left behind. That's why we created Lighten Up and Dark Mark Defense for the Clearly Basics toolkit—two products specifically formulated to target scars.

[Return to Menu](#)◀

Red Post-Acne Scars

Inflammation occurs when the body increases blood flow to the tissue surrounding a clogged pore. It is the body's natural response in fighting off bacterial infections.

After the pimple has flattened, it normally takes 8 to 12 weeks for blood vessels to shrink back to their original size. The residual blood and dilated blood vessels cause the post-acne red scar.

To fade the appearance of these red acne scars, use Lighten Up. This unique formulation uses botanical complexes to dissipate residual blood and reduce the appearance of dilated blood vessels: marigold flower, chamomile flower and tea tree oil.

Apply Lighten Up both morning and evening. The lotion does not clog pores and does not irritate sensitive skin. Although results vary for each person, the goal is to see a significant reduction within a month.

Pro tip! It is important to fade red scars quickly as it reduces the chance of UV exposure. Make sure to apply sunblock to protect these scars. A well-formulated sunblock will not cause irritation even if it is applied on top of a scar. Use gentle pressure when applying.



Brown Post-Acne Scars

If a red scar is exposed to UV light, it will start to collect melanin and turn brown. Brown post-acne scars are more stubborn than red acne scars and can last up to two years.

To fade a brown acne scar, use Dark Mark Defense. This formulation penetrates deeper into the epidermis where melanin resides. It uses tranexamic acid to decrease pigment production; 4nBR to inhibit tyrosinase – this essentially starves the scar of further pigment so that the skin can normalize.

Apply Dark Mark Defense both morning and evening. The lotion does not clog pores and does not irritate sensitive skin. Although results vary for each person, the goal is to see a significant reduction within three months.

Pro tip! Most scars are either red or brown so there is not much overlap between the two. Both Lighten Up and Dark Mark Defense are more effective when used in conjunction with Clear Out. Clear Out will slough away dead skin so that both formulations can readily absorb into the skin.



Atrophic Scarring

Often caused by excessive inflammation, picking or popping, atrophic scars are a result of damage to the tissue surrounding the pore.

The best offense against these scars is prevention—in other words, perpetually flushing out dead skin inside the pores so that they cannot build up into a clog.

Physical intervention is necessary in order to stimulate the skin to regrow. Make an appointment with your dermatologist to evaluate treatments that go beyond topical solutions.

Check with a dermatologist for any recommendations on dermal fillers or treatments like trichloroacetic acid to stimulate the reconstruction of skin (TCA CROSS).

Pro tip! Microneedling may help to fill in small, shallow scars, but it will do little for deeper scars.



Hypertrophic Scarring

Opposite of atrophic scars, hypertrophic scars are formed due to an excess of collagen production at the healing site. Hypertrophic scars are much more likely to occur in dark-skinned individuals.

Hypertrophic scars are often difficult to manage and require a visit to the dermatologist. Treatments vary for each patient. Some options that may be recommended include: cortisone injections to help shrink scar tissue or laser treatments.



Chapter 5:
HEALTH AND
LIFESTYLE
HABITS

[Return to Menu](#)◀

Rise and Shine

Good morning! Before you roll out of bed and get the coffee brewing, we recommend switching out the first drink of the day from something caffeinated to a tall glass of water. Why? Staying properly hydrated is not only essential to overall health, but it is majorly essential to glowing, clear skin.

Step 1: Water. In the new and improved morning grab a glass of water first. Don't worry, coffee can come later!

Step 2: Wash Your Face. It can be tempting to get on with morning chores before taking care of your skin, but no more. This morning routine takes five minutes. First, wash your hands with soap and lukewarm water.

Step 3: Spot Treatment. Apply your spot treatment (Lighten Up or Dark Mark Defense). where needed.

Step 4: Moisturize. Oily or dry, combination or clear, moisturizer is a necessity for all skin types. Just like that morning glass of water, skin needs to drink up too.

Step 5: Protect. Top off the five-minute routine with sunscreen. Whether staying inside or spending your day outdoors, never ever skip out on sunscreen. Seriously, you *will* thank us later.



Getting Cleansing Right

Although it seems basic, many people get this crucial step wrong. Cleanse too little and pollutants or debris that can clog pores are left on the skin. Cleanse too much and the skin will go into overdrive in order to produce oil that it has lost.

Frequency. Cleanse only twice per day, once in the morning and once in the evening using lukewarm water. Use a towel to gently pat dry. Clean off the debris and pollutants but avoid irritating any breakouts.

Consider a water-only rinse before a morning workout, and then a proper facewash afterwards.

Type of Cleanser. 90% of the population should use a gentle, non-foaming cleanser. Spend more time working in the cleanser for oily skin. A gentle cleanser may be equally as effective as a strong cleanser if you just spent more time working it into the skin.

After a good cleanse, skin should feel refreshed, supple and primed. If is "squeaky clean" or tight, it may be over-stripped and it will need to produce more oil to compensate.

The extremely oily 10% of the population should opt for a foaming cleanser or one that contains salicylic acid and glycolic acid. Clearly Basics' Cleanser is unique in that it contains both AHA and BHA (most only contain one but not the other), yet it is gentle and does not cause irritation.



Sweat it Out

Exercise is essential to overall health and essential to healthier, clearer, younger-looking skin.

A daily sweat session evens out skin tone, flushes out toxins and calms puffiness. The skin is one of the body's major detoxifiers, so working out to the point of perspiration helps to flush out and remove toxins from the skin. In fact, one of the best things during a workout is when the skin gets flush—the increased blood flow is a great cocktail of essential nutrients, hormones and oxygen.

A common misconception is that sweat leads to acne. In fact, it can do just the opposite. Some blood-pumping cardio can reduce inflammation, one of the major causes of acne, as well as level out cortisol, the “stress” hormone that also plays a major role in triggering acne flare-ups.

Pro tip! For early morning workouts, start the day with just a simple rinse (no cleanser). Then use a proper face wash and apply makeup post-workout.



Eat and Glow!

Strong skin can be attributed, in large part, to two major things: drinking water and a healthy diet. As stated by Samantha Heller, MS, RD, a clinical nutritionist at NYU Medical Center: "Everything you eat becomes a part of not only your inner being, but the outer fabric of your body as well. The healthier the foods are that you consume, the better your skin will look."

Balance is the key. Fruits like blackberries, blueberries, strawberries and plums are essential for their high levels of antioxidants. Salmon, walnuts and flaxseeds for their fatty acids. High-protein foods like lean meats and poultry have a low glycemic index, which lowers the levels of acne-causing hormones.¹

Avoid foods that are high on the glycemic index (GI). These foods have been shown to trigger sebum glands to produce more oil. Some of these foods include: pasta, white rice, white bread and sugar. ¹

Limit the amount of caffeine and alcohol. While they don't cause acne, they can exacerbate its presence on the skin. Also limiting the intake of high-glycemic carbohydrates, saturated fats and trans fats will play a major role in helping to clear the skin from the inside out. ¹



1. Smith, R. N., Braue, A., Varigos, G. & Mann, N. J. The effect of a low glycemic load diet on acne vulgaris and the fatty acid composition of skin surface triglycerides. *J. Dermatol. Sci.* 50, 41-52 (2008). <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/18178063>

Let it Breathe

Makeup is great! But sometimes the best thing for skin is to go makeup-free. Let it *breathe*.

Regularly going makeup-free can decrease oiliness, clogged pores and pimples. Why? Makeup creates a barrier that sits on top of the skin thereby increasing oil production. Skipping out on makeup also eliminates the potentially damaging effects of over-washing and stripping the skin when cleansing.

When it's time to apply makeup, ensure products and applicators are clean. Bacteria can live and thrive in makeup brushes, palettes and applicators.

A little breathing time lets the skin reset!



Don't Squeeze

Resist the urge to pick or pop pimples. This is tough. Squeezing a pimple or scratching at a scab risks introducing more bacteria into the area and damage to the surrounding tissue.

Let the azelaic acid in Clear Out do its work to flatten a pimple that flares up. For a further boost, use benzoyl peroxide as a spot treatment during the day.

Pro tip! Put away the close-up mirror and stand 1 meter away from the bathroom mirror so that you see yourself just as others do.



Clear the Counter

When it comes to acne-prone skin, **less is more.**

Resist the urge to throw multiple skincare products at a breakout in the hopes of a quick fix. Do not use multiple acne treatments together unless they were designed to work together. This will reduce the chance of complications during healing and simplify what is and is not working.

To make things easier, we've combined multiple active ingredients together in Clearly Basics' formulations. We have also balanced the concentration of each ingredient so that they drive the best results while minimizing the side effects.

Give each new product a 3-month trial to see the difference.



Shade and Sunblock

Let's make one thing perfectly clear – **no tan is a healthy tan.**

Exposure to UV rays and pollutants damages skin. It accumulates over time and skin will start to show the signs of aging.

Wear sunscreen even for short periods outdoors. UVA light penetrates through clouds and windows. It does not darken skin or leave a sunburn, but it attacks the collagen structure of the skin.

SPF rating only covers UVB protection. Whereas the PA rating system covers UVA protection. Choose a sunblock that has both SPF 35+ and a PA+++ rating.

Many people with acne worry that a sunblock will clog pores and cause further breakouts. However, a well-formulated sunblock that is labeled “non-comedogenic” or “does not clog pores,” should not cause issues.

Pro tip! The best sunblock for you is one that you can use every day.



Glass-Half-Full

As with many things in life, stressing about acne can make it worse. Try to maintain a positive outlook. There are lots of solutions to reach your skincare goals and you will get there!

Acne is a common occurrence, but it doesn't have to be permanent.

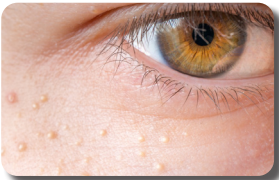
Exercise, drink water, get restful and restorative sleep. Take a step back and look at the bigger picture to help lighten the path ahead of you.

Pro Tip! Acne can be very isolating, but know you are not alone. Reach out. There are many in the skin positivity community who are happy to share their stories.



Take it Off

It's been an exhausting day and the bed is calling! But don't forget the cardinal rule: don't go to bed with your makeup on. Take the time to remove makeup and apply your skincare.



Where possible, minimize the use of makeup removers unless necessary. Makeup removers tend to dull the skin. Additionally, many women struggle with milia, particularly around the eyes from using makeup remover.

For the evening cleanse, take the time with a gentle cleanser to really work it in. That should remove most makeup. Experiment with the duration of the cleanse. Run a damp cotton pad across the face to test if it comes out clean and free of makeup. Try to double the amount of time cleansing in the evening as compared to the morning to lessen the need for makeup remover.

Pro tip! Gently work in your cleanser without friction so as not to damage delicate skin.



Beauty Sleep

Being well-rested is absolutely essential to waking up feeling and looking your very best. As stated by Debra Jaliman, M.D. and author of *Skin Rules*, "[beauty sleep] is essential for repairing the skin." Sleep gives skin the opportunity to recover from exposure to the environment it has confronted during the day.

The recommendation? Seven to nine hours of sleep every single night. A solid night's sleep is not necessarily going to prevent acne, but it will strengthen the immune system and reduce overall stress; two key factors which may contribute to acne.

Develop a nighttime routine: An hour before bed, put the phone away and unwind. Avoid caffeine. Allow the body to prepare itself for sleep. (After you wash your face, of course!)

You deserve a good night's sleep—and so does your skin.



Chapter 6: WHEN TO CALL IN THE DERM

This guide is for education and information purposes. Refer to your physician for any changes in your health. If acne continues unabated, it is time for a visit to the dermatologist.


[Return to Menu](#)◀

During your visit, explain the steps already taken over the last 3 to 5 months, the duration of each step, and how the breakouts responded along the way.

Here is the algorithm which dermatologists use to treat acne:

Medscape

Acne treatment algorithm



	Mild		Moderate		Severe
	Comedonal	Papular/pustular	Papular/pustular	Nodular [†]	Nodular/conglobate
First choice [‡]	Topical retinoid	Topical retinoid + topical antimicrobial	Oral antibiotic + topical retinoid +/- BPO	Oral antibiotic + topical retinoid +/- BPO	Oral isotretinoin [§]
Alternatives [‡]	Azelaic acid or salicylic acid	Alt. topical antimicrobial agent + alt. topical retinoid or azelaic acid [¶]	Alt. oral antibiotic + alt. topical retinoid +/- BPO	Oral isotretinoin or alt. oral antibiotic + alt. topical retinoid +/- BPA/azelaic acid [¶]	High-dose oral antibiotic + topical retinoid + BPO
Alternatives for females ^{‡,¶}	See first choice	See first choice	Oral anti-androgen + topical retinoid/azelaic acid [¶] +/- BPO	Oral antiandrogen + topical retinoid +/- oral antibiotic +/- alt. antimicrobial	High-dose oral anti-androgen + topical retinoid +/- alt. topical antimicrobial
Maintenance therapy	Topical retinoid		Topical retinoid +/- BPO		

Source: Expert Rev Clin Pharmacol © 2010 Expert Reviews Ltd

If you are using Clearly Basics' products, know that Clear Out's formulation contains a topical retinoid, azelaic acid and salicylic acid.

For Clearly Basics' Users

Depending on how your skin responded to Clear Out, the dermatologist may prescribe a topical cream or jump straight to oral medication.

Prescription medications require a doctor's oversight as they carry potentially serious side effects. Your dermatologist will work with you to understand these risks as compared to the potential outcomes.

For red or brown post-acne scars, Clearly Basics users who also use prescription medication often combine the Protective Moisturizer and Lighten Up to fight off red scarring. For older/brown scars, it is common for our users to pair their prescriptions with Dark Mark Defense.



Chapter 7: YOUR SKINCARE JOURNEY

[Return to Menu](#)◀

Feel Good Products that Are Not Acne Treatments

It's also important to discuss skincare products that are often touted for acne treatment. Although they may provide a feel-good experience, these products do not address the underlying issues that cause acne.

Scrubs: While it is tempting to scrub away skin woes, scrubs cannot clean out the dead skin inside the pore where the real issue lies. Put away the scrub as we do not want to irritate and further inflame existing pimples.

Clay Masks: These products are fun to apply, but they only temporarily soak up oil and give skin a tingling or conditioning sensation. These effects are usually gone after a couple hours. Acne requires consistent, long-term care that masks cannot provide.

Face Masks: Although some may contain acne-fighting ingredients, they are generally not left on the skin long enough to penetrate into the pore where the real issues lie. In general, masks do little but offer a few hours of conditioning to your skin.

Pore Strips: Despite oddly-satisfying videos of pore strips pulling out all the bad stuff hidden beneath the skin, clogs are often too deep for the pore strip to successfully get rid of them. They are simply ripping off the tip of the clog. Pore strips can also exacerbate sensitive skin, particularly rosacea-prone skin.

DIY Masks: While it's true that a healthy diet supports healing in acne-prone skin, generally, the vitamins or anti-oxidants in the fruit/vegetables used in homemade masks may vary too widely to be consistent and effective.



Success!

Once there have been no breakouts for three consecutive months, decrease the use of Clear Out to every other evening. Each bottle will then last six months.

In addition to being the gold-standard in acne, retinol is the gold standard for anti-aging. The medical grade retinol in the Clear Out helps to boost collagen production and aids in cell turnover. The gentle, perpetual facial provided by Clear Out will even out skin texture, brighten skin tone and fight off the appearance of sun spots, fine lines and wrinkles.

In a recent article in The Huffington Post, dermatologist and assistant professor at the Boston University School of Medicine, Dr. Emmy Graber notes about retinoids: "I can always tell when a woman uses these. She'll have that dewy, fresh-faced look – like she just had a facial." And Dr. Brooke Jackson, a dermatologist and associate professor at UNC Chapel Hill continued: "I don't know anyone over the age of 25 who could not benefit from a nightly retinol product."¹

Happy Clear Skin Days to You!



1. Article Source: <https://m.huffpost.com/us/entry/5845764>

Let's keep in touch!

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