



For the neck and décolletage, doctors recommend products with niacin, which has been shown to improve texture and tone.

• **Clear the way.** "Extend your daily exfoliant, whether it's with a cleansing brush or a glycolic acid, all the way down to the top of your chest. Sloughing away the dead-skin layer allows active ingredients to absorb faster."

• **Get the strong stuff.** "The skin on the neck and chest is thin, so sun damage is more apparent and harder to repair. Both the neck and chest require stronger formulations to reverse aging. Dedicated neck creams are more concentrated and powerful than most face creams, but some facial formulas with retinol, such as RoC Retinol Correxion Deep Wrinkle Serum, have been shown to work on the neck and chest, too."

• **Put peptides to work.** "One of my favorite ingredients for treating damage below the jawline is tetrapeptides, like the ones in StriVectin-TL. There's plenty of science to show they help make new collagen and elastic tissue,

which is what the neck and chest need to look firmer and younger."

• **Strengthen skin.** "Niacin is a B vitamin that, until recently, we could not get through the skin barrier. Now a new delivery system, in the Nia 24 and StriVectin-TL lines, means it can penetrate the epidermis and strengthen the skin barrier. I've seen it dramatically improve the texture and tone of the neck and décolletage."

• **Watch your wardrobe.** "When you treat skin below the jawline with anti-aging ingredients, consider the fabrics you wear. Anything scratchy, like wool, can cause irritation."

## Face Oils

Those tiny bottles of oil that promise a youthful complexion are not of the snake variety anymore. Dermatologist **David Colbert**, the founder of Colbert M.D. Skincare, who has

studied the skin-care and anti-aging benefits of face oils for 15 years, explains how they benefit the skin.

• **Free-radical protection.** "Many botanical oils, including argan, passion fruit, and African marula oils, are potent antioxidants. In the morning, massage a few drops onto clean skin, wait two minutes, and apply sunscreen or foundation as usual."

• **Improved skin tolerance.** "Oils can prevent the irritation caused by some anti-aging ingredients. Argan, yangu, and borage-seed oils all decrease inflammation. Smooth one on after your nightly anti-aging treatment—a few drops will be enough to cover your face and calm the skin."

• **Plumping skin.** "In your late 30s, wrinkles suddenly look deeper because skin's natural oils decrease, the moisture barrier breaks down, and skin dries out. Most creams contain a little oil, but not enough to make a big difference in

water loss. Because oils are lipophilic—or fat-loving—they pass through the lipid layer of the skin faster, preventing water loss and plumping skin with moisture more effectively. Olive and coconut oils are great moisturizers."

• **Better absorption.** "If you apply an oil before your anti-aging cream, the oil molecules behave like tiny Trojan horses—tricking the skin into letting active ingredients, like retinol, glycolic acid, and vitamin C, deeper into the skin and closer to the collagen-producing fibroblasts. All without irritating the surface."



TOP FACE OILS

1 Darphin Chamomile Aromatic Care  
2 Colbert M.D. Illumino Face Oil 3 Fresh Seaberry Moisturizing Facial Oil

## Inflammation

The link between inflammation and aging is a tricky one. A controlled dose of inflammation (from a peel, microdermabrasion, or a laser) can make you look younger, but too much has the reverse effect. **Fredric Brandt**, a dermatologist in New York City and Miami, explains how to make it your skin's best friend—not its worst enemy.

• **Good inflammation.** "Inflammation is good for your skin when it's short in duration—a few days at most. It's a response to injury, so it initiates your skin's repair process, and that includes boosting collagen production, which smooths and firms your skin. The best way to do this is with an in-office laser treatment, but you can get good results at home with a mild glycolic, lactic, or salicylic acid peel, a microdermabrasion scrub, or a home laser device, like the PaloVia."

• **Bad inflammation.** "Chronic inflammation is the bad kind. There are all sorts of causes, including skin diseases like rosacea; stress, which causes your

## Plant Life

As director of the McDaniel Institute of Anti-Aging Research in Virginia Beach, dermatologist **David McDaniel** has the inside track on the newest and most potent ingredients. And right now, he's excited about stem cells in plants:

"A lot of the big cosmetic companies are in the process of setting up plant stem cell research divisions, and that's because while botanicals are powerful, the potency of an ingredient varies widely depending on where, say, the blueberry or coffee cherry was grown," he says. "Taking the stem cell allows us not only to standardize an ingredient but can also make it more potent—signaling repair of cells and even DNA deep within the skin. **Lancôme Absolue L'Extrait** is one of the first to do this well; the cream has rose stem cells, which they've shown can firm skin. Another is the **Origins Plantscription SPF 25 Anti-aging Cream**, with raspberry plant stem cells shown to smooth fine lines. This is just the beginning—plant stem cells are the new frontier for anti-aging."

body to produce hormones that affect insulin levels; smoking; alcohol; and sun damage. Glycation, which you get from eating too much sugar, is another cause of inflammation. Sugar molecules bond to skin and break down collagen and elastin. Good habits are the way to avoid the bad inflammation: Cut down on alcohol, wear sunscreen, and eliminate white foods, sucrose, and fructose from your diet. And do two things that have been shown to reduce inflammation: Exercise and take three grams of omega-3s a day. Topically, I recommend products with anti-inflammatory ingredients, like green tea, grape seed, pomegranate, pycnogenol, ceramides, and aloe."

## Glycolic Peels

Play a quick game of word association with any beauty editor, and "**Dennis Gross**" will match up with "at-home peel" every time. The dermatologist and founder of 900 5th Dermatology in New York City, who developed one of the first at-home peels, explains everything we need to know about dropping acid—on our face.

• **Peels can help shrink your pores.** "Not everyone realizes that there are benefits to peels beyond the immediate skin brightening: The pores expand as sebum and dirt accumulate in them—and the older you get, the more likely

they are to remain enlarged. Daily peels can actually shrink them."

• **The more (acids), the merrier.** "You'll get better results from a peel that combines several beta and alpha hydroxy acids, including glycolic, rather than one acid at a high strength. Not only do the acids work synergistically, but a combination—at lower strength—is less irritating, too."

• **Your postpeel routine matters.** "A minute or so after the peel, the dead layer of cells have been removed and the newer, fresher ones are primed for anti-aging ingredients. Apply a serum with peptides, retinol, or vitamin C, followed by a barrier-boosting moisturizer."

• **It's possible to OD.** "The best peels deliver the same amount of acid every time, so look for one that comes on presoaked pads or in a controlled delivery system. Pouring a formula onto a cotton ball, it's very easy to overwhelm the skin."



TOP AT-HOME PEELS

1 Avon Anew Clinical Advanced Retexturizing Peel 2 Dr. Dennis Gross Skincare Alpha Beta Daily Face Peel 3 Philosophy The Microdelivery Triple-Acid Brightening Peel