SKIN_CARE

My Skincare to yours: the beginning

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One winter afternoon, I sat in my backyard, old enough to worry about what those sneaky UV rays might be plotting against my skin. Would they stage a full-blown rebellion in the future? That thought faded, until five years later, during the 2020 pandemic. While the world was freaking out over a virus, I was waging my own war against my skin. Confidence? Shattered. Social life? Ghosted. I was well on my way to becoming a full-time anti-social hermit.

Fast forward to now, where I?m the sunscreen police in my house where no one steps out without SPF on my watch! I not only feel more confident in my skin but have worked hard to heal and replenish it. Back when I was in the trenches of skincare battles (still visiting occasionally), I thought fixing my skin would mean never worrying about it again. Spoiler alert: it didn?t. What stuck with me, though, was the knowledge, the experience, and the dubious honor of being the family?s and friend?s unofficial skincare guru.

Skincare is now a permanent resident in my life, part self-care, part self-acceptance. Let?s be honest, it?s hard to feel like a boss when your face decides to showcase its rebellion to the world. It still gets me sometimes, but now I meet it head-on with courage and a dash of humor. And hey, here?s to hoping my daily 11:11 wish for flawless skin doesn?t go to voicemail.

So, ladies, that?s your gossip fix! And for the gentlemen rolling their eyes at "skincare is girly," hold tight we?ve got tea to spill just for you. Picture this: me, surrounded by a battlefield of empty skincare bottles from the past few years, ready to prove I?ve seen it all, the worst, the best, the "meh," and those "why did I even buy this?" moments.

Here?s my first piece of wisdom as a seasoned skincare enthusiast: *be patient.* No, really, skincare isn?t a Netflix series; you won?t see results overnight. It took me 2?3 years to get where I am today and trust me, I?m counting the mental breakdowns too.

Next, for the love of your pores, don?t turn your bathroom shelf into a mini Sephora. Your skin needs oxygen, not a 10-step product smothering. Start simple. Get to know your skin like it?s a first date, slowly, cautiously, and without overwhelming it. Once you two are vibing, then maybe introduce those fancy serums with even fancier names. But and this is a big BUT, always patch test first. Trust me, you don?t want your face throwing a tantrum because you skipped that step.

All right, skincare rookies and pros alike, let?s tackle the million-dollar question: With a gazillion products from a bazillion brands promising eternal youth and goddess-like glow, how do you pick the best ones for *you*? Oh, and how often should you use them? And how much? Don?t panic, let?s break it down.

Step one: Understand your skin. Sounds obvious, right? But seriously, ask yourself: Is it normal, combination, dry, or oily? And no, don?t just copy your favorite influencer?s routine because they look like a glowing angel on your feed. Do oil slicks on your T-zone? Congrats, you?re on Team Oily. Dry patches? Welcome to Team Sahara.

For my dry-skinned folks: moisturize like it?s your full-time job. And here?s a seasonal hack you probably didn?t know: your moisturizer needs a wardrobe change too! In summer, gel-based moisturizers are your BFF. Come winter, switch to a creamy one, think of it as bundling up your skin for the cold.

Now, here?s a hot take: Never trust a product just because it smells heavenly. That?s what your perfume is for, not your moisturizer. Fragrance might smell like paradise but could lead to skincare hell.

And for all my acne-prone pals, pay attention to this magic word: **non-comedogenic**. Translation? It won?t clog your pores. Trust me, your skin will thank you.

Hmm, why haven?t I sung the praises of sunscreen yet? Honestly, I think sunscreen is seriously underrated. There are two types of sunscreens: chemical-based and physical (or mineral-based) sunscreen. Having tried both, I can confidently say they?re both equally magical in their own ways.

Physical sunscreens are like your skin?s personal armor, they stay on top, creating a barrier without soaking in. While they might leave a slight white cast, it?s a small price for that extra protection from the sun. Think of it as an invisible shield that keeps harmful rays at bay!

On the other hand, chemical sunscreens are the smooth talkers. They sink right into your skin, doing their thing below the surface. They?re lighter, so you don?t get that heavy, greasy feeling, but if you have sensitive skin, they might cause a bit of drama.

Both types have their ups and downs, so it all comes down to what your skin needs. But no matter which one you choose, the key takeaway is this: sunscreen is a MUST. Don't leave the house without it- your future self will thank you for not looking like a raisin later.

Keep it simple, know your skin, and don?t get enchanted by a pretty package or heavenly scent. Skincare isn?t about showing off; it?s about showing up for your skin, that is. So, go forth, hydrate, and may your skin glow like your Wi-Fi signal on a good day!

Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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