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THE CUTTING EDGE OF AESTHETICS

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About the Creator
Olha Maikina, MD, is Co-Founder and Product Director of Zemits, a global developer of advanced aesthetic technologies. With formal medical training, Dr. Maikina unites clinical methodology with device innovation and has authored treatment protocols, educational curricula, and practice guidelines implemented by estheticians worldwide. Her work prioritizes safe, evidence-based interventions that support providers and optimize patient outcomes - always with a deep respect and love for the skin.

Olha Maikina, MD
- Co-Founder & Product Director, Zemits

Zemits HydroDiamond®: The Dazzling Facial Everyone Wants

A Diamond-Powered Hydro-Exfoliation System for Glass Skin Facial Rejuvenation

Abstract
Zemits HydroDiamond® is more than a facial treatment, it is a ritual of skin renewal, born from science and created with love for the skin. This advanced, non-ablative facial technology consolidates essential actions: exfoliation & extractions, deep skin hydration, and toning: into a single, seamless workflow that transforms dullness into radiance. Using our unique Dual Diamond technology and controlled vacuum, the platform gently lifts away compacted corneocytes, decongests pores, and delivers targeted serums to enhance texture and luminosity with no irritation and no downtime. When paired with the Glass Skin Serums Collection, the system synergistically exfoliates, purifies, and nourishes toward a smooth, luminous "glass-skin" finish—a signature experience where innovation meets indulgence.

Mechanisms of Action: Science Meets Indulgence

1. HydroDiamond Resurfacing for Penetration Readiness
Dual Diamond hydro-exfoliation removes the outer corneocyte layer, smoothing surface texture and preparing the skin to receive and absorb active ingredients. With every touch, dullness lifts away.

2. Pores Decongestion
Post-exfoliation Hydro Extraction passes mobilize sebum and keratin plugs in congested areas (e.g., T-zone), leaving skin clean, clear, and primed for infusion.

3. Targeted Serum Infusion
Fine oxygen mist evenly deposits infusion serums, amplifying hydration and nourishment. Indication-specific serums, brightening, antioxidant, peptide - are deeply infused into the skin, hydrating, calming, and visibly refining tone and texture. Moisture is locked deep within, and the skin awakens to new vitality.

4. Cold Therapy Finish: The Arctic Retreat
The ritual concludes with a refreshing Cold Therapy finish using peptide gel. This cooling sensation calms erythema, stimulates circulation, enhances comfort, and leaves the complexion feeling refreshed, firm, and radiant, like a rejuvenating Arctic retreat. The final cool embrace "locks" the glass-skin effect, reviving the skin and leaving it alive with radiance.

Courtesy of Rosanna Siracusa & Zemits Verstand HD Pro



Case 1: Reduction of Facial Redness, Rehydration, and Light Congestion

Patient: Female, early 30s
Skin Type: Fitzpatrick III–IV
Treatment Area: Full Face
Protocol: RSN Signature facial (90 minutes); planned 4–6 sessions at 6-week intervals
Findings: Immediate decrease in erythema, increased hydration, reduced non-inflamed congestion; no PIH or prolonged erythema
Maintenance: Home care with SIV Biome Serum, hypochlorous acid mist, GlyMed Comfort Cream, daily SPF; 1–2 touch-ups per quarter as needed



Case 2: Resolution of Facial Congestion with Hydration Support

Patient: Female, early 30s
Skin Type: Fitzpatrick I
Treatment Area: Full Face
Protocol: 6 sessions, 4–6 week intervals
Findings: Marked clearance of congestion and visibly brighter complexion after one treatment; no adverse events
Maintenance: Vivant Daily Repair Pads, Face Reality Hydrabalance, GlyMed Comfort Cream, daily SPF; continue follow-ups about every 6 weeks as needed

Clinical Relevance & Patient Experience
Patients typically note immediate improvements in luminosity, hydration, and tactile smoothness after a single session. The skin feels softer, smoother, and deeply nourished. With consistent treatments, skin demonstrates better moisture retention, more balanced tone and structure, and a luminous, healthy glow that feels unforgettable.

No irritation. No downtime. Only the pure luxury of transformative results and a radiant complexion that speaks for itself.

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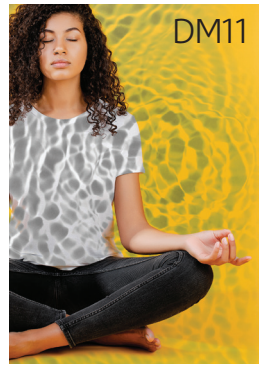

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KITTY LIN
Managing Editor
clin@allured.com

The Spa as a Well-Oiled Machine

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

Happy holiday season, everyone! The year's almost over and that means we can all sit back, take a deep breath and rest on the laurels of 2025, right?

Not quite.

While it's true that there's a lot to celebrate about this year—our earned credits, the new connections we've sparked and our victories, both big and small—the end of the year is one without any finality. If we're stopping, it should be to make sure we're rested up to start planning for next year.

This doesn't just mean we're writing a list to eat better, drink less and get back on that hobby we've abandoned a few times already, I'm talking about setting up the pieces of our businesses so we can enjoy a little harmony and a whole lot of profit in 2026.

I'm talking about those add-ons that are resurging with enthusiasm and that are bound to stick around. I'm talking about making decisions in response to the growth of the med spa space and the regulatory landscape that affects how you navigate the industry. I mean, making AI work harder for you without sacrificing the oh-so-essential human element of the brand. I'm also talking about holiday offerings that aren't just novel, but those that your clients will actually rely on as they move through a busy and stressful time of year.

So, eat and be merry, and then go back to the drawing board. No idea is a bad one and no experiment is a waste, even if you need to pivot again. Stay healthy, stay ambitious, stay inspired, and you can't go wrong.

Wishing you well,



Kitty S. Lin

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Tune In!



Skin Inc.'s

Multimedia

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Winter Skin Survival Kit

By Kitty Lin

We're coming up on the end of the year, and with the chillier months and holidays right around the corner, people are going to be looking for last-minute S.O.S. measures to keep dull, dry skin away. Our health also tends to take a hit during the season of sugary treats and festive libations, and while we all deserve a little treat, it can be hard not to feel the mounting pressure of having to undo all that damage come the new year. Here's what you can expect to see lots of in the upcoming season.



Image by ActionGP at Adobe Stock

1 Hydration sheet/gel masks

Now that consumers are getting better-acquainted with barrier health, hydration is a major priority for all skin types and concerns. K-beauty brought the sheet mask into vogue and now here we are! A hydrating sheet mask feels a bit like the perfect product for the holiday season—get that extra boost of moisture, maybe soothe that simmering hangover and both with minimal effort. Sheet masks are also fun to do for a girls' night; slap one on, slip under the blankets and lock in to a holiday movie rewatch. Avatara Skin has several Hydrogel masks to scratch this exact itch.

avataraskin.com

2 Simple, regenerative solutions

People are consolidating their routines and bringing them back to basics: cleansers, moisturizers and then maybe a serum or night treatment of their choice, depending on their skin needs. Regenerative skin care is the new approach shaping attitudes towards longevity and well-aging. If you're promoting healthy cell turnover and maintaining the skin's natural regenerative properties, then the idea is that you can get the results you want without a full 12-step regimen. Angela Caglia has a skin care line rooted in regenerative solutions.

angelacaglia.com

3 Powerful combinations

Beautiful skin is a journey, and rather than going to get treatments that only check one box on their dream skin wish list, people are looking for treatments that will give them overall gorgeous skin, through a combination of innovative products, cutting-edge technology and the classic massage. Candela Corporation developed The Glacê treatment process to do just this, so estheticians can give clients the ever-coveted glass skin they crave.

"The system works by combining three different technologies to cleanse, exfoliate and revitalize the skin," says Leah Lynch, skin and lash expert, owner of Beautique Salon Spa and Lash Lounge. The process starts with a hydrodermabrasion and serum infusion. "A diamond-tipped wand exfoliates and polishes the skin while Candela's specialized serums are simultaneously infused via the Glacê Vac closed vacuum system. This provides deep cleansing, exfoliation and hydration."

Next, is the dual-mode cupping massage: "A cupping massage tool uses vacuum pressure to help support lymphatic drainage, reduce the appearance of puffiness and enhance facial contours. The final step involves a soothing biocellulose mask paired with red, green or blue LED light therapy to calm, brighten and soothe the skin," explains Lynch.

"This treatment, pronounced"glassy" was designed in response to the glass skin trend and is attempting to rival the Hydrafacial because of, not just the beautiful results that it provides, but because as a service provider the Hydrafacial is a really unpredictable device with the cost of the consumables and this device has a fixed cost and more focused modality with real diamond tip microdermabrasion rather than disposable plastic. This however is a fairly expensive device, although it is currently on sale for half off as they introduce it!"

candelamedical.com


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idskinpro.com



i Fill Ceuti-Shot

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I Fill Ceuti-Shot is a 4-week intensive skin regeneration kit designed to revitalize and restore the skin. At the heart of the treatment is the DMS (Dissolving Micro Ceuti-Shot) roller, engineered with 3,100 micro-pyramids. Each pyramid is infused with hyaluronic acid, peptides and tannin complexes. When applied, the DMS roller creates micro-channels that allow these active ingredients to penetrate deeply and absorb instantly. The treatment is complemented by four targeted ampoules, each formulated with NAD+, plant-derived exosomes and salmon PDRN, addressing specific skin concerns to enhance elasticity, refine pores and deliver visible anti-aging benefits.

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sivcare.com

Product images courtesy of the manufacturers

RapidLash® adds integrity between practice skin care professionals and their clients

For nearly three decades, EA Medical Aesthetics has stood as a beacon of excellence in the world of advanced skincare and wellness. Located in the heart of New England (Worcester, Massachusetts), this elite medical spa has redefined what it means to age gracefully, blending the precision of medicine with the artistry of aesthetics.



"As a skincare professional, I'm always on the lookout for products that deliver real results—and RapidLash has absolutely earned its place on my recommendation list. I started using it personally after noticing my lashes were thinning from years of mascara and extensions. Within just a few weeks, I saw a dramatic improvement in both length and fullness—without any irritation or sensitivity.

Now, I confidently recommend RapidLash to clients who want a non-invasive way to enhance their natural lashes or eyebrows. It's the perfect complement to our in-clinic treatments—safe, effective, and so easy to use. Clients love that it feels luxurious and delivers visible results without the commitment of prescriptions or procedures.

RapidLash is more than just a lash serum—it's a confidence booster in a bottle."

— Gabriella Kaminska, Licensed Medical Aesthetician at EA Medical Aesthetics, Worcester, MA



"I cannot say enough good things about RapidLash. I've been using it now for over a decade, and at this point, I cannot live without it. It's given me so much confidence and the ability to naturally enhance my appearance, which, in my opinion, is the best option. I used to struggle with my short blonde lashes, and tried many different mascaras, extensions, and glue-ons that did more damage than good. After using RapidLash, I finally became happy with my lashes and felt confident just waking up and looking in the mirror. RapidLash has not only increased the length and fullness of my lashes, but they now also curl up naturally, no need for lash curlers! I am often stopped and asked about my lashes, and I never keep this serum a secret. I am truly so happy with this product. I use it religiously and will continue to do so."

— Julia Gamache, Client at EA Medical Aesthetics, Worcester, MA

To learn more about the RapidLash family of products, visit rapidlashusa.com, email orders@rocasuba.com or call ROCASUBA Inc, at 508-539-7077.

RapidLash®



Sahar Berjis, MPH, RD

– Functional Dietitian & Founder of InnerHealthWellness

By Kitty Lin

With wellness becoming increasingly mainstream, it can be difficult to decipher the conversation surrounding clean beauty, holistic wellness and hormones.

Our team was fortunate enough to get insight from functional dietician and founder of InnerHealthWellness, Sahar Berjis.

Skin Inc. (SI): Can you speak to the state of our knowledge and approach to hormones in the past few years?

Sahar Berjis (SB): Our understanding of hormones has expanded dramatically. In the past, discussions about hormones were mostly limited to reproduction. Today, we know they influence mood, energy, digestion, skin and immunity. We've shifted from "fixing symptoms" to seeing hormones as part of an interconnected system influenced by gut health, stress, sleep and environment.

SI: Are there treatments/products/ingredients that the average consumer should steer clear of? If so, what are they?

SB: Yes—endocrine disruptors found in plastics (like BPA), pesticides, synthetic fragrances and many ultra-processed foods. Overuse of refined sugar also stresses hormones and the gut. Choosing organic, whole foods and clean skin care is a smart way to minimize exposure.

SI: What is the relationship between hormones and wellness? How much power does the average consumer/client have in maximizing their approach to wellness as far as hormones are concerned?

SB: Hormones are like conductors in the body's orchestra—when balanced, everything runs smoothly. Consumers have more influence than ever through lifestyle: supporting gut health, reducing toxins, managing stress and prioritizing restorative sleep. Simple steps like adding natural probiotics from fermented foods or herbs like maca and shatavari can support hormonal balance. Bitters (from foods like dandelion, arugula or supplements) also help stimulate digestion and natural detox pathways, creating a foundation for hormone health and skin vitality.

SI: How has the recent boom in wellness tech affected the way we navigate hormonal health?

SB: Wellness tech has made hormone health more accessible. Wearables and apps can track sleep, blood sugar and stress responses—things that directly affect hormones. While they're empowering, I remind clients that tech is only one piece of the puzzle. Balance comes from lifestyle, not just data.

SI: Holistic approaches to skin care and wellness have become a larger part of both conversations—do you have tips that estheticians and spa professionals can pass on to their clients? Or else, do you have tips for spa professionals themselves navigating a space that is expanding outside their area of expertise?

SB: Glowing skin really does start from the inside out. Estheticians can remind clients that hydration, antioxidant-rich foods, natural probiotics and collagen support can enhance skin resilience and glow. Bitters also play a role by supporting liver detox and digestion, which directly impact skin clarity. For professionals themselves, I recommend staying in scope but building a network of integrative health providers they can lean on for referrals—this creates a more supportive experience for clients.

Image courtesy of Sahar Berjis

SI: Menopause is finally becoming a larger part of skin care/wellness/health conversations. Do you have specific tips for the spa professional when it comes to treating menopausal/perimenopausal clients?

SB: I'm thrilled menopause is getting the attention it deserves. During this transition, declining estrogen can affect skin hydration, elasticity and sensitivity. Spa professionals can focus on gentle, hydrating treatments and recommend collagen-rich foods or supplements for skin support. Gut-friendly probiotics and fiber help balance estrogen metabolism, while phytoestrogens (like flax or soy) and adaptogens (like shatavari and ashwagandha) may ease symptoms. Supporting detox with bitters can also help with skin clarity and overall balance.

Collaborating with a dietitian or integrative wellness practitioner can help clients navigate this transition holistically, giving spa professionals confidence in offering complementary support while knowing when to refer.

SI: Can you speak to the relationship between diet and hormonal health?

SB: Food is one of the most powerful hormone regulators. A balanced plate—with lean protein, healthy fats, fiber, probiotics and colorful vegetables—helps stabilize blood sugar and reduce inflammation. Collagen (whether from bone broth or high-quality supplements) supports skin elasticity, joint health and gut lining integrity—all of which tie back to hormone function and skin glow. Herbs like maca and shatavari are additional allies for hormone support, while bitters keep digestion and detox pathways flowing.

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



The Complete Business of SPRAY TANNING:

A Guide for the Modern Esthetician

By Leah Lynch

In the ever-evolving world of aesthetics, there's one service that's managed to stay both timeless and trendy—profitable for practitioners, addictive for clients and shockingly low overhead for what it delivers: spray tanning.

For clients, it's that effortless, just-back-from-vacation glow (minus the UV damage, sunburn and regret). For estheticians, it's one of those rare services that checks all the boxes: low cost per treatment, quick appointment times, repeat business that borders on obsession and endless potential as an easy add-on to nearly everything else you already offer.

At Beautique Salon in MA, we joke and say, "Look 15 pounds lighter, 15 times hotter in just 15 minutes—guaranteed!" One of the highest payoffs in the fastest timeframe with a nice, long-lasting result. A professional machine barely needs more than a corner of your treatment room, and the payoff? Anywhere from $45–$65 per session on average and often much more in urban markets or during peak glow seasons like weddings, proms and holidays.

In this article, we'll dive into everything you need to know to master the art and business of spray tanning—from its quirky history and the science of DHA, to pro application tips, client prep and aftercare, common mistakes (and how to fix them), plus how to position spray tanning as a high-value, low-cost expansion of your service menu.



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THE COMPLETE BUSINESS OF SPRAY TANNING



When choosing the right spray tan method, it's important to understand a client's desired outcome and skin tone.

A BRIEF HISTORY

Spray tanning wasn't always chic. In fact, when Coco Chanel accidentally popularized the "sun-kissed" look in the 1920s after a holiday on the French Riviera, tanning became a fashionable rebellion against the pale complexions that once symbolized wealth. Fast forward to the 1960s, when a researcher noticed that dihydroxyacetone (DHA), a compound derived from sugar beets, stained the skin a harmless brown. Early formulations, however, often left clients more "pumpkin patch" than golden goddess.

It wasn't until the late 1990s and early 2000s that professional spray tanning equipment became widely available, formulas improved and celebrities started raving about their flawless spray tan glow. From red carpets to bodybuilding competitions, spray tanning went from gimmicky to mainstream. Today, it's a billion-dollar global industry and a highly profitable niche for estheticians.

Spray tanning is more than just a faux glow—it's a modern esthetician's golden ticket.

THE SCIENCE OF SPRAY TANNING

Here's where things get really fun: spray tans are basically a science experiment disguised as beauty magic. The star ingredient, dihydroxyacetone (DHA), works by reacting with amino acids in the very top layer of your skin—the stratum corneum.

The result? A chemical process called the Maillard reaction (yep, the exact same reaction that makes your morning toast golden, gives pretzels that deep brown shine and caramelizes onions).

So essentially, when you're giving a spray tan, you're "toasting" the skin. The difference is that it's controlled, flattering and bronzed—never burnt. Instead of UV damage breaking down your skin, DHA creates a temporary pigment that sits on the surface. The beauty of it is that it doesn't alter your DNA, doesn't penetrate deeply and fades naturally as those top layers of skin shed off.

The concentration of DHA in formulas varies, usually between 6% and 14%, which is what determines how light, medium or deep the tan develops. Lower percentages give a subtle glow (perfect for beginners or pale skin tones), while higher percentages deliver that rich, "I-just-got-back-from-the-Maldives" depth, and because the reaction depends on each client's unique skin chemistry, spray tanning is as much art as it is science—no two tans ever develop exactly the same way.

With today's advancements—violet-based undertones, rapid-developing solutions and organic blends—spray tanning has moved far beyond the days of streaky orange disasters. Thanks to chemistry, you get to play beauty alchemist: turning colored liquid into a golden glow in just a few hours.

TYPES OF SPRAY TANNING METHODS

As an esthetician, you'll encounter three main approaches:

Booth Spray Tans – This type of spray tan is automated, quick and lower cost for clients, but allows for less control and is more impersonal

Custom Spray Tans – You (or your staff) apply the tan with a spray gun. This is where artistry comes in: contouring, customizing shades and delivering flawless results.

Mobile Spray Tanning – Growing in popularity, especially for bridal parties or busy professionals. With a tent and portable machine, you can bring the service directly to the client.

For most estheticians, custom spray tanning is the sweet spot. It requires minimal investment, creates strong repeat clientele and allows you to charge premium pricing for your expertise.



Top: Image by Parilov at Adobe Stock; Bottom: Image by Pattadis at Adobe Stock

PREP IS EVERYTHING

Even the most skilled spray tan application can go sideways if the client isn't prepped properly. Blotches, uneven color and premature fading are almost always the result of skipped steps before the client even steps into your booth.

As the professional, your role isn't just to spray—it's to educate and empower your clients so they get the best results every time. Consistency in client prep is key to building trust, repeat visits and raving reviews.

KEY PREP STEPS TO COMMUNICATE

- **Exfoliate 24 hours before.** This removes dead skin cells, smooths the skin's surface and ensures the DHA absorbs evenly. Morning exfoliation can leave skin a little sensitive. Make sure that if it is a repeat client, they know to remove as much of the existing tan as possible before applying more.
- **Shave or wax the day before.** Freshly shaved skin can be sensitive, and applying a tan immediately afterward can lead to irritation. Giving the skin a full 24 hours to rest is ideal.
- **Skip lotions, oils, deodorants or perfumes on the day of the tan.** Moisturizers and oils create barriers that prevent DHA from adhering evenly, while deodorants or perfumes can react with the spray solution and alter color in unwanted ways.
- **Dress for success.** Loose, dark clothing and flip-flops are best. Advise clients to avoid socks, bras or tight garments immediately after application if possible. Tight clothing can leave lines, rub off color or create uneven fading in those areas.

PRO TIP: Make it easy for your clients! Create a simple, branded prep-and-aftercare sheet that you can hand out or email ahead of their session. This not only reduces the need to repeat instructions every time but also gives your service a professional, polished touch. At Beautique Salon Spa and Lash Lounge in MA, we even have a small sign hanging in our tanning room with reminders about both prep and aftercare—an instant reference that clients love and actually follow. We also have a handy guide pinned on our Instagram page.



Make sure clients understand that the session will require them to be fully nude (or wearing minimal garments) and to have their hair tied up.

Image by Parilov at Adobe Stock

Proper prep is where the magic starts—when clients follow these steps, your application will glide on smoothly, the color will develop evenly and your spray tan results will wow them every single time.

THE SPRAY TAN SESSION: WHAT TO EXPECT

Spray tanning is quick, but that doesn't mean it's without finesse, a smooth, professional session looks like this:

- **Consultation** – Ask about their goals (subtle glow vs. deep bronze), skin undertones and any special events. Provide clients instructions of what to do once you close the door.
- **Barrier Cream** – Apply product to hands, feet, elbows and nails. These areas absorb more DHA and can look muddy without protection. (Some lines do not require this step, and some artists perfect the technique enough to skip it.)
- **Attire** – Most clients will go topless to avoid tan lines and will opt for a disposable thong on the bottom (though some may wish to skip for tan-line reasons). If a client does use the disposable thong and shower cap to protect their hair, adjust both before spraying to ensure the shower cap is not sitting low on the



Clients should wait at least eight hours before rinsing off in a lukewarm, water-only shower.

forehead or the thong isn't sitting crooked in the back or too high on the hips. Otherwise, tan lines may show outside of a normal bathing suit bottom and give an unwanted "peep show" result.

- **Application** – Guide the client through poses to ensure even coverage. Move methodically—front, back, sides—with light, overlapping passes. Avoid spraying the neck directly; it will naturally get hit with overspray from the shoulders and chest. This area can feel sticky if overdone. Always ask clients if they would like their face done and warn them that it may accentuate dark spots from the sun. If spraying the face, ask clients to pull in their lips, hold their breath and squint their eyes to avoid too much DHA entering the airways. At our salon, we say "1-2-3" and then spray the face from the front, asking the client to turn right and left so we can repeat. This way, they anticipate the spray and know it's just a quick three-second breath hold.
- **Drying** – Remove your gun from the hose and use the compressed air to dry the body between applications for the most flawless result. Build-up or wet applications can look good for a few days, but often fade poorly. If space allows, keep a standing fan in your tan room so clients can dry fully after the session. *Pro Tip*: Buy black everything for your tan room to keep it looking clean!
- **Post-care Instructions** – Verbally remind the client, then hand them written guidelines for either express or classic tan. Express solutions are popular because they develop quickly. The final color depends on how long the product remains on the skin (not the % of DHA). Guide clients on when to shower to achieve their desired result. Many salons charge more for express tans as well!

A confident, professional flow creates client trust. Remember, many first-timers are nervous (and probably worried about looking like Ross on *Friends*). Clients can feel vulnerable in these positions or start apologizing for how their body looks, so being reassuring and kind goes a long way.

PRO TIP: Every body is beautiful—here's how to get a flawless glow on any canvas:

- **For clients with larger breasts**, have them raise their arms and gently arch backward so you can mist underneath.
- **To prevent those half-moon tan lines under the booty**, ask the client to lean forward slightly. This tiny shift lifts the skin just enough for a quick, seamless spray.
- **For clients whose skin naturally folds above the knees**, a small bend at the knee smooths everything out and avoids "crinkly knee" surprises.

Think of it like choreography: small, subtle moves that make all the difference in delivering a flawless finish.

AFTERCARE: MAKING THE TAN LAST

A flawless spray tan doesn't end when the session does. In fact, the hours after the tan is applied are the most critical for making sure that the glow develops evenly

Image by Евгений Вершинин at Adobe Stock

and lasts as long as possible. Clients need to think of this stage as the "do not disturb" phase—no water, no workouts and definitely no sweaty hot yoga. Even something as simple as getting caught in the rain can streak the developing color. Clothing matters too: remember, tight jeans, bras or socks can rub the tan before it sets, leaving behind uneven patches.

The first shower is its own ritual. At Beautique, master spray tan artist Holly Allard advises, "We tell our clients instead of scrubbing down like usual, clients should let lukewarm water rinse over them until the water runs clear, gently washing away the guide color. No soap, no loofahs and just water. When it's time to dry, a soft pat with the towel will extend the life of the tan far better than a vigorous rub." After that first rinse, they can ease back into their normal shower routine, but gentle is still the name of the game.

Hydration is the secret weapon of a lasting tan. Well-moisturized skin keeps color vibrant and helps it fade evenly. The best choice is a fragrance-free, oil-free lotion—anything too oily can cause the tan to break down. Pair that with plenty of water from the inside out, and their glow will have real staying power.

There are, of course, a few tan-killers clients need to avoid: long soaks in hot baths, saunas, chlorine-heavy pools and exfoliating scrubs all speed up fading. Oils in skin care and body washes are also sneaky culprits for patchiness.

Here's where professionals can shine: by giving clients a simple aftercare card or even offering a branded mini lotion or tan extender. It's a small touch that not only helps results last but also reinforces your expertise. Clients will remember that their flawless glow didn't just happen—it was guided by you.

COMMON PROBLEMS AND HOW TO HANDLE THEM

Even the most skilled esthetician will occasionally encounter hiccups during a spray tanning session. Understanding the common issues and knowing how to address them promptly not only saves the client experience but also reinforces your professionalism and expertise. One of the most frequent concerns for a new artist is not moving quickly enough. This results in a heavy application that can cause pooling or dripping. When this happens, the best approach is to gently blot the excess solution with a tissue, much like blending makeup on the skin, and then lightly re-spray the area to restore an even, flawless finish. Uneven patches or streaks can occur even with careful application, and for these situations, recommending exfoliating gloves or specialized tan corrector products can be a lifesaver. Hands and feet are notorious for developing darker tones than the rest of the body. A simple, gentle buff using a baking soda paste can help tone these areas down without compromising the overall tan.

No one wants an unwanted orange tone. Fortunately, most professional spray tanning solutions now incorporate carefully calibrated undertones—typically violet or green—that neutralize these hues while keeping the result natural. For clients looking to reset their previous tan before a new session, terry cloth exfoliation mitts after a warm bath or the use of specialized tan removers can lift residual color safely and effectively. Teaching your clients how to remove their old tan before a fresh re-spray will avoid unsightly buildup or blotchy fading issues.

Many estheticians find it helpful to maintain a small "spray tan fix-it kit" in their treatment space, stocked with tissues, barrier creams and corrective products. This not only allows for quick fixes but positions you as a reliable problem solver who is prepared for any scenario.



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Take care to protect your client's eyes, nose and mouth from ingesting DHA during the tanning process.

Compared to self-tanning lotions, spray tans deliver professional, streak-free results with fully customizable shades to suit every skin tone and client preference. Even when compared to automated spray booths, custom spray sessions provide greater precision, the ability to contour and highlight and an overall smoother, more consistent finish.

Communicating this clearly to clients reinforces the value of your professional service and positions you as an expert who provides results that DIY approaches simply cannot achieve.

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

Safety is a key selling point when it comes to professional spray tanning, and clients often have questions about the potential risks. The primary ingredient, DHA, is FDA-approved for external use and, when applied properly, poses minimal risk. However, precautions are essential to maintain a safe and professional environment. Providing nose plugs, eye protection and lip balm helps prevent accidental inhalation or ingestion during the session. While spray tanning is considered safe for most pregnant clients, it's always best to encourage a consultation with their healthcare provider. It may be wise to offer clients with sensitive skin conditions like eczema or known allergies a patch test before full application. DHA will stick to and develop darker on dry patches and may flare sensitive skin into an itchy reaction. The presence of proper equipment, a clean workspace and well-defined safety protocols not only ensures client safety but also conveys a high level of professionalism and care.

SPRAY TANNING COMPARED TO OTHER METHODS

Many clients will inevitably compare professional spray tanning to other options such as self-tanners, tanning beds or natural sun exposure. In these comparisons, spray tanning consistently comes out ahead. Unlike sunbathing or tanning beds, professional spray tans provide an immediate glow without the risk of UV damage, premature aging or sunburn.

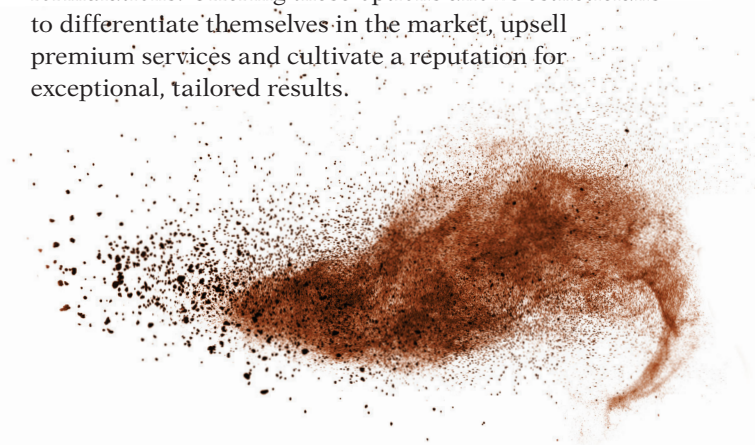
CUSTOMIZATION AND TRENDS

Today's spray tanning clients expect more than a one-size-fits-all tan.

They crave personalization, and modern estheticians can meet this demand in multiple ways. Shade matching for individual undertones—whether warm, cool or olive—ensures each client leaves with a tan that complements their natural coloring.

Body contouring techniques allow the esthetician to highlight abs, slim arms, define legs or enhance curves with subtle shadowing and light placement.

Special occasion tans for weddings, proms, vacations and photoshoots are increasingly popular, and competition tanning for bodybuilders or fitness models has grown into a highly specialized niche. Rapid-developing tans accommodate clients with busy schedules who cannot wait the traditional six to eight hours for full development, while eco-conscious consumers appreciate organic, vegan or cruelty-free formulations. Offering these options allows estheticians to differentiate themselves in the market, upsell premium services and cultivate a reputation for exceptional, tailored results.



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COST AND VALUE FOR THE ESTHETICIAN

One of the most compelling reasons to offer spray tanning is its low barrier to entry and high return on investment. Professional spray tanning machines and portable tents are available for under $1,000, and the solution for each application costs just a few dollars. Many suppliers make initial purchases straightforward with bundle deals that include all the necessary accessories and formulations.

Some solutions even feature fun add-ons, like pineapple or coconut scent, or a bronze shimmer to add a little glitz and glimmer before a special event. These add-ons can increase not only the price you can charge for the same amount of time, but can also add another dimension of differentiation from the average artist, and keep your social media content fresh by showcasing all the ways you can combine your special offerings!

Service pricing typically ranges from $45–$65 per session, with higher rates in luxury markets or for premium customization. Each appointment generally takes only 20–30 minutes, allowing you to see multiple clients in a short period of time. By carefully managing disposable supplies and taking advantage of distributor incentives and bulk purchases, profit margins for spray tanning remain among the highest in the esthetics industry.

FUN FACTS AND SURPRISING INSIGHTS

Spray tanning isn't just about looking sun-kissed without the sunburn.

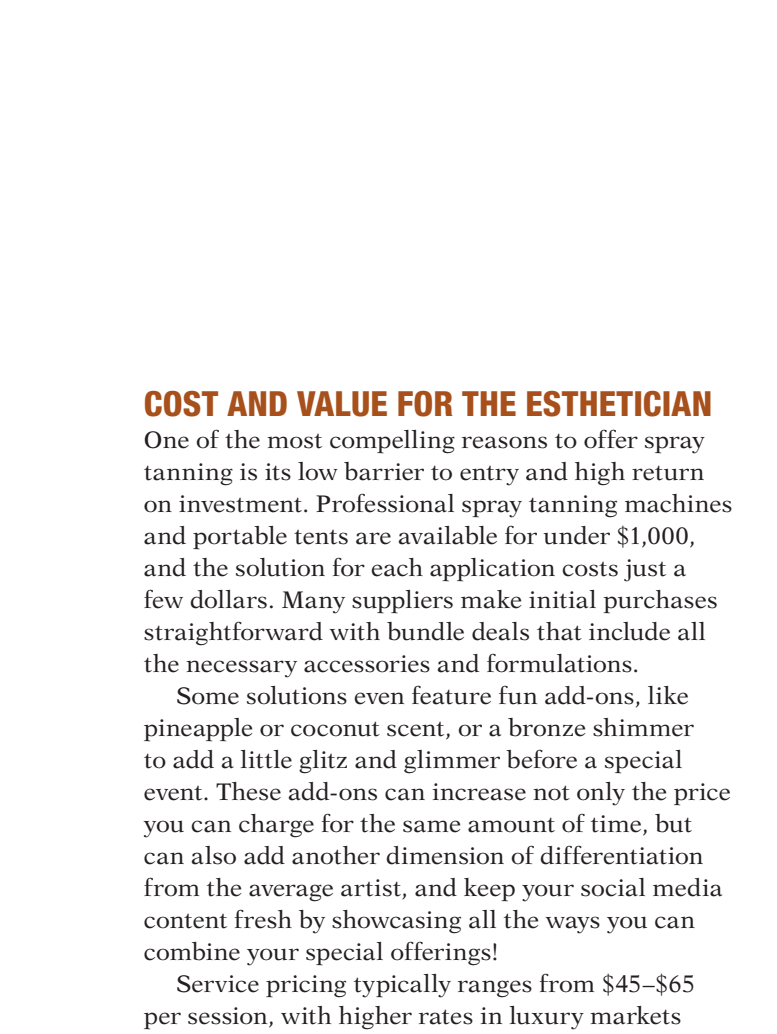
Did you know that spray tanning is actually required for fitness and bodybuilding competitions? The deep bronze glow enhances muscle definition under harsh stage lighting, making physiques look sharper and more sculpted. This can be a whole niche market for spray tan artists with these specialized products and application techniques.

Moreover, photographers and bridal stylists often recommend trusted spray tan professionals to their clients, since a flawless, even glow can make wedding photos look more polished and radiant. Getting your name on these referral lists can quietly but powerfully grow your clientele.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Spray tanning is far more than an optional add-on—it is a strategic, scalable business move for estheticians. Minimal space requirements, low startup costs and quick appointment times make it a high-demand, repeatable service. In addition to generating revenue, it elevates your service menu, attracts new clients and complements existing offerings such as skin care, waxing and makeup. Most importantly, spray tanning delivers exactly what today's clients are seeking: a safe, fast and fully customizable glow that enhances confidence and satisfaction.

Whether you are introducing spray tanning to your salon for the first time or perfecting your existing technique, consider it a gateway to higher revenue, stronger client loyalty and a reputation for producing results your clients can't stop talking about. Ultimately, it's not just about the tan itself—it's about the glow you bring to every client and the business you build.



Clients can get the bronze they want without UV exposure.

Image by Augustas Cerkauskas at Adobe Stock



Leah Lynch is the owner of Beautique Salon, Spa & Lash Lounge in Newburyport, Massachusetts, and is an award-winning master lash artist, trainer, speaker and judge. Her business has won seven prestigious awards including "Best of Boston." A regular editorial contributor for numerous trade publications, Lynch is recognized internationally for her business acumen.

Lynch is also the creator of Lash Mastery Academy, where lash artists can take their career to the next level by utilizing advanced materials, manuals and curriculums to become a trainer in their area.



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AI in Skin Care: **Practical Innovations for Spa Owners and Estheticians**

By Elaine Sterling

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is revolutionizing the skin care industry, offering spa owners and estheticians powerful tools to enhance client care, streamline operations and stay competitive. In this article, we will explore how AI can be practically applied in spa settings to deliver personalized treatments, improve diagnostics and elevate the client experience.

Personalized Skin Care Powered by AI

AI enables hyper-personalized skin care by analyzing a client's skin type, lifestyle and environment. Tools like Haut.AI and Revieve use facial recognition and machine learning to assess skin conditions—empowering estheticians to recommend customized routines that adapt over time. This leads to better results and increased client satisfaction.

AI in Professional Skin Analysis

AI-powered diagnostic devices can detect subtle skin changes invisible to the naked eye. These tools enhance consultations, track treatment effectiveness and build client trust through data-driven insights. Spa owners can use these technologies to differentiate their services and improve outcomes.

Enhancing Education and Training

AI is transforming esthetics education by creating adaptive learning platforms like Milady CIMA. These tools personalize training based on student performance, helping estheticians master techniques more efficiently.

Ethical Considerations and Human Touch

While AI enhances capabilities, the human touch remains irreplaceable. Empathy, intuition and hands-on expertise are essential in spa services. Spa professionals must also ensure ethical use of AI, including data privacy and client consent.

Looking Ahead

Spa owners and estheticians who embrace AI will be better equipped to deliver exceptional results and grow their businesses. The fusion of technology and artistry is redefining beauty, and AI is at the heart of this transformation.

AI Tools in Skin Care: A Guide for Spa Owners and Estheticians

This guide provides an overview of cutting-edge AI tools currently used in the skin care industry. It's tailored to spa owners and estheticians seeking to enhance client care, streamline operations and stay competitive in a rapidly evolving market.



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Haut.AI
Offers scientific skin analysis using over 15 metrics such as wrinkles, pigmentation and hydration. Can be embedded into websites for client-facing assessments and provides personalized skin care recommendations based on lifestyle, nutrition and sun exposure.

Practical Benefit:
Ideal for spas wanting to shift from selling products to solving skin concerns.

Perfect Corp – Skincare Pro
Combines AI skin analysis, before-and-after tracking and CRM tools. Detects up to 14 skin concerns and generates personalized routines. Used by brands like Estée Lauder and Bobbi Brown.

Practical Benefit:
Great for estheticians managing consultations, education and client records.

Proven Skincare
Uses AI to analyze individual skin profiles and create custom formulations. Focuses on hyper-personalization based on real-time skin conditions and lifestyle data.

Practical Benefit:
Helps deliver truly customized skin care solutions.

EntityMed
Offers AI-powered aesthetic simulators for visualizing treatment outcomes such as fillers and Botox.

Practical Benefit:
Builds trust and attracts new clients with realistic previews.

Cubix
Provides personalized product and service recommendations based on skin type and goals.

Practical Benefit:
Enhances client satisfaction through tailored experiences.

Alby
Uses generative AI to respond to client queries with personalized suggestions.

Practical Benefit:
Improves customer service without increasing staff workload.

AEDIT's The AEDITOR
A 3D consultation platform for visualizing aesthetic transformations.

Practical Benefit:
Helps clients make informed decisions with realistic previews.

L'Oréal's Augmented Beauty Platform
Uses machine learning to analyze ingredient data and create innovative formulations. Accelerates R&D and supports sustainable product development.

Practical Benefit:
Supports innovation and sustainability in product development.



Elaine Sterling founded The Elaine Sterling Institute in 2008 in Atlanta. Sterling saw the need for quality education that would match the fast-paced and growing field of esthetics. She thus created a school that is focused on high educational standards. Her vision is for a spa-like environment for her students to learn the very best of European techniques with the latest equipment.

Medical Aesthetic Procedures – **What's in Your AFTERCARE?**





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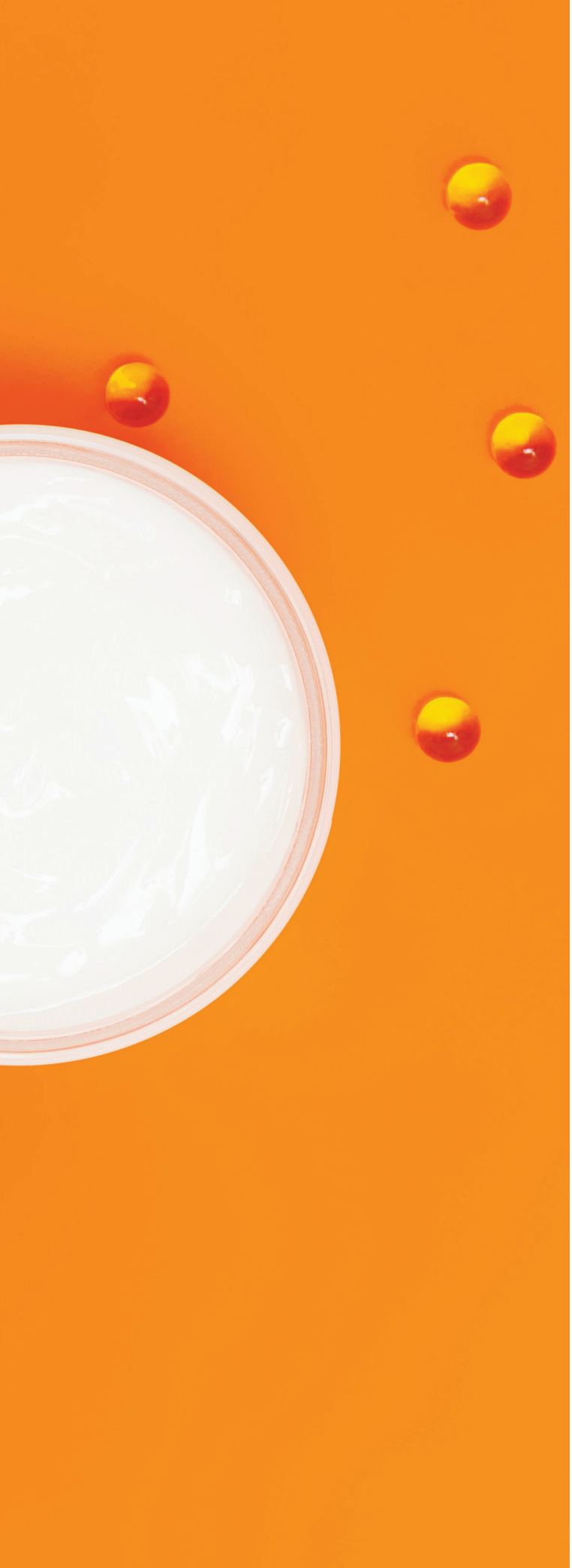
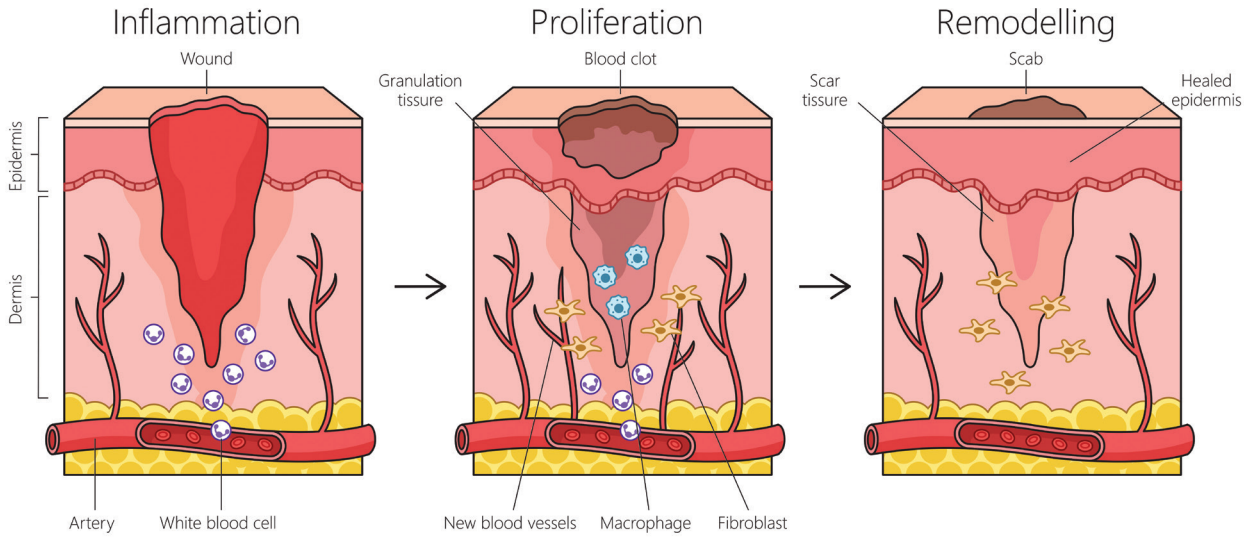


By Shannon Esau

The aesthetic industry has grown and developed over the last twenty years! What was primarily peels, microdermabrasion, facelifts and deep CO_2 lasers, has changed dramatically. Medical aesthetics offers a range of procedures and requires a range of healthy skin-strengthening aftercare. After any skin procedure that is impacting the epidermis or dermis, it will need special attention for the next days, weeks or months, depending on the depth and type of device or treatment.

Skin in a wounded state will go through all the wound healing stages. It is critical to avoid skin-irritating ingredients like synthetic fragrances, dyes, parabens, sodium lauryl sulfate, mineral oils, lanolin or other toxic ingredients and focus on rebuilding, strengthening and hydrating the skin.



When healing, it's important for clients to diligently follow the specific procedure provider's instructions!

Stages of Wound Healing

1. We begin with an inflammatory response, which starts immediately upon a perceived injury to the skin or body. The four signs of inflammation are swelling, redness, heat and pain or discomfort. It is during the inflammation stage that platelets release growth factors.
2. Re-epithelialization, granulose tissue formation and angiogenesis are the second phase of wound healing. Re-epithelialization begins within the first 24 hours and is the migration of keratinocytes to the base of the wound, which will also increase cell proliferation.
3. Granulose tissue and angiogenesis formation begin on the second or third day. The fibroblast is the chief cell involved in the formation of granulosa tissue. New blood vessels and extracellular matrix respond as well in creating the support and protection needed during this phase. Essentially, it provides the skin with a temporary barrier for protection to the wounded area and supplies nutrients and oxygen for healing.
4. The remodeling phase is the building of collagen. The fibroblast cell and its functions are key at this stage. It is responsible for the texture of the skin. Water is resorbed, the collagen fibers bundle closer together and the epidermis cells become healthier and thicker in appearance. This stage begins when the inflammatory response ends, and this stage can continue for months, depending on the depth of treatment.

As the skin is going through these stages, our skin is more vulnerable and anything we apply to the skin will impact it more significantly.

Medical Procedures

As previously mentioned, this industry has grown! Lasers, IPL, BBL, injectables, micro-needling, micro-needling RF and more, and of course, with each procedure, there are levels of intensity, so it is not a one-size-fits-all regimen for aftercare.

Injectables have grown from collagen injections and Botox to several different neurotoxin injectables, hyaluronic acid fillers and more. The skin may experience redness, swelling, tenderness and some level of bruising in most cases. 20% *Arnica montana* extract, along with soothing botanicals and healing amino acids, can support the skin significantly. Arnica increases circulation and speeds up the healing of bruises. Blood rushes to the surface and becomes trapped with these type of injections so clearing and moving the blood out with arnica extract is very helpful.

The other great thing about arnica is that it reduces inflammation and decreases pain! Some studies have shown it to be as effective as Ibuprofen. For optimal results, begin using arnica three days before your appointment and continue to use it up to three days after to reduce the bruising and alleviate discomfort. Look for a superior formula with other healing components and no skin irritants for increased results and no negative effects on the skin.



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Clients recovering post procedure should also prioritize rest and hydration.

Nonablative lasers use light energy to penetrate the skin without causes the surface to have an exfoliation or disturbance.

- **Yellow laser**: Targets yellowing pigments in the skin, reducing discoloration
- **Intense pulsed light (IPL)**: Treats a variety of skin concerns, including sun damage, rosacea and spider veins
- **Broad band light (BBL)**: This is an advanced form of IPL.

All of these use light therapy at various wavelengths, yet each one targets different concerns in the skin. These nonablative options heat the skin and cause fibroblast stimulation without removing the surface layer. They do tend to create a lot of erythema, which is redness in the skin, some tenderness and possible heat. Days following these treatments, the skin may become drier, tighter and begin to flake. With these treatments utilizing ingredients to release heat from the skin, reduce inflammation, protect barrier function, bring cellular longevity and healing, as well as increase hydration, your skin will not only feel great, but it will enhance the final results, giving you a more lasting change and healthier skin.

Thermus thermophilus ferment is an advanced scientific ingredient found in deep oceanic waters and natural hot springs that release heat from the skin and inspire healthy oxygenation and protect from environmental stress, all while promoting cellular wound healing. *T. thermophilus* ferment replenishes skin's glycoproteins, providing a resilient barrier. **Thioctic (R-lipoic) acid** is a beautiful ingredient providing anti-inflammatory, powerful antioxidant benefits as it is considered a "universal antioxidant". This means it can function in every cell and tissue because it is both fat (oil) and water-soluble! Amazing! R-lipoic acid affects the mitochondria, which are considered the powerhouse of the cells. The function of the mitochondria is vital during wound healing!

Another great one is **ubiquinone (coenzyme Q_{10})**, as it regenerates skin, assists in cellular growth and protects against oxidative stress. **Apple Cell Culture Extract (Malus domestica)** protects and maintains the function of skin stem cells and ensures the longevity of skin cells. This stem cell ingredient is very sophisticated and has great promise in the ability to repair and bring about healthy skin cells! **Alteromonas ferment extract** reduces skin irritations and helps to increase natural hydration within the skin. This ingredient will help to strengthen and protect the barrier.

Epidermal growth factor is another highly recommended ingredient for healing and strengthening cells. It is a protein that attracts cells to the injured area and is a key component internally during the healing process. It's vital for ablative lasers as well.

Ablative laser treatments remove the outer layer of skin for rejuvenation and stimulation of fibroblast cells.

- **Fractional CO_2 laser**: Targets water molecules in the skin, stimulating collagen production
- **Erbium laser**: Similar to fractional CO_2 laser, but penetrates deeper into the skin

These types of lasers could be looked at as more similar to a chemical peel in the way the skin responds and goes through wound healing, but certainly on a much deeper level. Most patients will experience redness, swelling, itching and discomfort.

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THE POWER OF SCALP MASSAGE in Elevating Client Treatment

By Gaynor Farmer-Katics

There are many ways to enhance treatments, but one of the simplest and most effective is a great scalp massage. Whether you're performing a facial, body massage or spa treatment, targeting this area of tension adds an extra layer of client care that can transform an ordinary service into an extraordinary experience.

A well-executed scalp massage doesn't just feel good; it has profound benefits, from reducing stress and muscle tension to improving circulation and supporting hair health. Yet, the scalp is often overlooked in treatments, either rushed through or treated as an afterthought. By giving this area the attention it deserves, you can set yourself apart as a therapist who truly understands the power of great touch.

Why the Scalp Holds Tension

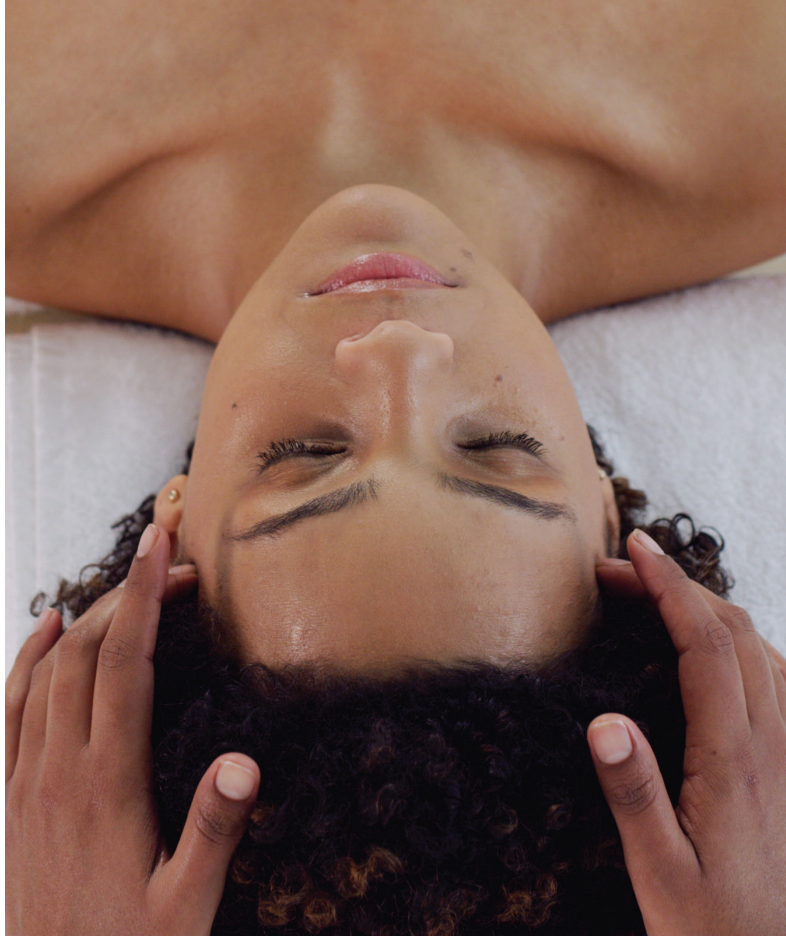
Many people don't realize how much tension builds up in the scalp. Unlike other areas of the body, where muscles are larger and easier to work on, the scalp consists of a few flat muscles that can become surprisingly tight. When we're stressed, anxious or concentrating for long periods, we unconsciously engage the muscles of the scalp, forehead and jaw.

One of the most affected areas is the **temporalis muscle**, a fan-shaped muscle on the sides of the head. It plays a critical role in jaw movement and is constantly engaged when we chew, bite or clench our teeth, something many people do unknowingly.

Another key player is the **frontalis muscle**, which covers the forehead and extends into the scalp, blending into the **galea aponeurotica**, a thick fibrous sheath covering the scalp. At the opposite end of this sheath lies the **occipitalis muscle**, which attaches to the galea aponeurotica and inserts on the superior nuchal line of the occiput. This creates a tension network across the scalp, meaning tightness in one area, whether from stress, posture or habitual movements, can radiate across the entire head.



Much of scalp tension stems from muscle contractions caused by stress, anxiety or poor posture.



Scalp massages can increase blood flow and nutrient delivery to hair follicles, stimulating growth and strengthening the roots.

The Benefits of Scalp Massage

Scalp massage is about more than relaxation. It has multiple physiological benefits, making it a valuable addition to any esthetician or spa therapist's toolkit.

Reduces Stress and Promotes Relaxation

Scalp massage stimulates the parasympathetic nervous system, triggering a calming response that lowers stress levels. Many clients report a meditative sense of relief afterward.

Relieves Muscle Tension and Headaches

Because of its connection to the jaw and facial muscles, scalp massage can alleviate tension headaches and some migraine symptoms. Focusing on the **temporalis** and **occipital** region helps release built-up tension and provides much-needed relief.

Improves Circulation and Hair Health

Increased blood flow to the scalp delivers oxygen and nutrients to the hair follicles, supporting healthy hair growth.

Enhances the Client Experience

A well-executed scalp massage can elevate any treatment. Whether incorporated into a facial, body massage or as a standalone service, it leaves clients feeling nurtured and deeply cared for, making them more likely to return.

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Mastering the Technique: A 3-Minute Scalp Massage Sequence

To help you incorporate scalp massage seamlessly into your treatments, here's a simple yet effective **3-minute sequence** that you can use with your next client.

STEP 1: Stationary Circles Along the Hairline (30 seconds)
Using all fingertips, apply three slow, stationary circles, starting at the center front hairline and moving laterally toward the sides and then to the back of the scalp. This should not be a superficial shampoo-like movement but a deeper technique where you move the **skin of the scalp** along with the underlying tissue, fascia or muscle.

STEP 2: Cradling and Palm Circles (30 seconds)
Turn the client's head to one side and cradle it with one hand. Using the palm of your free hand, perform stationary circles on the side of the scalp, releasing stored tension.

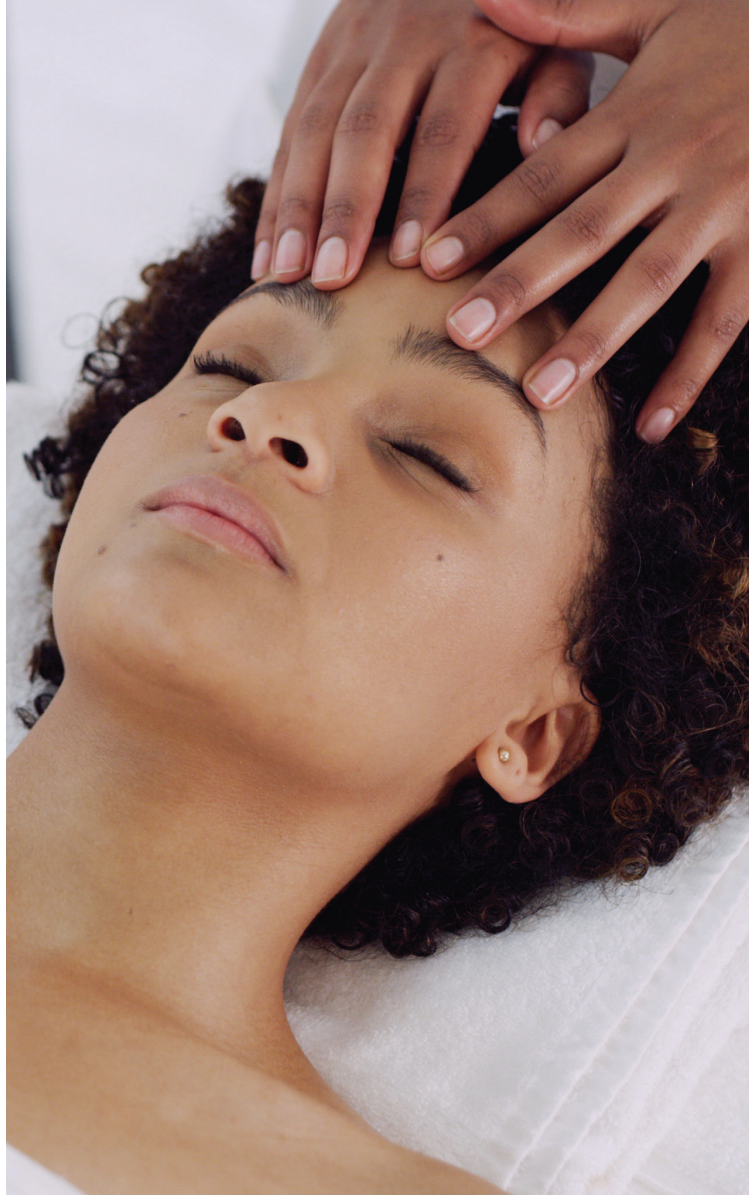
STEP 3: Deep Finger Petrissage on the Occipital Ridge (30 seconds)
Work the base of the skull using deep finger petrissage circles, focusing on:

- Below the occipital bone (suboccipital muscles)
- Directly on the bone (firm but comfortable pressure)
- Over the occipitalis muscle

This is also the attachment site of many upper body muscles and working here even helps release tension in the neck and shoulders. Many clients store tension here, especially those who spend long hours at a computer.

STEP 4: Repeat on the Opposite Side (30 seconds)
Turn the client's head to the opposite side and repeat steps two and three.

STEP 5: Alternating Thumb Presses to the Crown (30 seconds)
Begin at the front hairline, placing your right thumb at the starting point. Place your left thumb just behind the right and apply gentle pressure, alternating until you reach the crown. At the crown, press three times before slowly breaking contact to end the massage.



As an add-on, scalp massage promotes relaxation, good circulation and soothes the senses.

A Small Addition with a Big Impact

A great scalp massage doesn't take long, but its effects linger. It's a simple yet powerful way to enhance any treatment, helping clients feel truly cared for while benefiting their overall well-being. Many estheticians find that refining their scalp massage skills leads to better client retention and even higher tips, because when you make someone feel amazing, they'll always come back.

So, the next time you're with a client, take a few extra minutes to work on their scalp. That small act of care might be what sets your treatments apart from the rest.



Gaynor Farmer-Katics is passionate about teaching estheticians how to refine their touch by increasing their repertoire of massage techniques. With almost 40 years of industry experience as an esthetician, massage therapist and educator, her business Enhanced Touch offers both online and in-person training. Find out more at *www.enhanced-touch.com*.

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Holiday Skin SOS:
The Surprising Science You Need to Know During Stress Season

By Rebecca Gadberry, LE, FSCC

Walk into any treatment room this holiday season and you'll see it instantly—that telltale puffiness around the eyes, the stubborn redness that refuses to calm down, the client who insists their go-to serum suddenly stings. Holiday stress doesn't just mess with our minds; it rewrites our skin's biology in real time.

The numbers paint a clear picture: stress-related skin conditions have surged 40% since 2015. Between 60-80% of clients with chronic skin issues identify stress as their main trigger. During the holidays, these statistics come to life as 'cortisol face', sudden product sensitivities and that bone-deep exhaustion no amount of sleep can fix.

This isn't about indulgence anymore—it's about intervention. When clients understand their skin issues stem from biological stress responses, not personal failures or poor product performance, they stop viewing treatments as guilty pleasures and start seeing them as essential wellness care.



Stress can exacerbate conditions like eczema, acne and hives.

When Skin Becomes a Stress Dashboard

Forget mood rings—your client's face is broadcasting their stress levels loud and clear. Holiday stress reveals itself as a perfect storm of symptoms routine"sensitive skin" products and protocols can't touch. You're seeing multiple issues collide: acne flares alongside premature aging, barrier breakdown paired with inflammation and healing that slows to a halt.

The most telling sign? When longtime clients suddenly react to products they've used for years. Their skin hasn't become"difficult"—it's been hijacked by biological stress pathways that operate outside normal skin behavior.

The Hidden Network: How Emotions Rewire Skin

Your client's skin isn't just passively affected by holiday meltdowns—it's actively taking part in molecular crosstalk called the Neuro-Immuno-Cutaneous-Endocrine (NICE) network. This real-time dialogue between brain, nerves, hormones and skin cells creates six distinct stress pathways that transform skin from the inside out.

- **The HPA Axis** floods skin with cortisol, both from circulation and produced locally by skin cells. This hormone doesn't just cause puffiness—it breaks down collagen, thins the barrier and accelerates aging at the cellular level.
- **Sympathetic nervous system activation** releases substance P and adrenaline, creating instant redness and restricting blood flow. This is why stressed clients often look flushed but feel cold, and why their skin seems to age overnight during particularly intense periods.
- **Neurogenic inflammation** occurs when stressed nerves dump histamine directly into the skin, bypassing normal immune controls. This creates the persistent, treatment-resistant redness that seems to have no clear trigger.
- **Cellular aging accelerates** when stress damages DNA, shortens telomeres and creates"zombie cells" that produce inflammatory signals while resisting death. This is 'cortisol face' in action—the rapid loss of firmness and radiance that makes clients look years older in days, or even weeks.
- **Microbiome disruption** wipes out beneficial bacteria while problematic strains like *Cutibacterium acnes* thrive. The result: compromised healing, increased sensitivity and that stubborn combination of dryness and breakouts.
- **Epigenetic changes** flip genetic switches that control everything from barrier strength to pigmentation. Some of these changes persist long after stress subsides, explaining why some clients never bounce back to their pre-stress baseline.

Present this science confidently. When clients understand these are proven biological processes—not mysterious skin problems that just add to their stress—they invest in solutions instead of bouncing between products hoping for magic.

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Spotting Stressed Skin in Your Treatment Room

Conventional skin analysis falls short when stress is the driver. Instead of categorizing by type, look for these stress signatures:

- Facial puffiness that doesn't respond to lymphatic drainage
- Inflammation that migrates around the face
- Texture changes, surface lines and deepening wrinkles that develop too quickly to be normal aging
- Poor wound healing after extractions or peels
- The client who bounces between products, convinced nothing works

Ask strategic questions:

- "When did these changes start?"
- "Do flares coincide with busy or stressful periods?"

Immediate reactions point to nervous system involvement; delayed, persistent issues suggest hormonal and cellular stress.

Beyond Pampering: Ingredients That Interrupt the Cycle

Stressed skin demands real solutions—not another round of pampering. Instead of just delivering relaxation, focus on ingredients that actively target stress pathways at the source, helping skin recover, adapt and repair damage where it starts.

Cortisol blockers like cortinib from *Helichrysum italicum* can reduce cortisol levels by 76% within 30 minutes. Neurophroline from *Tephrosia purpurea* seeds targets cortisol produced by skin cells themselves, helping break the local stress cycle.

Cellular repair antioxidants revive the energy systems that stress depletes. Ergothioneine shields mitochondria, the cell's power plants. EUK-134 mimics the superoxide dismutase enzyme that cortisol destroys. RejuveNAD from sunflower sprouts fires up cellular energy production through NAD+—a coenzyme essential for powering cell repair and metabolism—and SIRT-1—a nuclear protein that promotes wound healing and healthy cell replication.

Anti-aging performers target stress-induced cellular damage. Renovage extends cell lifespan by over 30%, preventing the premature cellular retirement that creates aged-looking skin. Celyscence defuses zombie cells to inhibit the spread of inflammatory signals to nearby cells and throughout the body.

Immune modulators like beta-glucans don't just suppress inflammation—they teach immune cells better behavior. This matters for stressed skin, where multiple pathways create unpredictable reactions.

Microbiome restorers, including prebiotics like inulin and fructo-oligosaccharides, feed beneficial bacteria, while postbiotics like lactobacillus ferment deliver ready-made metabolic benefits for barrier repair.

Barrier rebuilders remain essential: ceramides NP, AP and EOP; cholesterol or phytosterols; squalane and fatty and omega acids plug the leaky barrier stress creates. Niacinamide stimulates natural ceramide production while calming nerve-induced inflammation.

Don't overlook aloe vera. Turns out there's a bunch of reasons this desert plant has been used across civilizations for over 4,000 years. New research shows this multitasking ingredient feeds good bacteria, calms inflamed nerves, kills problematic microbes without harming beneficial flora and delivers instant comfort that breaks the stress-skin spiral in minutes.



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Activating the Parasympathetic Response

Coordinated Breathing Techniqu during product application:

- Instruct client to inhale slowly through their nose for 4 counts while you apply product.
- Have them hold for 2 counts during gentle patting or pressing motions.
- Exhale through their nose for 6 counts during massage or smoothing movements.
- Repeat this 4-2-6 pattern throughout application.

The science: This extended exhale in and out of the nose activates the vagus nerve, shifting from the sympathetic (stress) to parasympathetic (repair) nervous system.

Vagus Nerve Massage Points

Apply gentle, sustained pressure (30-60 seconds each):

- Behind the earlobes: Use fingertips in small circles
- Base of skull: Two fingers on either side of spine, just below hairline
- Jaw hinge: Where jaw meets ear, release tension with upward circles
- Temples: Slow, deliberate circles moving toward hairline
- Between eyebrows: Gentle upward strokes toward center of forehead

During treatment: Incorporate these points into your standard facial massage, extending contact time at each location. The sustained pressure stimulates vagal tone better than quick, light touches.

Client instruction: Teach these techniques for home use during their skin care routine to maintain parasympathetic activation between visits.

EUK-134 | Lucas Meyer Cosmetics Canada Inc. (a subsidiary of Clariant) holds the trademark for EUK-134.

RejuveNAD | Mibelle Biochemistry (Mibelle AG), Switzerland, is the developer and trademark owner of RejuveNAD for cosmetic purposes, including "RejuveNAD technology" for skin longevity.

Renovage | Sederma SAS (France), a renowned cosmetic ingredient supplier, holds the trademark for Renovage, which is the tradename for teprenone as a cosmetic active.

Celyscence | Clariant AG, through its Lucas Meyer Cosmetics business, owns the Celyscence trademark for cosmetic actives.

Practical Applications for Real Results

Keep protocols simple. Stressed clients can't handle complex routines—stick to four products maximum: gentle cleanser, multi-targeted serum, barrier-repair moisturizer and a mineral sunscreen. Layer in sensory appeal through luxurious textures and mild scents for emotional comfort.

Coach mindful application with coordinated breathing. This activates the vagus nerve and triggers oxytocin release, flipping the client's biology from stress mode to repair mode.

Extended massage techniques during treatments serve the same purpose. Those extra minutes of gentle pressure along vagus nerve points deliver measurable physical benefits, not just temporary relaxation.

Reframe the Conversation

Stop positioning stress treatments as luxury add-ons. When you explain your client's symptoms stem from real biological changes—not bad luck or poor choices—you reduce shame and build trust. Frame your services as essential wellness, not optional pampering. When money is tight, clients skip treatments they desperately need because they feel guilty spending on what seems like a luxury instead of taking care of themselves.

Stress is Here to Stay

Our always-on digital culture and uncertain economy ensure that holiday-level stress is becoming a year-round reality for many clients. With these insights, you're positioned to offer something most practitioners don't: targeted solutions based on current science.

The tools are here. The science is solid. The opportunity to improve lives—one stressed face at a time—is in your treatment room.



Receiving seven awards as a legend in the beauty industry, **Rebecca Gadberry, LE, FSCC**, is a preeminent ingredient authority who has taught thousands of beauty professionals how to understand and successfully discuss ingredients with their clients. The first Marketing Fellow of the Society of Cosmetic Chemists (FSCC) who is also the 13th licensed esthetician in California, Rebecca is the senior instructor and program director for UCLA Extension's highly acclaimed cosmetic science program since 1986, a co-host on the popular podcast, Facially Conscious: Get the Skinny on All Things Skin, and Director of Product Development & Education for YG Labs.

Microneedling, Nanoneedling or Morpheus 8, Anti-aging & Hyperpigmentation Protocol Using BIOFRANCE LAB PRODUCTS

1. Double cleanse using Brightening Plus+ Facial Cleanser.
2. Complete a pre-treatment using Papaya Pineapple Enzyme or bright Rice Enzyme. Leave on for 3-5 minutes and remove with warm towel.
3. Create a customized skin cocktail using the Custom Cocktail kit. 4-5 serums may be combined in a small glass or stainless steel dish. For anti-aging with hyperpigmentation, a suggested combination would be 1-2 dropfuls of Collagen & Elastin Ampoule, 1-2 dropfuls of the Multi-Hyaluronic Acid Ampoule, 1-2 dropfuls of Ultra Lightening Bright Ampoule, 1-2 dropfuls of the Vitamin C Age Defense Ampoule and 1-2 dropfuls of the Injection-Like Ampoule.
4. Add in several pumps (2-3) of the peptide gel that comes in the Custom Cocktail kit.
5. Using a fan brush blend the serums and peptide gel until smooth and completely blended.
6. Apply a thin layer to each area working in 3-4 inch sections. Microneedle over each area/section accordingly and re-apply the custom serum cocktail as needed.
7. Once microneedling is complete, you can create another custom cocktail, apply it using a fan brush, and penetrate deeper into skin layers using electrotherapy, radio frequency, galvanic therapy, etc. (Note: the BioFrance Lab serum ampoules are electrotherapy-friendly and are safe to use).
8. Next, use BioFrance Lab Medi Cold Cryo Peel-Off Mask to soothe, calm and reduce inflammation. Leave on for 12-15 minutes. This will allow the peel-off mask to create a hydration seal and drive the serum ampoule cocktail, used during the above treatments, deeper into the skin.
9. Remove mask.
10. Apply the Skin Corrector Toner to remove any residue.
11. Apply appropriate moisturizer using the Hyaluronic Boost Face and Neck Lifting Gel. For additional hydration you can follow with the Ultra Whitening Cream or the Intensive Facial Cream.
12. Apply the Dual Eye Pro-Treatment set underneath the eyes.
13. Apply a light mist of the Rose Facial Mist.

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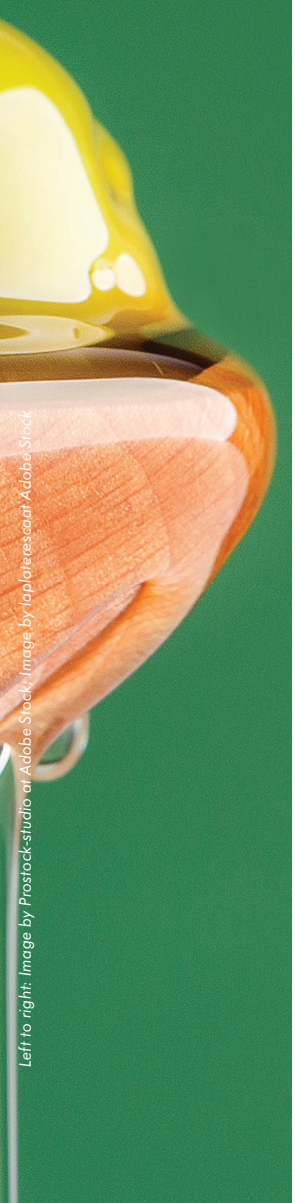

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The Dynamics of OLIVE OIL

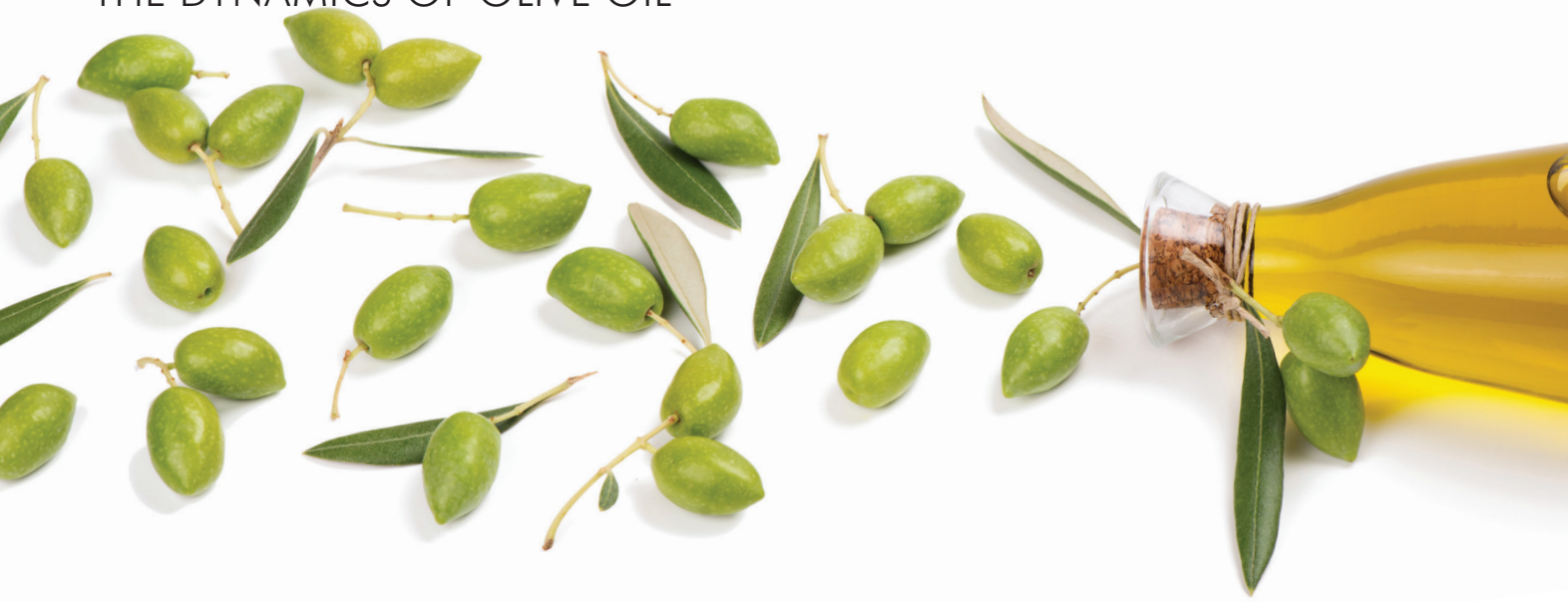
By Erin Madigan-Fleck



Olive oil originates from the Oleaceae family, which encompasses over 600 species, including more than 30 genera of trees and shrubs. The most renowned species is *Olea europaea,* which is widely consumed internationally and is acknowledged as a vital source of nutrients for addressing various traditional and contemporary health concerns. Extracts from *O. europaea* are also used in modern medicine to alleviate dermatological conditions and promote skin health.

Phenolic compounds obtained from the by-products of olive oil, such as olive leaves, may also confer numerous health benefits. These compounds can serve as antioxidants, photoprotectors, anti-inflammatory agents and antimicrobials in skin care and pharmaceutical formulations. Experts in dermatology and skin care underscore the importance of combining high-quality olive oil in diets with topical applications of olive oil constituents in skin care.

THE DYNAMICS OF OLIVE OIL



Extra virgin olive oil (EVOO) is primarily composed of triglycerides, monoglycerides and diglycerides. Its minor constituents, which constitute approximately 2% of its total weight, include over 200 substances such as hydrocarbons, sterols, aliphatic alcohols, tocopherols, pigments, volatile compounds and phenolic compounds—encompassing flavonoids, lignans, phenolic acids and phenolic alcohols. Numerous studies emphasize the skin-protective benefits of olive-derived compounds, which involve reducing oxidative stress, promoting cellular health and mitigating tissue damage. The olive tree and its fruit contain phenolic compounds that offer modulated protection against radiation due to their low ultraviolet (UV) absorption and potent antioxidant properties, thereby forming a barrier that prevents photo carcinogenesis. These compounds also promote growth, migration and gene expression associated with cell differentiation in healthy tissue, thus supporting wound healing. Based on these insights, the olive tree and its derivatives may prove efficacious in the treatment of various dermatological conditions. Similarly, the anticancer properties of olives have been investigated through diverse compounds and extracts, which are capable of selectively targeting human melanoma cells.

Furthermore, they demonstrate antibacterial activity against microorganisms responsible for skin infections, such as E . *coli, Candida albicans, Staphylococcus aureus, Staphylococcus epidermidis, Enterococcus faecalis, Pseudomonas aeruginosa* and *Proteus spp.*

The impact of olive oil on the skin barrier is chiefly influenced by its elevated oleic acid to linoleic acid ratio. Although oleic acid may impact the skin barrier, other constituents of olive oil contribute beneficially to maintaining the integrity of the skin barrier. Compounds such as squalene, vitamin E and polyphenols help neutralize free radicals that cause oxidative stress and cellular damage within the skin.



EVOO is a cornerstone of the Mediterranean diet.

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Squalene and various fatty acids serve as emollients, helping to soften the skin and form a protective layer that reduces moisture loss. Polyphenols, including oleocanthal, exhibit anti-inflammatory properties that can help soothe irritated skin and promote wound healing.

The increased permeability of EVOO is linked to a rise in trans-epidermal water loss (TEWL), indicating a temporary disruption of the skin barrier. Although oleic acid briefly weakens the barrier's integrity to allow better penetration, it also helps hydrate the skin by strengthening the barrier and acting as an emollient. Its effect on the outer layers of the stratum corneum (SC) may decrease as the enhancer penetrates deeper or spreads laterally; however, the overall disruption is usually short-lived. Infants and individuals with atopic dermatitis are at a greater risk of irritation and barrier damage, and some studies indicate that using olive oil topically might exacerbate eczema symptoms. Conversely, other sources claim that oleic acid provides hydrating and anti-aging benefits. This difference is likely due to the potential of pure, free oleic acid to irritate the skin, whereas oleic acid in triglycerides within specially formulated products generally offers nourishing effects. Although it possesses moisturizing and antioxidant properties, the higher oleic acid content in EVOO may compromise the skin barrier, particularly in sensitive or damaged skin. Olive oils mostly have a high oleic acid (OA) to linoleic acid (LA) ratio. Skin irritation tends to decrease when this ratio is reversed (high LA to low OA), particularly when combined with other plant oils, such as sunflower seed oil.

Oleic acid functions as a skin penetration enhancer through selective interaction with and disruption of the organized structure of SC lipids, resulting in the formation of fluid-like domains that increase skin permeability to other molecules. This interaction induces lipid disorder, decreases the phase transition temperature of SC lipids and yields a more fluid barrier, ultimately impairing barrier function and promoting hydration. Oleic acid remains within the SC, contributing to these lipid modifications and providing moisturizing benefits. EVOO also provides squalene (a component of human sebum), polyphenols and antioxidants, including hydroxytyrosol and oleuropein, which help protect skin cells from oxidative stress and free radical damage. Vitamin E, αtocopherol, is a fat-soluble antioxidant that protects cell membranes and aids in skin hydration.

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Healthy fats and antioxidants in olive oil may have a plumping effect on aging skin.

Olive Oil Composition and Biochemical Attributes and Considerations

- Olive oil contains a high concentration of oleic acid, along with beneficial antioxidants such as squalene and polyphenols. Its effect on the skin is complex and varies depending on the oil's quality, the ratio of fatty acids and the individual's skin type.
- Not all olive oils are the same—factors include quality, the type of species used, distillation and other manufacturing considerations.
- Individual skin condition, age and lipid levels all influence the effects of OO.
- OO used in conjunction with multiple cosmetic ingredients alters OO biochemistry

The principal components of olive oil are triglycerides, composed of various fatty acids. The fatty acid profile fluctuates depending on the olive cultivation, climatic factors and the processing techniques employed.

- **Oleic acid (55–83%)**: This monounsaturated omega-9 fatty acid is the most abundant component of olive oil.



- **Linoleic acid (3.5–21%)**: This polyunsaturated omega-6 fatty acid is essential for maintaining the skin's barrier function.
- **Palmitic acid (7.5–20%)**: A saturated fatty acid that also acts as an emollient.
- **Alpha-linolenic acid (0–1.5%)**: A polyunsaturated omega-3 fatty acid

Monounsaturated Fatty Acids

The primary monounsaturated fatty acid present in olive oil is oleic acid, which is classified within the omega-9 family. This fatty acid constitutes an essential component of sebum, the natural oil produced by sebaceous glands that plays a role in protecting the skin from damage. Oleic acid in olive oil establishes a moisturizing layer on the skin's surface, thereby contributing to protection and hydration. Furthermore, it possesses anti-inflammatory properties that can alleviate irritations by activating anti-inflammatory cytokines and reducing pro-inflammatory mediators.

Polyunsaturated Fatty Acids

Olive oil contains linoleic acid, a component of the omega-6 family, which acts on the stratum corneum. This fatty acid can insert into the outer skin layer to serve as intercellular cement, filling gaps between cells and helping the skin retain moisture. Consequently, linoleic acid is crucial for preserving the integrity of the skin barrier. It also promotes regeneration by serving as a precursor for the synthesis pathways of healing mediators. As a result, linoleic acid provides moisturizing, nourishing and healing beneficial properties.

Saturated Fatty Acids

Palmitic acid is the predominant saturated fatty acid present in olive oil. Similar to oleic acid, it functions as an emollient, aiding in the preservation of skin hydration by forming a protective layer on the skin's surface. This process enhances the skin's suppleness. Olive oil also contains stearic acid, a long-chain fatty acid, which exhibits film-forming and protective properties comparable to those of palmitic acid. Furthermore, stearic acid is recognized for its nourishing and emollient advantages.



Saturated fatty acids like stearic acid and palmitic acid are essential for the skin barrier.

RESEARCH & REFERENCES

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Dr. Erin Madigan-Fleck, NMD, LE, LEI, has over 40 years of experience in the aesthetic and natural health industry. She is a naturopathic medical physician, a licensed master cosmetologist-esthetician, and an esthetic instructor. As a global educator, she serves on the Educational Commission for the International Association of Applied Corneotherapy in Germany. She is the owner of DermaEducationTV, and her practice, Naturophoria, which she founded in 2000.

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Extra Virgin Olive Oil

By Kitty Lin

You probably have it in your kitchen right now. I'm not talking about milk or last night's leftovers, I mean what could be the next staple in your skin care products.

Extra virgin olive oil (EVOO) is a rising ingredient trend, especially for well-agers looking to nourish their skin barriers, which EVOO does while promoting cell regeneration. While it may be tempting for some people to ditch their more costly products for something they can lump in with their grocery list, it's important that they don't go tossing their skin care yet.

While a useful ingredient, EVOO isn't a catch-all replacement for clinically effective and lab-tested products.

And no—regardless of what you may have heard on TikTok, it's not a replacement for traditional sunscreen, and may even worsen sun damage. This goes doubly when treating hyperpigmentation, as EVOO may worsen the appearance of dark spots with sun exposure.

So, what exactly are the benefits of EVOO, and where do we draw the line?

Benefits of Extra Virgin Olive Oil

Elaine Sterling, LE, cleared the air for us.

On top of being a licensed esthetician, she's also a LEI, ITEC, CIDESCO, the founder of The Elaine Sterling Institute and the best-selling author of *Beauty Beyond the Mirror*.

"EVOO offers a unique combination of efficacy and nourishment due to its rich profile of antioxidants, vitamins and fatty acids," says Sterling. "Its benefits go far beyond basic moisturization."

First things first, is efficacy. "EVOO is clinically recognized for its ability to support skin barrier function, reduce inflammation and promote healing. Its high concentration of oleic acid and squalene helps restore hydration and elasticity, while polyphenols and vitamin E combat oxidative stress and

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Some people have combined EVOO with sugar or sea salt to create their own exfoliating body scrub.

premature aging," she clarifies. "Not all olive oils are created equal," Sterling adds. "It's important to distinguish EVOO from other grades of olive oil. Only cold-pressed, unrefined EVOO retains the full spectrum of skin-beneficial compounds. Refined or "light" olive oils lose much of their antioxidant and vitamin content during processing, reducing their effectiveness in skin care applications."

Sterling also goes on to confirm EVOO's vitamin content. "EVOO contains vitamins A, D, E and K. Vitamin E is especially valuable for skin repair and protection, while vitamin A supports cell turnover and collagen production. These nutrients work synergistically to nourish and rejuvenate the skin."

How to EVOO

Most of the benefits of EVOO are referenced in terms of topical applications, but the antioxidants, anti-inflammatory compounds and vitamins can still benefit those who consume it.

Retailing products with EVOO can be a great way to introduce the benefits of the ingredient to your clients in a safe way while boosting sales. Ode Olive Oil Beauty offers wholesale pricing for spas that would like to carry their products.

Other pro brands, may use olive leaf extract in their formulations, like SkinCeuticals in their Phyto Corrective line.

In any case, however you choose to EVOO, you can always trust that whether you prefer to wear it or eat it, it'll always be ready and waiting.

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

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