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Client: Late 40's

Skin Concerns: Fine lines, dullness, uneven skin tone, lack of firmness, dehydration

Treatment Frequency: Monthly

Number of treatments performed: 1 session

Results:

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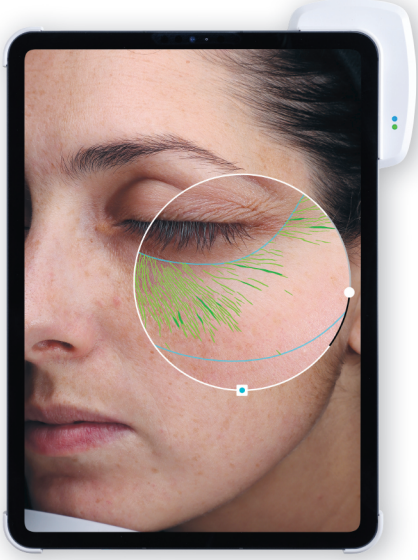

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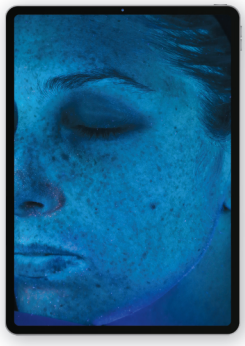

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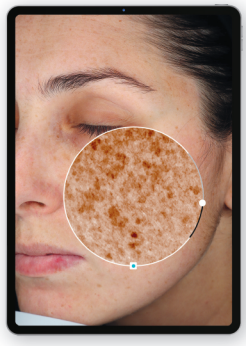

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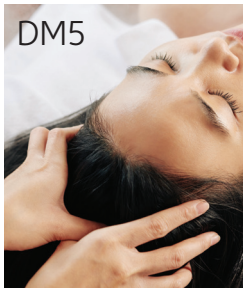





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KITTY LIN
Managing Editor
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Letter from the Editor

Skin Inc.'s Managing Editor Kitty Lin shares what's on her mind this month.

When we say this issue is about acne, it can feel like one of those really cut-and-dry issues. Acne as a condition brings very specific things to mind: specific topicals, specific ingredients, specific protocols. Of course, as we all know, for how often we talk about it, it's a complicated condition with a lot of different ways in which it can be analyzed. Yes, this issue is about acne, but in a meta-sense, this issue is like acne.

When we talk about this condition and how to care for it, we're not designing a manual or prescribing a course of treatment. We're taking a look at a complex condition that affects tons of people in a myriad of ways, and we're taking a three-dimensional look at it.

What sort of high-tech treatments and non-traditional regimens are being used now that we all know what we know? Which of these treatments have gotten the gilded seal of approval from public figures and cultural pillars, and how has that shaped industry attitudes towards skin care and acne treatments?

In this issue, we talk about how a solid, science-backed regimen is necessary, but not sufficient without a genuine connection with clients and a safe space for them to be vulnerable in treatment rooms. Trust is paramount in the current climate, where consumer demands for transparency and simplicity have only grown in this age of product fatigue.

When we look at what clients need, we inevitably see the intersection and value of evaluating what we need, as well. This issue features gifted industry professionals who've grappled with obstacles that led them to become the change they needed in the industry, proving that when we're the best version of ourselves we can be, our communities benefit.

Our June issue is about acne, but more than that, it's about fostering good habits that can help us close the difference between who we are and who we want to be every day, while doing the same for our clients. You can say this is the acne issue–but you could just as easily say this is the growth issue, or the community issue. Take your pick!

Wishing you well,



Kitty S. Lin

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Winter is finally over!

BY KITTY LIN



Winter is finally over! Or mostly anyway, if you're based in Chicago like me. Warmer weather brings out a whole host of changes: the vacation and festival seasons are here, meaning we'll all be spending a lot more time outside and shedding our layers, which requires more sun protection and lighter products that get the job done without weighing us down. With that in mind, here's what's on my radar.

1 Wrinkle Patches

For a quick fix for the upcoming week, wrinkle patches are a great non-invasive way to improve hydration and prevent creasing to erase wrinkles and fine lines. I like to wear mine while I sleep, so a comfortable, breathable fit is key, especially now that temperatures are rising. I try to look for medical-grade patches as well, so I can be certain of the patch's efficacy. While not a replacement for long-term well-aging treatments, my household always keeps these on hand so we can feel confident we're putting our best faces forward.

wrinklesschminkles.com

2 Brightening Peels

Spring means out with the old and in with the new, which is why I love to treat myself to a rejuvenating brightening peel to clear away dead skin. iS Clinical's new Flash Brightening Peel is the one to watch this season. Clients can find their glow at home with this hydrating, antioxidant-rich formula. Get smoother, softer skin and minimize pores with iS Clinical's potent botanical formula. Psst! Your clients with oily skin will love this!

isclinical.com

3 Spot Patches

I swear I'm not trying to make this too patch-heavy, but what can I say? They're convenient! I love hydrocolloid patches personally because whenever I pop one on, I always think I can feel it working. Nothing feels more satisfying in my morning routine than removing a patch after all-night wear and finding a spot has disappeared. Face Reality's new InvisClear Hydrocolloid Spot Patches not only flatten blemishes but protect them from environmental stressors.

facerealityskincare.com

4 Natural Skin Care–That's Still Clinically Effective

We all want to save the world and look good doing it. Thankfully, a lot of the products coming out these days have mastered the art of blending natural ingredients, sustainable practices and clinical efficacy. We love to reap the benefits of an effective formula without the risk of irritation or flakiness, we also love when we can do this and it's not rocket science. GROUND Wellbeing's launched its new Biome range, which keeps sustainability and simplicity at the helm of its skin care solutions.

groundwellbeing.com

5 Eye Creams

It's all in the eyes–especially after a sleepless night. If you know you tend to need a little pick-me-up, then you're in luck. It's important to pick products that stimulate collagen production and improve your skin's elasticity, so you can diminish and prevent the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles. Annemarie Börlind's Natuneo Lifting Eye Cream protects against free radicals to lessen the effects of oxidative stress and aging. I also love the extra richness that comes from eye creams, especially when I switch to a lighter moisturizer in the warmer months.

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Karyna Haiduk

BY KITTY LIN

This week, we sat down with Karyna Haiduk, an aesthetics expert who's distinguished in depilation and brow design. An author and mentor in sugaring, waxing and skin care, in her more than 7 years of experience, she's founded her own professional sugar paste and post-care cosmetics brand, Fast-Silk. Haiduk is a recipient of the Berehynia of Ukraine, an award that acknowledges the distinct efforts of the winner's contributions to the country's development and support. As of 2024, Haiduk was granted the title, Ambassador of Epilation and Depilation, by the Golden Hands of Ukraine.

Skin Inc. (SI): How do you approach hair removal with a client that has severe active acne? Does your approach change depending on if it's face vs. body acne?

Karyna Haiduk (KH): As an experienced depilation specialist, I always approach such cases with great care and an individual strategy. When a client comes to me with severe acne, the first thing I do is assess the condition of their skin—this is absolutely essential. It's important to determine whether the inflammation is in an active phase or already beginning to subside. If the acne is acute and the skin is highly irritated, I usually recommend postponing the procedure and consulting a dermatologist first. The client's health always comes first. My approach definitely differs depending on the area being treated.

For facial areas, especially the cheeks and chin—where the skin is most sensitive—I do not perform hair removal on active breakouts. Doing so can worsen the condition. In some cases, I can carefully treat isolated zones, such as the space between the eyebrows if the skin there is calm. Even then though, I work very gently and avoid anything aggressive.

On the body, for example, the back, buttocks or chest, I evaluate the size and severity of the affected areas. If there are only a few breakouts and they are not inflamed, I may perform sugaring carefully, avoiding the problem spots to prevent irritation or trauma. I always use antiseptics before and after the procedure, wear gloves, maintain strict hygiene and use only disposable materials.

Overall, when working with acne-prone skin, the key is to take your time, listen to the client and their body and be as gentle as possible. Of course, I always give clear aftercare instructions to help avoid complications and ensure the skin heals properly.

SI: What professional acne treatments can't be paired with professional hair removal treatments?

KH: When a client comes to me who is undergoing acne treatment, I always start by asking what products and procedures they are currently using because not everything is safe to combine with hair removal. First and foremost, I pay attention to retinoids—both oral (such as Roaccutane/Isotretinoin) and topical (creams containing retinol or tretinoin). These products make the skin very thin, dry and sensitive, which means even the gentlest hair removal can cause burns or lift the surface layer of the skin. So, during this kind of therapy, I usually recommend postponing hair removal for at least 4–6 months after the treatment ends.

I also do not combine hair removal with chemical peels, microdermabrasion, laser resurfacing or other intensive skin treatments that compromise the skin's

Image courtesy of Karyna Haiduk


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protective barrier. In such cases, the skin needs time to recover and I typically recommend waiting 7–14 days (depending on the procedure) before performing depilation.

In addition, when clients are taking antibiotics or anti-inflammatory medications, the skin can become unstable and more prone to injury. That's why an individual approach is essential, and sometimes I perform a patch test first. My goal is not just to perform a treatment, but to keep the client's skin in healthy condition. That's why I always start with a consultation to choose the best timing and safest technique. This approach ensures excellent results and minimizes the risk of complications.

SI: How can those of us performing depilation procedures tailor our post-care recommendations to our more acne-prone clients?

KH: As an experienced depilation specialist, I know for sure—there's no one-size-fits-all solution. Especially when it comes to clients with acne-prone skin. Here, a more attentive and personalized approach is essential. I always start by assessing the skin type and the severity of acne. It's one thing if there are occasional breakouts on the body and quite another if the client has oily, sensitive skin with frequent inflammation. Based on that, I select the gentlest, non-comedogenic products for both pre- and post-treatment care. Here's how I adapt my recommendations:

- Before the procedure, I advise avoiding heavy cosmetics, scrubs and acids, especially 2–3 days before sugaring or waxing.
- After the procedure, I recommend avoiding oils, heavy creams, self-tanners and fragranced lotions. Instead, I suggest gentle antiseptics like chlorhexidine, hydrolats or aloe-based gels.
- For acne-prone skin, I stay away from aggressive products and prefer lightweight lotions with anti-inflammatory ingredients or zinc-based powders to reduce irritation and prevent breakouts.
- I always remind clients: no tight clothing, exercise or saunas for 24–48 hours, especially if they have oily skin and easily clogged pores.
- I also explain that it's important to maintain not only a skin care routine but also good hygiene habits: clean clothing, breathable fabrics and avoiding touching the skin unnecessarily. If a client has more serious skin issues, I'm always open to collaborating with a dermatologist and adjusting my treatments to complement any prescribed therapy. For me, it's not just about removing hair, it's about helping the client prevent inflammation, avoid discomfort and feel confident in their body. That's what true professionalism means in our field.

SI: Can you go into how you recommend different hair removal techniques to different clients?

KH: I always select the hair removal method individually, taking into account the client's skin type, health condition, sensitivity level, pain threshold and even lifestyle. This is especially important for clients with acne-prone skin, since using the wrong method can lead to irritation or worsen inflammation.

Here's how I approach method selection:

- For clients with sensitive, inflamed or acne-prone skin, I usually recommend sugaring. It's gentle on the skin, doesn't damage the top layer, washes off easily with water and the paste itself is hypoallergenic and has anti-inflammatory properties. It's especially well-suited for delicate areas and oily, breakout-prone skin.
- For clients with normal, resilient skin that's not prone to irritation, both waxing and sugaring can work well—depending on personal preference. Waxing is great for larger areas (like legs and arms), but requires careful aftercare to prevent ingrown hairs and irritation.
- For clients with coarse, dark or stubborn hair, especially on the face, I often recommend electrolysis. It's the only hair removal method FDA-approved as 100% permanent. It's a great option for people with hormonal imbalances or unwanted facial hair due to medical conditions. However, it's not recommended when active inflammation is present.
- For clients with a low pain threshold or high anxiety, I suggest starting with sugaring on a small area. I explain the process thoroughly and create a calm, supportive environment and often, any fear disappears after the first session.
- It's important to remember that the method should be chosen based on what suits the client, not what's most convenient for the specialist. My goal is to clearly explain the pros and cons of each method, properly prepare the skin, perform the treatment carefully and give aftercare instructions. That's the only way to ensure safe, long-lasting results and happy, healthy skin.

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SI: What other skin conditions require careful consideration when it comes to hair removal? What are some of the obstacles?

KH: Before every procedure, I always carefully examine the skin, because there are situations when hair removal should be done with caution—or postponed altogether.

Here are the main skin conditions I pay attention to:

- *Couperose and rosacea:* with these conditions, the skin is very sensitive and blood vessels are close to the surface. Waxing can worsen redness and irritation. In such cases, I prefer gentler methods like sugaring and avoid anything that could overheat or stress the skin.
- *Active inflammation or infections:* if there are boils, herpes, cuts or abrasions, the procedure should be delayed until the skin fully heals. Hair removal can spread infection or aggravate inflammation.
- *Severe dryness and flaking:* dry skin is more prone to microtears and damage. It's important to restore moisture first before performing hair removal.
- *Allergic reactions or eczema:* during flare-ups, it's best to wait until remission. I also always ask about any product allergies (e.g. honey, lemon, essential oils) to avoid triggering a reaction.
- *Scars, burns, fresh tattoos or recent peels:* these areas should not be treated. The skin needs time to recover completely before undergoing hair removal.
- *Pregnancy and varicose veins:* these aren't absolute contraindications, but they do require a more delicate approach. It depends on how the client feels and the area being treated.

The most important thing is not to rush into a procedure "at any cost." If the skin needs rest or treatment, I always explain that to the client. Sometimes it's better to wait and properly prepare the skin than to risk burns, pigmentation or irritation.



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By Kitty Lin

PDRN treatments are the latest to hit the skin care world, as seen on Jennifer Aniston and Kim K. More commonly (and perhaps scandalously) known as the salmon sperm facial, its well-aging properties come from the polynucleotides comprising salmon DNA specifically. This super-ingredient aggressively encourages skin regeneration and repair, making it ideal for reducing the appearance of scars, keeping skin hydrated and mitigating puffiness, fine lines and dark circles under the eyes. PDRN can be a topical treatment, injectable or used in mesotherapy treatments. One common PDRN treatment, Rejuran is rippling through the industry. "Rejuran is an innovative skin booster from South Korea and is revolutionizing regenerative aesthetic treatments," says Rosy Sandhu, MD, founder of Neem Medical Spa in Boston. "Its key ingredient is PDRN (polydeoxyribonucleotide) which are DNA fragments from salmon and it works by releasing growth factors. [It] stimulates our skin to naturally repair, glow and regenerate. I recommend it to my patients who are looking for a smoother texture, a radiant luminosity to their complexion, for acne scars and even under eye rejuvenation of fine lines and wrinkles. We are using it in the US in conjunction with microneedling treatments for collagen stimulation, also to be infused using DEP or dermal electroporation which is a needle-free deep dermal infusion of PDRN and as topical skin care products. I recommend three to four monthly treatments with a maintenance treatment every six months. The fact that it's safe for all skin types with minimal to no downtime, makes it one of the most sought after treatments all year round."

Of course, there's a lot more to PDRN than gathering a whole bunch of salmon….stuff and slathering it on someone's face. As always, when a new hot ingredient hits the market, it's important to find where it comes from, who can get it and what other things get kicked up by the industry in response.

Rejuvenation!...But At What Cost?

There's one question that comes to mind when something finds Jennifer Aniston's and Kim Kardashian's hands before mine (which, to clarify, is most things): how much does this cost? I have no concept for how much this sort of thing is supposed to cost, after all, salmon are doing alright as a species... aren't they? Surely their…secret formula isn't so coveted that the common man would have to take out a mortgage to support their facial. A quick Google search tells me that Kim K is rumored to have spent more than 20 grand on her pre-Met Gala skin regimen (at this point, I've started to sweat.) That isn't limited to one facial, though. Further investigation (read: a second Google search) reveals that she at one point spent $1,500 on a vampire facial. Granted, this is a sum of money I can wrap my head around, but it's still leagues above what most people are spending on facials, especially when it comes to repetitive treatments. One clinic I've found starts their PDRN treatments at $880, while another Texas-based spa keeps theirs at around $350. Whichever end of the spectrum you go to, it appears that people are willing to pay a pretty penny to reap the benefits of PDRN.

This makes sense though—when anything new hits the market, the rush to implement it makes distinguishing yourself to clients all the more competitive. Not to mention, competing for space while working within the limits of the natural bottlenecks that come with adding a completely new treatment to your menu. For one thing, spas looking to add PDRN to their menus will need to find reputable suppliers, a task that becomes more trying every year in an industry flooded with products. A trend still in its shiny-and-new phase only makes this all the more difficult. It's imperative when vetting suppliers, that spas get a fully-fleshed out contract (and read it, mind you) to the letter. In truth, having legal counsel go through it as well can't hurt, just to ensure all your bases are covered and no potentially sticky language can bite you in the butt later.





PDRN treatments are typically hundreds of dollars.

Something else to take into account are the PDRN products popping up on the much less regulated consumer-side of things. Dupes are a contentious subject in this era of market fatigue and consumers pushing for higher standards of transparency. I suggest becoming familiar with common-place home PDRN products, so that you can better understand what clients may already be using on their skin, and make recommendations for those who want to keep up the PDRN care at home. Brands like Medicube have come out with their own PDRN lines that are accessible to the

From left: Image by Alexander Raths at Adobe Stock; Image by Premium Illustration at Adobe Stock



Where does the responsibility of sustainability lie?

Image by Arda ALTAY at Adobe Stock

consumer. "I think it's [Medicube's Pink Peptide series] a great option for those looking to experience skin repairing and anti-aging benefits without the high price tag of in-spa PDRN treatments. While it's not identical to clinical-grade PDRN, I do believe brands like Medicube are helping bridge the gap and make those types of results more accessible to everyday consumers," says Arvika, a certified esthetician and digital creator based in Chicago.

There's Plenty of Fish (and Other Stuff) in the Sea

Another thing to consider when deciding if PDRN is the right choice for your practice, is the source of the treatment itself. Sustainability is a growing part of most conversations these days, with our industries serving as a mirror, reflecting our impact on the ecosystems and changing climate. Sourcing fish for expensive facials does beg several questions: are there alternatives that will give us the same efficacy that traditional PDRN treatments do without using animals? If so, do we have a moral responsibility to use these alternatives, even if efficiency takes a hit?

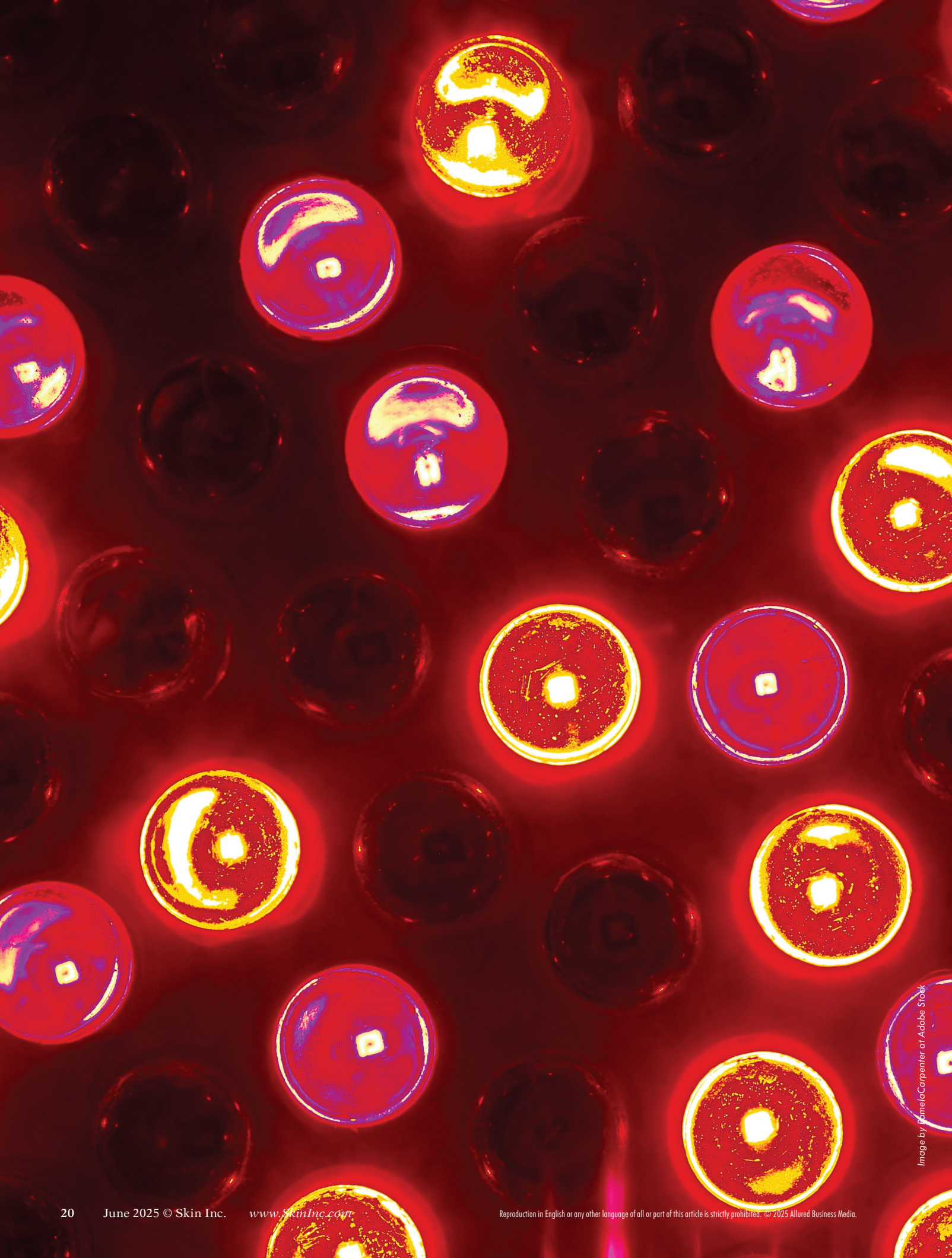
As far as alternatives go, there is currently emerging research concerning microbial-derived PDRN, which explores the possibility of sourcing PDRN from the *Lacticaseibacillus rhamnosus* bacterium. If microbial-derived PDRN proves to be lucrative down the line, this would not only address sustainability issues, but it would also open up the possibility of year-round availability, so we would no longer be confined to the natural patterns that make up a salmon's life cycle. This could mean the possibility of large-scale production, keeping this small corner of the industry stabilized and making the treatment more accessible in the long run, with resource scarcity being less of a factor. Currently though, this research just isn't there yet.

There are some plant-based alternatives that come from ginseng, green tea and microalgae, but these haven't proved to be as successful as salmon-based PDRN at their current stages.

For those still on the fence about PDRN, there are other treatments that provide similar benefits. One close alternative is PN, which can be derived from more than one source and stimulates collagen production. Using PRP in facials and microneedling can also have similar regenerative effects, although you'll probably need to do this under the supervision of a licensed medical professional. Exosomes can also be used to get similar results.

For now, PDRN doesn't seem to be going anywhere and research is already underway to find non-salmon related methods for sourcing it. In the meantime, you have some options—there are plenty of fish in the sea, as they say, and that applies whether you source from one or not.

Kitty Lin is the managing editor of *Skin Inc.*



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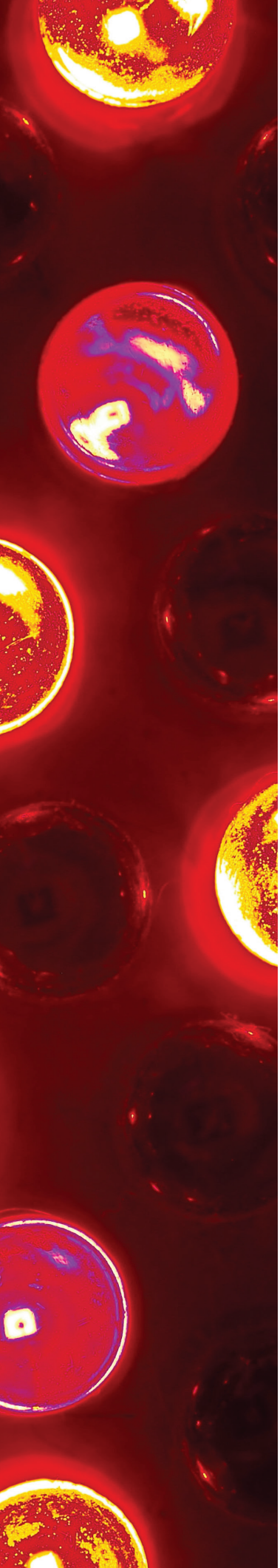


From Breakouts to Brilliant Skin: Effective Acne Solutions With LED Light Therapy

In the ever-evolving world of skin care, light therapy has become one of the most powerful tools in a professional aesthetician's tool kit.

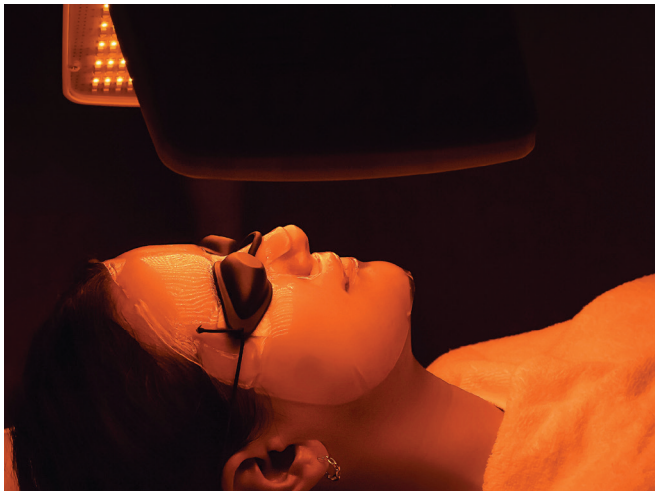
By Annet King

In the ever-evolving world of skin care, light therapy has become one of the most powerful tools in a professional aesthetician's tool kit. LED (light-emitting diode) light therapy is a popular non-invasive, science-backed treatment that has proven particularly effective in treating acne. For skin therapists and dermatologists alike, understanding the mechanisms, benefits and best practices of LED light therapy can be pivotal in enhancing treatment outcomes and expanding service offerings.

FROM BREAKOUTS TO BRILLIANT SKIN: EFFECTIVE ACNE SOLUTIONS WITH LED LIGHT THERAPY







LED light therapy can help reduce inflammation.

A Historical Glimpse into LED Light Therapy

Initially used to accelerate wound healing in NASA astronauts, LED light therapy has since been adopted for a wide array of dermatological concerns. Its application for acne has garnered particular attention, thanks to its ability to target bacteria, inflammation, keratinocyte and sebum overproduction, without the need for more invasive procedures or pharmaceuticals.

The Science Behind LED Light Therapy

LED light therapy works by delivering specific wavelengths of light into the skin to trigger biological processes. Each color or wavelength of light penetrates the skin at different depths and elicits unique cellular responses. For acne, the most relevant wavelengths are:

- **Blue Light (465 nm)**: Penetrates the epidermis and targets *Cutibacterium acnes*, the bacteria responsible for inflamed acne. Blue light activates porphyrins produced by the bacteria, leading to the release of singlet oxygen that destroys the bacterial cells.
- **Red Light (640 nm)**: Penetrates more deeply into the dermis, stimulating collagen production, reducing inflammation and accelerating wound healing. Red light is especially effective for reducing post-acne redness and supporting the skin's repair process.
- **Near-Infrared Light (880 nm)**: Though less commonly discussed in the context of acne, infrared light can also support skin rejuvenation, reduce inflammation and improve circulation, aiding in the healing of active breakouts.

What the Research Says

Numerous clinical studies support the effectiveness of LED light therapy for treating acne. A systematic review published in Dermatologic Therapy (2017) found that both blue and red light are effective in reducing inflammatory acne lesions, with most studies reporting improvement within 4 to 12 weeks of treatment. Patients experienced reductions in lesion counts, decreased sebum production and overall clearer skin with minimal side effects.

In a double-blind, randomized controlled trial published in *The Journal of Clinical and Aesthetic Dermatology* (2014), participants treated with a combination of blue and red LED light saw a 77% reduction in acne lesions after eight weeks, significantly outperforming the placebo group.

These results are compelling for professionals seeking evidence-based alternatives to topical

Images by Space_Cat at Adobe Stock;

antibiotics or systemic medications, particularly in an era where antibiotic resistance is a growing concern.

Advantages for Clinical Practice

LED light therapy presents a multitude of benefits for both practitioners and patients:

1. Non-Invasive and Painless
Patients often report a soothing, deeply relaxing spa-like experience during LED sessions. The treatment requires no downtime, making it ideal for clients who prefer non-invasive approaches or who are unable to tolerate more aggressive acne therapies like chemical peels or isotretinoin.

2. Safe for All Skin Types
Unlike laser therapies or certain exfoliating treatments, LED light therapy is safe for all Fitzpatrick skin types when used correctly. This versatility is particularly important in diverse clinical settings.

3. Adjunct to Other Therapies
LED light therapy can be combined with chemical peels, microneedling or nano exfoliation, microdermabrasion, extractions or topical products to enhance results. For example, using red light post-extractions can reduce inflammation and calm the skin, minimizing potential for post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation.

4. Compliance-Friendly
The simplicity and comfort of light therapy treatments increase client/patient compliance. Professional grade home-use devices are available for maintenance between professional sessions, to help patients maintain results. The is especially beneficial for teenage clients.

Practical Implementation in the Clinic

When incorporating LED light therapy into a professional setting, there are several considerations to ensure optimal outcomes:

Device Selection
Not all LED devices are created equal! Look for devices that are FDA-cleared, clinically tested and make sure to check that the device is actually cleared for the condition you wish to treat. If you are treating acne, you want an LED light therapy device that is indicated and cleared by the FDA for the treatment of acne. Make sure to purchase a device that combines multiple wavelengths



LED light therapy can be effective for adolescent clients.

(e.g., blue + red) to target both active acne and inflammation simultaneously, allowing for better results in the treatment room and more bang for your buck.

Treatment Protocols
Standard in-office treatment protocols typically involve sessions 2-3 times per week for 4 to 8 weeks, depending on the severity of the acne. Maintenance sessions may be recommended once weekly or bi-weekly thereafter.

Pre- and Post-Treatment Care
Double cleanse the skin thoroughly before treatment to remove oils, makeup or sunscreen that could block light penetration. After treatment, a hydrating serum or anti-inflammatory product can help soothe the skin.

Professional skin care manufacturers have product lines specially formulated for the various types of acne clients you may encounter. Design a home

Image by [NAME] at Adobe Stock

FROM BREAKOUTS TO BRILLIANT SKIN: EFFECTIVE ACNE SOLUTIONS WITH LED LIGHT THERAPY



Steam with a decongest type product before LED light therapy session.

maintenance package that couples professional grade active ingredients with an at-home LED light therapy device FDA-cleared for over-the-counter (OTC) use. They offer the same efficacy and outcomes as in-clinic machines and can be rented or resold as part of an anti-acne program. With effectiveness and value in mind, a well-designed home maintenance plan will keep your clients satisfied and on-protocol while generating income and referrals for you and your practice.

Considerations and Contraindications

When used according to the manufacturer's instructions, LED light therapy is considered extremely safe and low-risk. Contraindications are dictated by the regulatory agencies of the country that the device is sold in and are in place to protect practitioners and customers from potential legal ramifications.

LED light therapy is no longer a niche or adjunctive treatment and is now a scientifically-validated, client-loved solution for acne that blends efficacy with comfort and safety. For estheticians and dermatologists alike, integrating LED into acne protocols offers a modern, gentle and effective way to deliver real results.

As more clients seek alternatives to harsh treatments or long-term medication, the question becomes: Is your practice fully harnessing the healing power of light?

LED Acne Facial Sample Protocol

- Review light therapy contraindications and client history.
- Double cleanse and prepare the skin.
- Exfoliate the skin.
- Steam with a desincrustation or decongest type product.
- Perform extractions if appropriate and sterilize the skin.
- Position your LED light therapy device over the treatment area, as close as possible to the skin.
- Use blue and red LED light therapy for 20-30 minutes.
- Apply appropriate serums and moisturizers that rehydrate, soothe and protect the skin.
- Apply sun protection.



Annet King is vice president of business development for Bio-Therapeutic. She served as the senior director of global education at Dermalogica for 19 years and most recently as the vice president of global education for Elemis.

Image by Viktoria Key at Adobe Stock

BIOFOR'S AZO PEEL PROTOCOL FOR ACNE AND ROSACEA

BIOFOR's Azo Peel Protocol for Acne and Rosacea A professional peel that allows estheticians precise control over penetration depth and intensity using azelaic acid.

1. Gently cleanse the facial skin using Gentle Clean, a micellar water product. Free from SLS and harsh detergents, this product preserves the epidermal barrier and thoroughly cleanses without irritating inflamed or reddened skin.

2. Pour 2–3 mL of Azo Peel into a mixing bowl. Using a gauze pad, gently apply the product to all affected areas. Avoid rubbing or pressing the skin; apply gently without friction.

3. After the initial application, you may use an applicator dipped in Azo Peel for targeted treatment of individual papules.

4. Evaluate the skin's condition before deciding whether to proceed with another layer of Azo Peel. Up to four full applications of Azo Peel can be performed during the same session.

5. After completing all applications, apply the Calming Mask. This mask contains approximately 10 ingredients to kill bacteria and deter infection. The Calming Mask also soothes and restores the epidermal barrier. Remove the mask using an absorption method rather than wiping to avoid friction with papules or inflamed areas.

6. Apply Enrich, a lightweight moisturizing cream with a cooling astringent and soothing effect to complete the treatment.

Image by Екатерина Клищевник *at Adobe Stock*

SPA SNAPSHOT:

The Roosevelt's Recovery Lounge

New Orleans, Lousiana



By Kitty Lin

Just a hop and a skip away from the French Quarter, tantalizingly close to New Orleans' pulse, is the city's Grande Dame hotel. Her pearl? The Roosevelt New Orleans' Recovery Lounge. This space, conceptualized and crafted to be a luxury wellness experience, prides itself in being an accessible resource to its patrons—many of whom are stopping in from out of town on business, or perhaps to participate in one of the city's many parades and *fêtes*. The Recovery Lounge offers a wide range of treatments, including those that can fit neatly into 20 or 30-minute windows and accommodate the busy schedules of traveling professionals and vacationers with packed itineraries.



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The Roosevelt crafted its menu to compliment the vibrant city it lives in.

Photos courtesy of The Roosevelts Recovery Lounge; Background by Helena at Adobe Stock

Connection: A Luxury You Can Afford

While offering more conveniently timed treatments is one way The Roosevelt's Recovery Lounge shows up for its clients, it's not the only one. Connection is the crux of wellness, and at The Roosevelt, it's the foundation of the luxury wellness experience they offer. "It's being a luxury environment but creating that space where people can connect and be social together," says Rachael McCrory, director of spa and wellness at Hilton. "Wellness is really the catalyst of that."

When asked about what distinguishes a luxury wellness space, McCrory says "every moment is hosted." Clients look to wellness professionals to not only analyze and recommend treatments, but to create a comforting space where one can relax, rejuvenate and even heal. When it comes to wellness while traveling, creating that space often requires a compromise of sorts—a professional must stage a space familiar enough to keep a client at ease while working in harmony with the destination they're escaping to. It's hard to divorce a city as vibrant as New Orleans from its lush nightlife and electric party scene. The Roosevelt's Recovery Lounge stands as an oasis, complementing the Big Easy's lengthy jazz roots with its audio-therapy treatment. Available in as short (read: convenient) as a 20-minute session, the lounge's Harmonic Meditation treatment marries vibroacoustic sound therapy with zero-gravity positioning to reduce stress, manage anxiety and improve sleep. This treatment is just as effective as a stand-alone pick-me-up as it is when stacked with other treatments for a more intense wellness regimen.

Creating an à la carte menu that balances when combined, while also complementing the lifestyle of the clients coming through is no easy feat. It requires careful consideration of the locale, an understanding of the market's demands, knowledge of the state-of-the-art technology and the ability to curate clinically-backed treatments in a flood of new products, devices and tech, some of which remain untested by the time the internet sinks its teeth into them.

Wellness: Part Human, Part Machine

Introducing tech to traditionally unplugged spaces is nothing new in this age. It feels like every day, there are a hundred new ways in which techies are boasting how AI can save time and boost productivity. The implications of integrating automation in skin care and wellness comes with its own string of complicated ethical quandaries and the uneasy question of



Join the Spa Club to continue to enjoy the Recovery Lounge!

legitimately improving the industry versus cutting corners. The Roosevelt has mastered this balance, incorporating state-of-the-art technology with a largely autonomous menu offering everything from infrared LED light therapies to shiatsu massages. "Touch will always have a place," McCrory affirms. "The technology is there to support and amplify the work our staff does." With a unique blend of newer treatments that sound like science fiction and tried-and-true classics, The Roosevelt's Recovery Lounge is meant to be a welcome space for all. Clients with less experience can try out high-tech treatments for the first time in smaller windows, while the seasoned wellness advocate can pick a Recovery Package for a deep rejuvenation they can feel confident in. The Recovery Lounge's emphasis on connection means that friends, spouses and even the traveling bachelorette party can visit this stop on their wellness journey together, feeling good and getting better, together.

After Checking Out

As we all know, all vacations come to an end eventually. So, what is one to do once they check out of The Roosevelt? Luckily, those who are local can join the Spa Club, a monthly program that allows members to benefit from a restorative massage or custom facial, while letting them take advantage of the hotel's amenities. Additionally, a new layer of the Spa Club Membership allows members access to the Recovery Lounge and Contrast Therapy. As a Waldorf-Astoria hotel, The Roosevelt is part of a global network of hotels with their own spas and wellness centers, so wherever a client gets-away, they have the option of making another stop on their wellness journey.

The qualified staff at The Roosevelt Recovery Lounge is also able to let clients know where they may want to incorporate certain practices once they return home, such as additional stretching for those who suffer from muscle tightness or an abundance of stress. The line of cutting-edge products used in the Recovery Lounge, such as the smart goggles or collagen masks are available for purchase and can be drop-shipped, in case clients need to take a little TLC home with them.

The next time you're in the Big Easy, don't forget to check out The Roosevelt's Recovery Lounge to take it easy—your body will thank you for it.

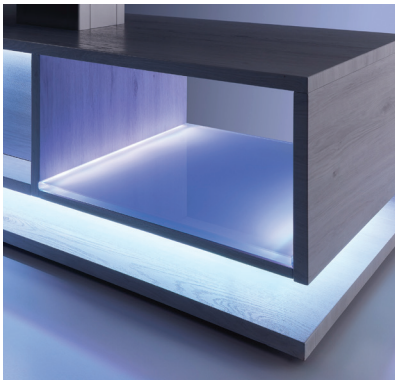
THE RUNDOWN:

THE ROOSEVELT RECOVERY LOUNGE

Address:	**130 Roosevelt Way New Orleans, LA 70112**
Phone:	**504.335.3190**
Web:	**https://therooseveltneworleans.com/waldorf-astoria-spa/**
Instagram:	**@therooseveltneworleans**
Facebook:	**@TheRooseveltNewOrleans**
Hours (daily):	**Sunday - Thursday 12 PM - 12 AM Friday - Saturday 12PM - 1 AM**
Capacity:	**Contrast Therapy Suite - 2 people Recovery Lounge - 4 people**
Skin Care Line:	**TheraBody, Knesko**
Amenities:	**Hair Services, Nail Services, Makeup Services, Infrared Saunas, Cold Plunge Tub**

Earthlite's Everest Eclipse 2.0





Having reliable equipment is a non-negotiable in spa and wellness, given that it's fundamental to the work spa professionals do and plays an important role in helping clients feel secure in vulnerable or intimate settings. As treatment tables are one of the essentials, being priced out of high-caliber equipment can be a major accessibility block within the industry. Earthlite's Everest Eclipse 2.0 delivers a wide range of features and customizable options without compromising on quality or breaking the bank.



Table Features to Look For

- **Comfort:** First and foremost for a treatment table. The Everest Eclipse 2.0 has a replaceable, 4" hand-upholstered Strata LX™ memory cushioning mattress with Comfort-Flex™. It also offers the Conforma Lux™ Adaptive Chest Comfort System available as an option.
- **General Storage Space:** The Everest Eclipse 2.0's sleek, mid-century cabinet design offers an abundance of storage space for everything a professional may need to keep on hand.
- **Cold Storage:** For chilled beverages to keep clients hydrated and comfortable during services. The Everest Eclipse 2.0 comes with an LED-lit IceBlock™ shelf for ease of access, as well as function.
- **Warm Storage:** A place to keep wet rags, hot stones or a warm robe. The Everest Eclipse 2.0's has a stainless steel frame so it's easy to clean, while its soft-close drawer means easy access in a quiet, relaxing environment. Earthlite's warming drawer has a digital controller with three heat settings to accommodate whatever professionals need to keep at the ready.
- **Water/Chemical Resistant:** This is a must for treatment tables! You want equipment that's durable enough (and easy to clean!) for every treatment a client may need with minimal turnover time.

ADA Title III Compliance

This is another non-negotiable for treatment equipment. Tables that are height adjustable for ease-of-access for dis-and differently-abled clients are essential when choosing equipment. The Everest Eclipse 2.0 specifically has a commercial-grade column lift for extended low height range, making it ADA Title III compliant while lasting you for years.

Last But Not Least: Style

When it comes to choosing equipment, whatever you choose is an extension of your brand and of your spa's identity. Finding functional equipment that fits the look and feel of your space is essential, not only from a branding perspective, but for making sure clients get the ambience they're expecting, to put them at ease and make their wellness environment feel more curated to their needs. Earthlite's Everest Eclipse 2.0 is available in flat, tilt and salon top options. Earthlite's tables are built to order in Southern California and offer a variety of finish and upholstery options. They also come with a limited lifetime structural warranty, so professionals can settle into their Earthlite Everest Eclipse 2.0 for the long haul.

EarthLite®
WORLD'S #1 BRAND IN MASSAGE™

earthlink.com

Images courtesy of Earthlite



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Soft Skin Care: The Evolution of Gabrielle Singh

By Kitty Lin



Gabrielle Singh

I'm not talking about product function or a new brand launch when I refer to "soft skin care." I'm referring to clinically-backed, effective skin care imbued with the warmth and compassion of a trusted professional. Gabrielle Singh, a dermal therapist and founder of GC Skin Boutique and Cosmology Skincare, now Iyvos, has built her businesses and career on efficacy with heart. This human approach to clinically effective care is the premise of what soft skin care is.

"You can still be healing and whole, and you can still be soft and strong. That's the evolution of the brand and that's the evolution of me."

People Make the Skin They're In

"For me and the brand, we truly do believe that skin care's one of the most personal forms of self-care. It's how a woman can return to herself," says Singh. Skin plays a crucial role in a person's wellness outside of their regimen, especially where our faces are concerned. Our skin is enmeshed in every first impression, it's a part of our identity, it's the place where the rest of the world and us meet. With the level of importance we put on our skin, socially and personally, it's no wonder that Singh and her team have created products that are intended to support the individual inside. "Among the quiet and the chaos," she says, "it's a quiet reminder that they matter."

Singh describes her brand, Iyvos, as being where great science meets soul, and much like the complex inner workings of people, the brand has undergone some meaningful change in its history. Originally, Iyvos started out as Cosmology Skincare. Symbolic of where Singh was at the time of her career, she attributes the more medical feel of the brand to her clinical roots. At the time of our interview, she's able to reflect on her 10-year career in the industry thus far. Being results-driven in nature, a clinical approach to efficacy manifested as a central part of Cosmology Skincare's vision.

As she evolved and grew, so did the brand. Singh cites her transition into motherhood as a major contributing factor. "It [motherhood] sort of changed my passion to women's health and anti-aging, and I think it was because I was going through that chapter myself. That's when I started to truly see the women walking through my doors. It was their stories, their insecurities, the emotional weight that they carried through various conversations that changed me, not just as a practitioner, but as a woman." That, she confirms, is where Iyvos was born. Her brand's image softened, shaped by a stronger focus on empathy and garnering a genuine understanding of the woman behind the skin. As it currently stands, Iyvos has kept the clinical formulations and efficacy of Cosmology Skincare but is revitalized by the genuine connections it forges with Iyvos users. "You can still be healing and whole, and you can still be soft and strong. That's the evolution of the brand, and that's the evolution of me." Many people view science as being too sterile of an environment to nurture compassion towards the people its advancements are meant to serve, but Singh says they're strongest when together and that's what distinguishes soft skin care.

Building trust with vulnerable clients is an incredibly intimate business. "A lot of times, women will sit in silence when certain conversations take place," Singh says, explaining how her connections with her clients have allowed her to peer deeper into the sensitive nature of her work. Throughout our time speaking, Singh has cited a major responsibility of hers as helping restore a woman's confidence, with the topic of trust cropping up repeatedly. In addition to trust, though, Singh says it's important to lead with integrity. She recalls her own struggles with cystic acne growing up and observes how saturated the market currently is with self-proclaimed miracle cures. Singh hears a lot about the lofty promises made through the market from the clients that seek her out; clients that oftentimes remind her of her own skin care journey. This is something that sits top of her mind with respect to soft skin care, she says, "I don't feel comfortable over-promising and under-delivering. I like the opposite." Many of us are no strangers to fighting acne—I can recall my own experiences growing up, being hollowly reassured by adults that "it'll go away after a while," but a while can be a long time when it's *your* face and there's no end in sight.

This is where we glimpse Singh's solutions-oriented roots once more: at the heart of resolution lies a deep understanding of the problem. Singh has made educating her long-standing team the core of her leadership style, seeing as many of her team members have been with her since the very beginning (a testament to the trust and integrity Singh mentioned earlier!) Everyone on her team, even the positions furthest removed from the clinical nature of her work,



Simpler skin care takes some of the stress out of self-care.

aren't so far removed at all. Her marketing and design teams are all in-house and have used their years of experience with Singh to refine Iyvos' messaging so that people know exactly what they're about.

Women, Wellness and the Cultural Moment of Skin Care

Cosmology Skincare started out as a unisex brand, and while Iyvos isn't not that, women make up their primary demographic. Singh and Iyvos' growth gleans a distinct connection between the brand and women's wellness journeys. The portrait Singh paints of such a journey is one of great nuance, informed by her decade of putting in the work, both building the brand and meaningful relationships with the clients that seek her out. "It's important to note that a woman's wellness journey isn't about the products, which, I know, that's—" Singh gives a wry smile, "—seeing as I own a skin care brand, but it's really about how she feels and how she shows up for herself in the life she's moving through." She goes on to list the major cultural shifts we've all observed and many have experienced: women are juggling careers, relationships and self-expectation while being bombarded with fantasies of perfection in a hyper-consumerist culture. Even wellness itself, she notes, is something women feel they must master, rather than do for their own benefit. Singh says simplification is key. "When I rebranded to Iyvos, I actually discontinued 10 products from my range." Through simplifying the process, skin care and wellness become less of a chore or undertaking and more of something a woman gets to do. Singh notes that women's issues evolve: hormones shift, priorities change and confidence comes and goes. It's the role of skin care professionals to meet women wherever they are on that road.

The cultural snapshot of skin right now compounds the already perilously thin line women walk in that space of aestheticism and beauty. She needs to look spectacular and do so without any ethical drawbacks while making it look effortless. Transparency and sustainability have also entered the conversation and while ultimately good things, they sure don't make the larger dialogue any simpler. Cue the over-saturated market again, and we get what Singh refers to as a mass fatigue. "They [consumers] don't want to buy from brands anymore, they want to buy from people, they want things that feel natural and human."

Singh encourages (soft) skin care professionals to dive deep into who clients are as individuals. Social media can be really hard on people, especially Gens Z and Alpha, so to the client who feels the crushing pressure to look perfect on every screen, Singh likes to share her own vulnerabilities, specifically through the same channels flooded with unrealistic expectations. "I posted a video that we shared on social media about my own experiences with childbirth and my marriage, and tried to start a conversation that would resonate with people in the hopes that it would open the doors for them to feel vulnerable with me." She suggests being genuine with clients and confiding in them about their own experiences to craft an authentic connection. Additionally, celebrating gradual wins can go a long way, things like: continuing with treatments or feeling confident enough to leave the house without putting makeup on.

Skin is the matrix in which our health and identity interplay, and what better metaphor for an industry made of people nourishing and being nourished, of being vulnerable to one another and getting well. When asked what sort of person an ideal brand partner would be, Singh says thoughtfully, "someone who values depth, transparency and having a thoughtful connection with their audience."

Kitty Lin is the managing editor of *Skin Inc.*

Images courtesy of Gabrilee Singh



Cathy O'Brien,

CEO of Naturopathica

BY MARISA SYKES AND KITTY LIN

Cathy O'Brien has been building businesses for more than 25 years. Serving as CEO to leading holistic skin and body care brand Naturopathica, O'Brien sits at the helm of the brand's Spa and Healing Arts Centers and product development. In addition to expanding the brand's spa experiences and driving product innovation, O'Brien has taken the lead in training and certifying Naturopathica therapists in Oncology Massage modalities. With a comprehensive understanding of well-being and an uncanny business acumen, O'Brien has used her skills to navigate the cultural fabric in a variety of ways having started in the music industry representing top talent. During the pandemic, she added a Master's degree in Social Work from Columbia University and a certificate The Prevention of Domestic Violence from the University of Massachusetts to her robust portfolio.



Images courtesy of Cathy O'Brien

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O'Brien got her start at Estée Lauder.



O'Brien has years of formative memories in the industry.

***Skin Inc.* (*SI*): How did you get started in the industry?**

Cathy O'Brien (CO): My entry into the 'beauty' world was when I joined Estée Lauder working for the Tommy Hilfiger business. I had always been a secret beauty product junkie—hoarding all types of makeup. While at Estée Lauder, I had the great fortune of meeting and 'clicking' with Jo Malone, as Estée Lauder had just acquired her brand. Most people aren't aware, but Jo started as a facialist and not a perfumer. She created her own skin care and had a thriving private facial practice with her mother, cultivating a deep, loyal customer base. Her fragrance business actually started when she created a fragrant bath oil as a thank you to those clients as a holiday gift one year. Et voila—the fragrance business began. As we were building and growing the fragrance business in the US, we opened a free-standing store in the Flatiron building in Manhattan—and it had a small spa in it. I was the head of marketing for the business, and part of my role was to set up and open that spa. [I was] responsible for the look and feel of it, treatment protocols, what products to focus on—among other things. We did only facials and the fit of the facialist was so important. Jo was hands on. I also have a vivid memory of stocking the shelves of that store and spa on a ladder when I was very pregnant (as was she!)

(*SI*): What is your favorite memory of your time working in this industry?

CO: I have a lot of great memories and new experiences that create memories that continue to happen. Anyone who is in this industry can tell you that. It's full of positive energy and people wanting to do good. I have found my most recent years at Naturopathica plentiful with laughs, unified positive energy and true enjoyment around building something of importance. In 2023, I worked with Cassie Pahel, who is vice president of our spas, to envision and build a spa footprint for Naturopathica outside of the New York bubble it had lived in for its entire existence. We thought about our customers and our services and where it made sense for us to evolve and spread the word. Palm Beach and Aspen were natural fits and we embarked on making that happen. Along the way, we opened two additional high touch luxury Naturopathica spas in Manhattan and one in Phoenix. At the same time that year, I had the great fortune of meeting and hiring Amy Damiano as our head of professional sales. She has deep roots in the spa world, and a warm and thoughtful way about her, to build and nurture a killer team. It literally makes me teary to see these wonderful women building and growing our mission and message—sharing our healing

Images courtesy of Cathy O'Brien



Post-cancer patients may requires specialized care as their skin can change as a result of treatment.

vision. During this era, we, together, created and rapidly evolved our Oncology Care program, where all of our own service providers are trained and certified in oncology treatment care in order to touch and care for people who are going through cancer treatment (chemo and radiation). We subsequently offer these trainings to our professional spa partners. As an evolution of this, we partnered with Mount Sinai hospital in Manhattan and Penn Medicine's Abramson Cancer Center to provide massage therapy services on site while patients are receiving chemotherapy.

(*SI*): What do you love about spa and wellness?

CO: Everything. What is not to love? I like that now, in the zeitgeist, the idea of 'wellness' isn't something that is aspirational or something that sits to the left of what a person does daily. Everyone knows about it and everyone is already doing it. 'Wellness' is consciousness about yourself as a whole. Body, mind, spirit—the food you eat, the friends you have, the amount you sleep. Do you laugh? Do you rest? Do you walk or exercise? Do you think about these things at all? There are so many ways to define it and to appreciate that you're already doing it. Hygiene is wellness. Hair care is wellness. Walking or any kind of bodily movement is wellness. Socializing is wellness. Laughing, crying, conversing—all wellness. Faith and religious practices—wellness. I love that



wellness can cost nothing and is accessible to everyone. It can be practiced in public or private. It can be loud or quiet. Singular or group. And when you are conscious of it, it gives you a sense of caring for yourself and valuing yourself as you are meant to be valued and cared for.

(*SI*):: How has being in the wellness industry impacted your life?

CO: Long term, it has made me more sensitive to the idea of being 'well' and being happy. I am aware of all things that impact my physical and mental well-being. Most literally though, is the positive impact and good fortune that I had last year when undergoing chemotherapy and radiation. Because of the work I do, I had the good fortune to be able to experience therapeutic massage after each chemotherapy session, which was highly beneficial to me physically and energetically. Additionally, I had access to potent healing skin care that helped my skin stay healthy while undergoing the ravages of the chemo and radiation treatments.

(*SI*): What wellness trends are you most excited to try?

CO: I am committed to the thinking that 'wellness' is the unification of mind, body and spirit. With my experience last year with breast cancer, that approach is how I operate my life on all levels. There are a few things I have been incorporating into my life this year—first and foremost is a diet change. Post cancer, I gave up all meat and have been having a mainly plant-based diet with some fish. Lots of fruits and veggies. From an energy standpoint, I took a transcendental meditation course and practice this daily. Lastly, I guard my energy and



Meditation can improve focus and concentration.

have implemented clear boundaries with my time, energy and focus. I spend more time with myself rather than doing busy social activities, unless I feel there is a real reason for expending and taking in that energy.

(*SI*): What's the first thing you do after a long day at work?
CO: I am a meditator and a reader. For years I did a 10-minute morning 'daily calm' app meditation when I woke up. I always loved that I was able to carve 10 minutes out of the morning before I had to hit the ground for my kids. Now that my kids are off and out, I have a different kind of time. I learned transcendental meditation—which sounds a bit woowoo—but it really isn't. It was an easy class—zero pressure. I learned how to go deep-fast and do a 20-minute morning meditation, and have added the after work 20 minutes, which has really been powerful. It's a great bridge between the day and the evening. I also walk to decompress, so I'll walk in the evening with an audio book to clear my head and change up where my thinking is.

(*SI*): What's your favorite wellness treatment to receive and why?
CO: I try massage treatments everywhere I go to see if there are different techniques to discover and to experience a unique approach to a treatment. I have a deep respect for massage therapists and know that most are healers and bring their energy and intentions to their work. I always feel so lucky to be receiving this from someone, and I look at each experience almost as a piece of art. Of course, a massage feels good but it's more than just the actual physical touching—it's the way they approach and connect and listen and respond. It's actually quite special. So, if you are awake to it, when you get a massage, you are getting the healing massage touch and also receiving real healing energy channeled to you from your therapist. It's magic.

(*SI*): What's your greatest accomplishment?
CO: Personally, my greatest accomplishment is the relationships that I have with my son and my daughter. Professionally (and personally), it is the Oncology Care Program that I helped to create and then build at Naturopathica. With the rates of all types of cancers rising, there is a massive need for care while navigating this scary and devastating diagnosis and experience. Our Oncology Care Program gives people undergoing treatment the opportunity to be touched and healed during this vulnerable time, and gives them the chance to feel better. Adding to this experience was my own cancer diagnosis at the end of 2023 and my ensuing treatment through 2024, where I was able to experience firsthand how important what we are providing is. Our care program is in its infancy stage and has the opportunity to grow to serve an abundance of people in need. THIS will be my greatest accomplishment, as it grows and serves.

(*SI*): What advice do you have for someone just getting started in the industry?
CO: There are many ways to be part of this industry and there is not one 'right' way to do it. Additionally, you can take numerous paths while growing in the industry. It is common to come in one door and then learn and grow and evolve in other capacities. Spa, wellness, health, skin care—there are a multitude of things to learn and master. Make sure that you are following your own heart, passions and most importantly, your gut. The people you work with and for are critical as these are the people you will learn with and from. Energy and culture are real, and critical elements for your growth and overall happiness. Pay attention to that. Be open to evolution and change of your own passions and path.

(*SI*): What's one thing you can't leave the house without?
CO: A hydrating lip balm. I will go back and get it if I have forgotten it.

Image courtesy of Cathy O'Brien

(*SI*): What's your guilty pleasure?
CO: A good NETFLIX binge. I used to say sea salt and vinegar potato chips, but post cancer—I can't do that anymore.

(*SI*): Who or what inspires you?
CO: Smart women who make it happen. All ages, all professions. I love seeing women engaged and passionate and achieving.

(*SI*): How do you practice self-care?
CO: I try to be really patient and kind to myself. I tend to be a bit of a hard ass with my expectations, so I work on focusing and appreciating good things I've done rather than how I may think I could have done better. I also love to take baths with yummy salts.

(*SI*): What is on your bucket list?
CO: Travel. The cancer thing, while a reality jolt and scary, did help me with priorities and a new sense of freedom. I am much more able to say yes to things and have been traveling a lot, with an immediate bucket list of Iceland, New Zealand and Australia (there are others.) I'm also prioritizing being with the people in my life. Theater, experiences—whenever something comes up that one of my people wants to do—I'm in. So, I guess my bucket list is really my to-do list.

(*SI*): What's on the horizon for Naturopathica?
CO: Our vision and plan is to continue to evolve and provide our service offerings to professional spa partners around the country, enabling them to use our protocols, products and bring in our oncology care services. We are nurturing and growing our eponymous spas in Palm Beach, Aspen, Tribeca and East Hampton to hone and evolve our own protocols, and importantly, evolving our oncology care partnerships with Mount Sinai and Penn Medicine's Abramson Cancer Center, with an eye on forging other partnerships with other renowned cancer care hospitals around the country.

Kitty Lin is the managing editor of *Skin Inc.*

Marisa Sykes is the managing editor of *Wellspa 360*.





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CURATING INFLUENCE

By Lisa Stewart



This is an article that I have wanted to write for some time now. The power of social media is incredible, fascinating and alarming. It's incredible that you can get a message out to the world in seconds. It's fascinating, the reach that a message has and alarming due to the weight of the message—is it truthful or not? Are people being misled?

Social Media has changed tremendously throughout the years, so much so that colleges offer degrees in media studies, personal branding and influencer marketing strategy. In the past I found social media to be more personal and focused on the community. We saw people sharing more real life experiences especially with their skin care issues. It didn't feel like social media was coming from a marketing company, it felt authentic and no agenda attached to it other than to help and be real as if it were coming from a friend. I have seen our industry get influenced the most from this crossover of personal and business becoming one. It used to be word of mouth professional endorsements that drove our business, and now being incorporated in an influencer's daily routine seems to carry more weight. I definitely notice social media has made skin care more talked about and accessible, which is awesome! We are in the days of influencers selling us everything from skin care products, spa services, athletic gear, cosmetics, smoothies and vitamins. You name it, they sell it. That's the key to remember—they



Skin-fluencing introduced young skin care enthusiasts to the market.

sell. Influencers can sell out a company's product overnight. I see clients and consumers trying to navigate through contradictory advice and fads. The majority of influencers in the skin care industry are not licensed professionals; a few are, which is terrific. I applaud skin care influencers who take the time to research ingredients and skin care company philosophies. I love when they research the science of how a product is made and why. This dedication to accuracy is professional, and shows me that they are authentic and care about their followers' skin issues.

Most influencers have excellent content that we can learn from, but as with any industry, there are people out there just looking to push products for money. Due to the increase of skin care influencers reaching a younger audience, I have had more clients bringing their daughters in for skin care advice–which in itself is fantastic. However, many of the girls are between six and 13 years of age, and they want to use products from the big box stores that are mainly for advanced adult skin care issues. They watch their favorite influencer demonstrate skin care products and trends, and want to enjoy them for themselves, not understanding that the products and trends are too aggressive for their skin at their age.

Although they're too young, it's remarkable that the youth are interested in healthy skin. To that end, while it's great that kids are being introduced to caring for their skin sooner, there needs to be some moderation. As we know, it's easier to prevent and teach the importance of skin education than it is to correct the damage done before a skin care education. I tell girls of this age that those products are too harsh for their skin and can cause more damage than help, especially with their skin barrier. Most understand, but social media heavily influences others. Overall, I believe they want to be part of taking care of their skin, which is terrific, so I start their protocol off extremely simply, such as explaining why it's essential to cleanse their face at night and apply a lightweight natural or organic moisturizer, it can even be organic olive oil. I recommend that other estheticians facing similar situations use their specialized, certified training as a foundation to educate young clients, and their continued education as additional tools for teaching down the road. Skinfluencing can also be a topic we discuss at spa conferences; we can work together to help our youth with issues like self-esteem if they experience acne, what to do or any other skin concern. We have an opportunity to help the youth and let them know that everyone's skin care needs are different; skin care is not a cookie cutter. Healthy skin does not need to look like a filtered picture or video. Estheticians have an opportunity to step in and redirect using compassion, education and clarity on skin health rather than trend chasing.

It would be unfair to say that all influencing is just trend chasing, though. Let's dive into what an influencer is, and what a typical day is for them.

Their days are busy! Starting off with emails, going over product content, negotiating brand contracts and multiple partnerships—especially if they do this full-time. They have a lot to get through in a day, so organization is key for them. It's a demanding job: filming, lighting, editing, script writing, managing their DM's, tracking post engagement and staying on top of trend cycles. The industry is fast-paced and keeping up with what is relevant could be a full-time job in itself. Their lives become platforms built on a mix of personal and business, and these platforms are powerful in shaping consumer thinking.

A skin care influencer promotes products to their audience and discusses their experience. Their audience is their following across social media platforms such

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as YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, Facebook or any vlogs or blogs. Some go into detail about the ingredients in the products and how they work on their skin; they need to be authentic and engaging with their audience. Skin care companies look for these qualities so they can partner with influencers to sell their products to a targeted audience.

The amount of money a skin care influencer can make depends on the number of followers they have and their engagement rate. They get paid by skin care companies when they post, with posts being anywhere from $20 to $50,000 per post! It all depends on the number of followers they have and how engaging they are. Some influencers get paid a commission on the sales they generate. This is the part that amazes me—some influencers provide a subscription model to their followers and charge for skin care routines, consultations and tips. While it's brilliant marketing on their part, this could be an issue because everyone's skin is different.

Due to skin care influencers, we often see clients come in asking for a certain treatment that an influencer recommends, which may not be the correct treatment for them, but the clients think it is because so-and-so on social media is doing it. What makes a skin care influencer different from an esthetician is simple: training and state board credentials.

Licensed estheticians are professionals trained in skin physiology, hair removal, facials and more. A skin care influencer does not need formal education or licensing, however, they have marketing awareness on how to create and sell content. So how do we curate influence? We know skin inside and out; we work with our clients on an intimate level. Clients trust us with our expertise mainly because we work directly on their faces, which is a vulnerable area for them. We often don't have time to post anything, let alone eat lunch. We are typically occupied with client after client all day; we work and then come home exhausted. My main priority is my clients and giving them my undivided attention. In the treatment room, I am my clients' professional skin care influencer. They know it and feel it. I make the recommendations, educate them about their skin and devise short- and long-term goals right in the treatment room. Many estheticians and dermatologists are influencers themselves. They educate and show us what



Image by KMPZZZ at Adobe Stock

People can place a lot of trust in parasocial relationships, especially with creators who are more accessible, like those on social media.

happens to the skin with certain skin conditions and how those conditions interact with protocols, devices and products.

We can learn a lot from skin care influencers and vice versa. For the estheticians who want to curate influence without turning it into a second job though, I recommend the following:

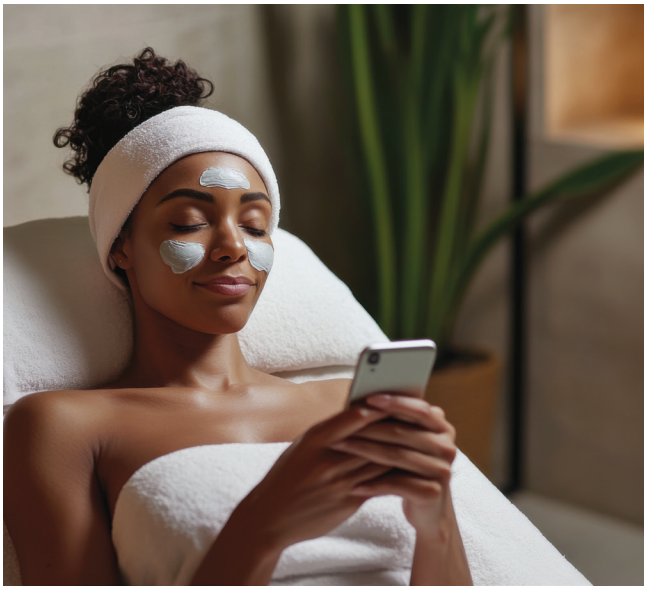
- **Encourage loyal clients to share their experiences on their social media and yours.** Have a QR code ready for them to scan and leave an authentic review. Authentic reviews carry more weight than any influencer's endorsement. This goes a long way and has helped my business tremendously. Additionally, you can have clients tag your spa to better leverage your relationship. This encourages good organic reach. Choose a client who truly loves your services, and have your client post about the treatments they received. You can always give your client a free upgrade to provide you with free advertising.
- **Define your brand values.** It's essential to be clear about your philosophy, mission and what makes you unique. Knowing what you stand for will attract the right clientele for you, which will increase client retention because these clients will identify with you.
- **Offer events and workshops.** Since you are the expert, you can offer exclusive classes, live demos and Q&A sessions. You can offer this asynchronously online, through live webinars or in-person at your spa.
- **Optimize your email and SMS Lists.** Use this direct marketing tactic to educate, give updates and offer personal specials for them. I like this because it comes from the heart and lets clients know you care. Mine look something like:

"Hi Mary,

I was thinking of you and hope you are well. I am excited to share our newest treatment with you! It's incredible in helping the skin's hydration. I remember you telling me your skin has been dry lately. Let me know when you can come in, I would love to see you!

Lisa"

I have noticed a shift in my community recently. I've seen an increase in people wanting genuine connection. By providing personalized services and genuine care, you can create a client who's loyal for life, and that's something hype just can't buy. I believe it's important to stay true to your expertise and passion, and not to chase trends that do not align with your values just because they're promoted on social media. Promote what is in your client's best interest and in your heart. That's powerful!



Offering educational opportunities can bolster your platform.

We can work together with influencers by inviting them to our spas to generate buzz around a new service or skin care line, while focusing on education rather than sales. A great idea would be for an influencer to show what it's like to go to a spa and get a treatment; this would open a window for people who have never been to a spa to come in, as there are still many people who are too intimidated to come into a spa. Another idea would be for a content creator and an esthetician to do a live Q&A. This brings professional education and professional on-the-job experience to the audience.

We can all learn from each other and stay in our power of what is in our client's best interest. Remember why we became estheticians? We want to help people feel good. What a beautiful gift this is. I am proud of my industry; we are caring, passionate professionals, and I honor you all.



Renowned beauty industry expert **Lisa Stewart** is a trusted skin care expert whose passion and tireless efforts have earned her a place in the market as one of the country's most beloved and most sought-after skin care professionals. She is the guest beauty expert for Fox, The Doctor's, writer, and advisory board member for Skin Inc. She is the founder and owner of Solia Spa and Peri Skin Care and is a co-host for the national TV show, Lite It Up TV.

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The Power of Exosomes In Spa Treatments



Image courtesy of Osmosis

Exosomes are rapidly gaining attention in the wellness industry for their powerful ability to support cellular repair and rejuvenation. These microscopic vessels, produced by stem cells, fibroblasts and macrophages, transport crucial peptides, growth factors and cytokines that help guide the repair and regeneration of tissues in the body. As the wellness community explores the potential of exosomes, it's important to understand how they work, their role in the body's healing process and why they are becoming such a sought-after tool in treatments aimed at combating aging and promoting skin health. Dr. Ben Johnson, Osmosis founder, CEO and an expert in the field, explains how exosomes are revolutionizing wellness therapies and what sets them apart from traditional treatments. This work has led to the creation of the Osmosis StemFactor and StemFactor MD Growth Factor serum, and the highly anticipated launch of a new professional treatment—Osmosis Exosome Infusions™—launching this year.

Skin Inc. (SI): For those unfamiliar, could you briefly explain what exosomes are and their function in the human body?

Ben Johnson, MD (BJ): Exosomes are small protective vessels produced by our stem cells, fibroblasts and macrophages. These cells create exosomes to carry peptides, growth factors and cytokines that guide the repair and development of the body's organs. The effectiveness of an exosome depends largely on the signaling peptides it contains. Although "stem cell-derived growth factor media" has been used for over 20 years, the focus on the exosomes within this media is only now gaining widespread attention.

Some people go to extremes, like injecting stem cells into their faces for rejuvenation. However, stem cells are not always active—many remain dormant. To boost repair activity, using exosomes daily (or at least monthly in larger quantities) is more effective. Treatments like acid/alkaline peels and lasers stimulate collagen, but they do so by repairing the damage they just caused. In contrast, Exosome Infusions™ activate collagen without harming the skin, allowing it to focus on repairing sun damage rather than the trauma from recent treatments. It's also safe for all skin types, from the most compromised to normal, aging skin.

SI: Are there any misconceptions about exosomes or their use in wellness that you'd like to clarify?

BJ: Yes! First, it's important to note that exosomes are not regulated by the FDA because they aren't human biologic material. While we use human stem cells and fibroblasts to produce the growth factors, the cells themselves are not part of the exosome-based growth media in each bottle. Second, there's a significant difference in both the number of exosomes per milliliter and the variety of growth factors that each company includes in their products. Don't get caught up in the debate over where the stem cells come from or whether they're delivered frozen or at room temperature—these are just marketing tactics. Exosomes are naturally produced by your body and are stable at temperatures up to 98°F.

To properly assess exosomes, ask what variety of growth factors, peptides and cytokines are proven to be in the growth media. This is an easy evaluation, yet many companies don't share their raw data. Additionally, inquire about the number of exosomes in the product. This is another straightforward test. Osmosis believes many companies avoid sharing this data because their numbers don't compare to ours. We've proven in lab analysis that our growth media contains over 600 different growth factors/peptides, the highest count in the world, and we have 47 times more exosomes than our nearest competitor—a staggering 3.5 trillion exosomes per bottle of StemfactorMD (even more with our Exosome Infusion™ Treatment). This makes our products a powerful tool for estheticians, medical professionals and their clients.

Osmosis

https://www.osmosisbeautypro.com/

Azelaic Acid

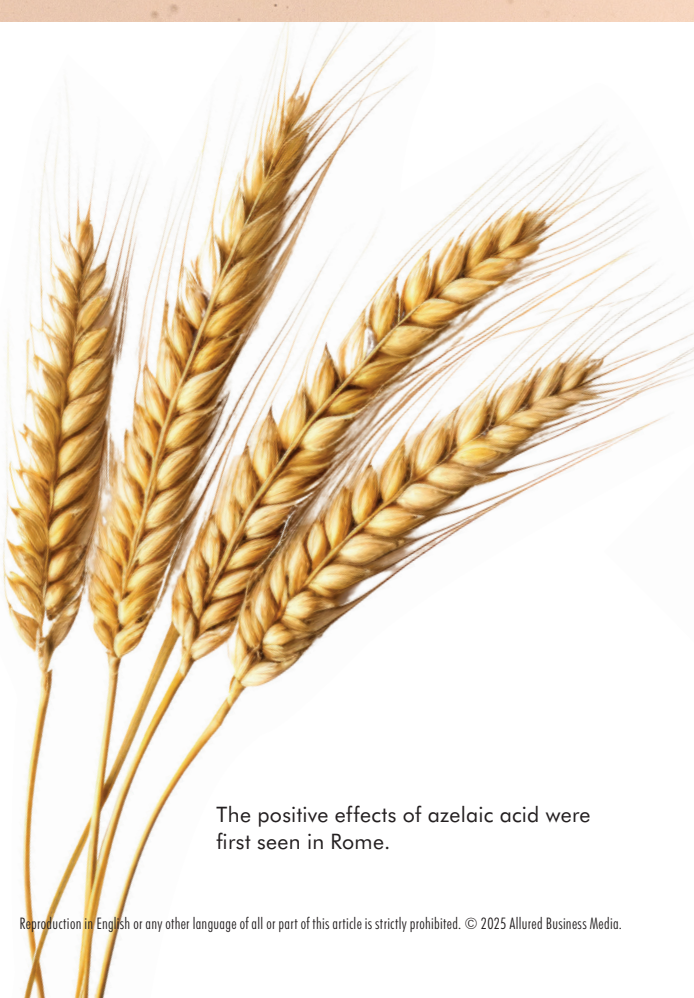
by Kitty Lin

Serving skin care since 1970, the positive effects of azelaic acid were first observed in Rome, when used on the scaly, discolored patches of pityriasis versicolor lesions. When the success prompted further research, scientists found it and put a name to it. It was then later used on malignant melanoma patients as a topical and oral treatment, which resulted in the separation of tumor masses prior to them being surgically removed, as well as improved wound healing. This led to azelaic acid's approval by the FDA in 1995 for the treatment of acne and rosacea.

Get This Bread

Azelaic acid can be found in natural grains, like wheat and barley, and the yeast, *Malassezia furfur*, which is commonly found on the skin under the conditions of fungal infections or seborrheic dermatitis. It can also be produced from oleic acid, which is found in olive oil!

Azelaic acid works by targeting bacteria that contribute to acne, and dissolving dead skin cells, effectively clearing away debris on the skin so new cells



The positive effects of azelaic acid were first seen in Rome.

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can replace the old. It also regulates the production of keratin, which is essential for protecting skin, hair and nails. Azelaic acid can also be effective for reducing inflammation and nipping breakouts in the bud. Since it's great for exfoliating and clearing pores, it's a key ingredient for improving skin texture. Its anti-inflammatory properties also make it ideal for managing rosacea and its ability to inhibit tyrosinase, which helps produce melanin, makes azelaic acid effective in treating hyperpigmentation. Azelaic acid's inhibition of the cathelicidin pathway and KLK5 gene expression also contribute to its antibacterial and anti-inflammatory properties.

A Mild-Mannered Ingredient

Azelaic acid is widely considered safe, even for those with sensitive skin and those who are pregnant. The FDA has been moving towards more stringent regulatory measures in recent times, and as such, has recommended a 2-year dermal mouse study as a requirement for formulations once they hit the market. Even under this renewed scrutiny, azelaic acid is unlikely to cause cancer given its simple molecular structure and frequent appearance in our diets.



Some question its efficacy compared to other acne treatments, and for clients with darker skin, there's the potential for hypopigmentation if used incorrectly, so it's important to educate clients on how to use azelaic acid products properly. Using azelaic acid treatments in combination with other acne treatments can help maximize efficacy while potentially mitigating side effects.

Azelaic acid comes in a variety of useful topicals like serums, emulsions and creams for whatever suits your clients' needs. It's soluble in glycerin and glycol, which makes it a friend to moisture retention and hydration. Since azelaic acid is well-tolerated and mild on the skin, products typically can carry a percentage of 10% on wash-off products and 0.10% in leave-on products. Azelaic acid formulations should be protected from an excess of light and humidity.

Overall, azelaic acid is relatively new to the playground, but tends to play well with others. It'll serve as a reliable staple for your clients struggling with rosacea, acne and an uneven skin tone and texture, if used properly.





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