

skin DEEP

Sherina Balaratnam from S-Thetics medical aesthetic clinic gives her top tips for reducing blemishes

With winter weather settling in comfortably, summer can seem a long way off. Achieving our summer bodies begins in the winter and the same goes for your skin.

Blemishes are skin imperfections like acne, pigmentation and dark marks that occur over time due to inflammatory changes in the skin, and can affect our confidence. Apart from our liver, our skin is the 2nd most mistreated organ, taking a beating from the cumulative and damaging effects of the sun, stress, lifestyle and hormonal change.

These are my top tips for reducing blemishes and improving your skin health this winter:

1. Prevention is better than cure. Wash twice daily with a cleanser to remove excess oil, grease and pollutants from skin. Face wipes don't work, especially if you have oil-prone skin.
2. Wear a broad-spectrum sunscreen - yes, even on a dull winters day. Ultraviolet A rays are all around us causing premature DNA damage, collagen breakdown, pigmentation and potentially skin cancer.
3. Add a medical-grade Vitamin C to your morning skin care regime to further improve your sun damage. Using this before sunblock has clinical evidence of reducing pigmentation, and brightens the complexion whilst adding antioxidants to skin.
4. Have a skin health assessment. This gives you a deeper understanding of your skin health and maps out marks and blemishes. Treatments can be tailored to the results from this, a good consultation and facial assessment, AND reviewed regularly to ensure you are reaching your goals.
5. Exfoliate. The top layer of dead, dull skin called the stratum corneum makes your skin dull and lifeless. Treat your skin to resurfacing treatments like the HydraFacial, which does this safely and effectively for you, and allows skincare to effectively get to its target. One treatment is often never enough to undo years of change.
6. Your wardrobe changes each season and so should your skincare. Central heating adds to dehydration during winter so add a hydrating mist to protect skin from drying out and looking dull.
7. Oily skin will benefit from skincare containing salicylic acid. This loosens cells from binding together and blocking pores, and has an important antibacterial property.
8. Don't assume you need products for oily skin because you get spots. You may just be prone to congestion in which case an acne range may be too harsh on your skin. Ensure you consult a skin specialist to help you to your goal. Call 01 494 670990, www.sthetics.co.uk

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We've all been there: our flawless, glowy skin disappears overnight and is replaced with outbreaks and red, sensitive skin.

Luckily for me, it came at a time when I had been invited to test the HydraFacial at S-Thetics, Beaconsfield, writes Victoria Birch.

And if anything was going to get my skin back to its former glory, it's this treatment. The very treatment which is said to be popular with a variety of famous faces, including Karren Brady.

It has six steps to healthy skin – a detox, including lymphatic drainage to increase blood flow and restore hydration, firm the skin and eliminate toxins; cleansing and exfoliation to reveal healthy skin and a serum used to nourish; a brightening agent to loosen debris from pores; extraction to remove impurities in congested areas (perfect for my needs); hydration to replenish and leave it plumped up; and lastly, rejuvenation using infrared LED light to reduce redness and stimulate collagen. This also supports the production of vitamin D, leaving skin glowing. Phew!

The result: Medical director and Surgeon Sherina Balaratnam summed this up. She had spent the day without wearing make-up as she'd had the treatment the day before. Her skin was beautiful - flawless and glowing. Knock out. On a personal note, aside from my dewy glow, I also found my lines had disappeared, my face had 'lifted' and was plumper. The perfect lunchtime treatment that really gets results.