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the Girl Who Faced
Down the Taliban

Gift Guide
59 Easy Ideas for
Picky People

Guy Pull
Why They
Are So
Psyched & Frustrated
About Me



Facial oil devotee
Doutzen Kroes

The Surprising Thing You Should Use on Your Skin

It's face oil, and experts everywhere say it can make any skin issue (even acne!) better.

By Maureen Choi

Most of us recoil at the thought of slathering oil on our face. (Didn't we spend ages 12 to 20 trying to get rid of it?) But then, a few years back, models, fashion-world makeup artists, and celebrity facialists alike started (and religiously continued) to tout the cure-all abilities of oils: "I use it as makeup primer for all complexions," makeup artist Tom Pecheux declared backstage at Derek Lam's fall show, as he massaged a sumptuous golden liquid into models' skin, before foundation. "It softens little lines, helps control shine, and just makes skin look amazing." Supermodel Doutzen Kroes, above, swears by a new mixed-oil blend from L'Oréal Paris for long flights; she rubs it in during takeoff to keep her *Continued on next page* ▶

skin supple. And West Palm Beach, Florida-based celebrity aesthetician Tammy Fender even recommends oil for treating *oily* skin. "Nothing cleans your face better," she insists. Fact is, the oil industry, so to speak, is booming: Retail-trends agency NPD Group reported \$22.2 million in U.S. department-store sales of skin care oils in the year ending August 2013 (up from \$7.6 million five years ago). Ready to give oils a go? We polled top skin pros on exactly how to make the most of them for every skin type and issue.

If you have dry skin...

Think avocado, sea buckthorn, and argan oils are your new best friends. "They're packed with essential fatty acids to hydrate and repair barrier function," says Fender. To get the best results, warm up three to four drops between your fingertips and gently press them into clean, slightly damp skin. (PS: This feels freaking luxurious.) To enhance the long-term benefits, layer an oil over your favorite serum or retinoid at night. "Oils help drive lipid-soluble anti-aging ingredients like vitamins A and E into the skin," says Houston-based dermatologist Jennifer Segal, M.D. Or choose a new anti-aging hybrid formula suited to dry skin. We like Dior Capture Totale Haute Nutrition Oil Serum (\$145, dior.com), which boosts cell regeneration and smells amazing.

If your skin is oily—or prone to breakouts...

Repeat after us: "Oils will not give me zits." (Well, most oils won't; avoid synthetics like mineral oil and petrolatum.) In fact, certain plant-based oils actually help decongest pores and dial down the production of sebum. Here's why: Oils are like magnets, so the ones you apply bind to the ones naturally in your skin and help dissolve them, explains Washington, D.C., dermatologist Elizabeth Tanzi, M.D. Instead of a foaming face wash, start with a detoxifying cleansing oil that contains sunflower (we like MAC Cleanse Off Oil Tranquil, \$30, maccosmetics.com, and La Mer The Cleansing Oil, \$75, cremedelamer.com) to "pull out pore-blocking sebum and get rid of dirt, makeup, and sunscreen," according to Fender. Follow it with a lightweight dry oil like jojoba (it'll sink right in and won't feel greasy), which has astringent properties and is almost identical in structure to your own. *Continued on next page* ▶



Your Face's Best Oil

- 1. To boost radiance:** L'Oréal Paris Age Perfect Glow Renewal Facial Oil, a.k.a. Doutzen's go-to (\$25, at drugstores)
- 2. To get a glow:** Dior Capture Totale Oil Serum (\$145, dior.com)
- 3. To calm redness:** Bobbi Brown Soothing Cleansing Oil (\$42, bobbibrown.com)
- 4. To prep and protect:** Erno Laszlo Phelityl Pre-Cleansing Oil (\$45, nordstrom.com)
- 5. To smooth lines:** Clarins Santal Face Treatment Oil (\$50, clarins.com)
- 6. To purify pores:** Elemis Pro-Collagen Cleansing Balm (\$60, timetospa.com)
- 7. To deep-cleanse:** SK-II Facial Treatment Cleansing Oil (\$60, sk-ii.com)



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sebum, making it less likely to irritate skin. And finally, our favorite news: Oils can actually treat pimples. "Antiseptic tea tree oil is just as effective as 5 percent benzoyl peroxide on acne without overdrying," says Dr. Tanzi. Our pick: The Body Shop Tea Tree Oil (\$9.50, thebodyshop-usa.com).

If your skin type is combination...

Simultaneously combating an oily T-zone and dry cheeks can be tricky, but oils like grape seed, carrot seed, and rosemary are the superheroes of skin care, "preventing dryness and breakouts," says Paris-based facialist Joëlle Ciocco, who suggests applying them on parched areas first, then swiping whatever's left lightly on forehead, nose, and chin. (Ciocco, by the way, helped L'Oréal Paris design the combo of eight oils in the Age Perfect mix on the previous page.) Thinking of being your own mix master? Hit the health food store to shop. One of the best sources: Whole Foods—try their 365 Everyday Value Essential Oils (\$10–\$19 each for 2 oz.). For your custom blend, mix 10 to 12 drops of essentials (we love bergamot—it's gentle yet loaded with vitamin C to lighten dark spots) with an ounce of grape-seed oil, and store in a dark glass bottle.

If you have red, itchy, or hypersensitive skin...

Then choose anti-inflammatory face oils like sweet almond and chamomile; "they soothe the skin and actually help prevent irritation," says Laurence Cassereau, research scientist at French skin care company Darphin, who recommends Darphin Organic Chamomile Aromatic Care (\$70, darphin.com). And consider blends with antioxidant-rich rose hip, neroli, or pomegranate (found in, respectively, Origins Plantscription Youth-Renewing Face Oil, \$50, origins.com; Tammy Fender Capillary Strengthening Blend Formula No. CB-459, \$80, tammyfender.com; and Badger Damascus Rose Face Oil, \$14, badgerbalm.com) to help strengthen skin against the elements. Just take heed: No product is a substitute for sunblock, so always finish your morning skin care routine with SPF 30+.

The point, in other words? Oils are your friend—especially if your skin has been depleted by weather, stress, pollutants, or harsh treatments such as peels and microdermabrasion. As Fender says: "Oils feed your face." ■

A Glowy-Skin Cheat Sheet

How to use oils the *right* way:

Only use natural plant- and nut-based oils—not synthetic ones. Scan the ingredient label for petrolatum and mineral oil, which will clog your pores and exacerbate breakouts.

● If you're applying a face oil in the morning, layer it on *top* of any anti-aging product and *under* your makeup or sunscreen. Pat or massage the oil on, then wait at least two minutes to let it fully absorb before adding anything else.

Look to classic treatments like olive oil (Cleopatra was a fan) and camellia (Japanese geishas swore by it). In cold, dry climates, add a few drops to a dollop of your favorite night cream before massaging into skin for an extra hydration boost. We love this trick on airplanes too.

Spread the wealth: Rub any leftover bits of oil into cuticles, elbows, knees, heels, soles of feet—anywhere you find a rough spot. Even dab some oil on the ends of your hair; it'll make frays or split ends look smoother.