

DE-BUNKING BEAUTY MYTHS

By Denise Spanek



Denise Spanek, aesthetician and beauty expert

With so much beauty advice and information bombarding consumers these days, it's difficult to know what is true and what's just plain hype. There are constant claims from skincare companies that they offer nothing short of "miracles in a jar". During my career as an aesthetician and skincare specialist, I have answered several questions from clients who were attempting to extract and distill down the truth. Here are some of the more common "myths," along with alternative solutions.

SKINCARE PRODUCTS CAN PERMANENTLY CHANGE THE SIZE OF A PORE

Just like your eye color, your pore size is genetically determined. Permanently changing the size of your pores, then, would be as impossible as permanently altering the color of your eyes (without help from colored contacts). Currently, nothing on the market will do this. However, you can "refine" the overall look of the skin by keeping pores clean with regular facials and using proper exfoliants to slough off dead cells. Non-surgical peels using glycolic or salicylic acid treatments can give the appearance of smoother skin, refining the look of the pores as well.

SUNSCREEN IN A MOISTURIZER OFFERS ENOUGH PROTECTION

If you are going to be inside for most of the day with only a quick jaunt or two outside, then this will suffice. That said, a simple SPF 15 in a moisturizer does not protect the skin from the UVA (think cancer-causing) rays of the sun. You need a full spectrum sun block, one that protects from both the UVA and UVB rays. I recommend applying sunscreen OVER a moisturizer. It should have an SPF factor of at least 20 for basic daily wear and an SPF 30 or over for extended outdoor exposure. If you want to avoid that "pasty" look that sunscreen can give you, break it down in between fingertips and pat it on. It will quickly disappear into the skin.

ALL-NATURAL AND ORGANIC PRODUCTS ARE BEST FOR THE SKIN

While I am a big fan of naturally inspired products, the bigger picture here is this: Rather than focus on "100% Natural" or "Certified Organic" claims, which can be questionable in many cases as these terms are not regulated by the FDA, be on the lookout for ingredients you should eliminate. Mineral oils, parabens and petroleum are the most common. In my experience, products that have a high concentration of antioxidants, vitamins, botanical and fruit extracts, along with active ingredients such as Hyaluronic Acid and Sodium PCA (great for plumping and moisture retention), are best. This combination satisfies the need to use a clean and natural product while guaranteeing an effective one as well. **CON'T ON PG.2**

DE-BUNKING BEAUTY MYTHS con't.

RETIN-A IS GOOD FOR ALL SKIN TYPES

While the results of using prescription retinol products on some skin types can be very beneficial, I've personally seen the damage it can do to sensitive skin. In addition to people with this skin type, anyone who is active and loves to be outdoors for extended periods of time (six hours of golf several days a week, etc.) should avoid using them as well. Because retinols encourage rapid cell turnover and bring new ones to the surface, this can render skin vulnerable to outdoor environments, especially sun exposure. There are plenty of effective, nonprescription alternatives on the market that won't compromise the skin. Look for brands made with fruit and lactic acids, vitamin C and peptides. These are all good choices. You will get the benefits of radiant skin without the harsh side effects.

DON'T MOISTURIZE OILY/ ACNE PRONE SKIN

All skin types need moisturizer. It's a matter of making the right choice for each one. What happens in several cases where someone has oily/acne prone skin is that they overly clean the surface of the skin with harsh cleansers disturbing the acid mantle, which is there to protect the skin from bacteria in the first place. This, coupled with not using any moisturizer after cleansing, can send a message to the oil glands to actually overproduce more oil, which can result in making the skin worse. After mild but effective cleansing, applying a light, quick absorbing moisturizer can help bring balance back to the skin.

While most beauty myths have been passed down through the ages, some companies do nothing to thwart these misconceptions. In most claims, logic doesn't factor into any of them. What's best if you have any doubts? Ask questions and do your homework to determine the truth. Next time you are approached by a "beauty expert" trying to sell you a cream that can shrink your pores or get rid of your wrinkles, think again. What you are being sold is hope in a jar.

*Denise Spanek, a San Francisco based aesthetician and beauty expert, is Founder & CEO of **Air Repair Skincare**. Denise and Air Repair Skincare have appeared on local and national TV, radio and in numerous publications and websites such as Allure, Glamour, Details and Travel & Leisure. Denise has been inducted into the National Association of Professional and Executive Women's "Women of Excellence" registry. For more information on Denise and Air Repair Skincare, please go to <http://airrepairskincare.com/>.*