

## How to Tweak Your Skin-Care Routine for Fall, Depending on Your Skin Type

Regardless of whether you have dry, oily, or combination skin, revamping your moisturizer game is likely the biggest change you'll need to make, dermatologists say.

By [Jessica Migala](#) Medically Reviewed by [Ross Radusky, MD](#)

Last Updated: October 1, 2019



Every skin type would be smart to slather on sunscreen year-round. (Getty Images; Shutterstock)

Now that the air is turning crisp with the emergence of fall, thoughts of apples, pumpkin spice, and cozy sweaters are at the forefront of your mind. Another thing to add to that list: the right skin care.

One of the biggest changes between summer and fall is the drop in humidity. “For this reason, we see more eczema and skin irritation in the fall and winter than any other time of year,” says S. Tyler Hollmig, MD, director of dermatologic surgery at UT Dell Medical School and Ascension Seton in Austin, Texas.

***What’s more, this lack of humidity means that people who found they could skip moisturizer in the summer suddenly need to start using one now — or step up to a heavier one, says Rebecca Baxt, MD, a board-certified dermatologist in Paramus, New Jersey. That’s why for fall, the biggest adjustment will likely be to your moisturizing routine, no matter your skin type. Depending on if you’re oily, dry, or somewhere in between, you’ll be looking for a lotion (made with a large water content, making it a lightweight hydrator), cream (the next step), or an ointment (the strongest option), she says.***

***Since fall is a season of new beginnings, this may be a great time for a skin reset, says Dr. Baxt. “If you abused your skin this summer [in terms of sun exposure] or now have bad breakouts from constant sweat and sunscreen application, then peeling off that top layer of skin with a treatment like a chemical peel or laser resurfacing can help try to reverse the damage,” she says.***

Don't forget that your skin thrives when you treat your body well with healthy habits. Just because there may not be as large of an abundance or variety of fresh fruits and veggies doesn't mean you should stop eating them. After all, fall is the season for squash, which is packed with carotenoids, compounds that have been shown in previous research to give skin a healthy glow. Beyond that, here's how to tweak your routine for fall, based on your skin type or goal.

## **OR OILY SKIN, FOCUS ON SKIN CARE THAT SOPS UP SEBUM**

There's a lot of good news with the switch of the seasons: "Fall can be a great time for patients with oilier skin. They are at a lower risk of a breakout than during spring and summer. It's almost like the environment is appropriately medicating their skin, which is a beautiful thing," says Dr. Hollmig. After washing with a gentle cleanser (one option is Cetaphil Gentle Skin Cleanser, \$6.33; Walmart.com), he suggests applying a moisturizer containing hyaluronic acid, which acts as a humectant to attract water to skin, and can appropriately hydrate acne-prone complexions without prompting breakouts, according to an article published in May 2014 in *The Journal of Clinical and Aesthetic Dermatology*.

Neutrogena Hydro Boost Water Gel with Hyaluronic Acid (\$21.49 for a 1.7-oz jar; Neutrogena.com) is billed as a treatment for dry skin. But considering it has a gel texture and is oil-free and noncomedogenic, it's also suitable for oily skin. Noncomedogenic means the product is unlikely to clog your pores and cause breakouts, according to Harvard Medical School.

In addition, you might view fall as a time where you can finally break free of sunscreen, but you have to stay vigilant. "UV exposure can sneak up on you during the fall. Plus, don't forget that UVA rays penetrate window glass in cars and offices," says Hollmig. UVA rays are those that cause wrinkles and discoloration, notes the American Academy of Dermatology (AAD). Switching from a sunscreen or a sunscreen-moisturizer to a powder with SPF is a great choice here, as it offers protection without causing breakouts, and sops up excess oil. Tarte TarteGuard Mineral Powder Broad Spectrum SPF 30 (\$28, Sephora.com) is one of the few powder formulations that has the recommended SPF 30. "The beauty of these products is that they can be typically applied right on top of makeup," he says, adding that he suggests patients carry one in their purse and then reapply at lunch.

## **IF YOU HAVE DRY SKIN, FIND A RICH OINTMENT**

"Dry skin can change from a nuisance to a disaster during the fall," says Hollmig. "As humidity levels drop, evaporation of water from the skin increases, and this can sneak up on people. Fall is 'eczema season' for this reason; dry skin cannot protect itself from factors causing inflammation, resulting in dry, cracked, irritated skin," he says.

Still, there are several tweaks you can make to your routine to preserve your skin's barrier in the autumn. Make sure you're not damaging the epidermis (top layer) with your existing skin-care routine. If you're still using a facial brush or scrub to cleanse skin, give them up now, says Hollmig. You should also make the switch to a thicker moisturizer, preferably an ointment like Aquaphor Healing Ointment (\$12.97 for a 14-oz tub; Walmart.com). Formulated with 41 percent petrolatum (petroleum jelly), this moisturizer is known as an "occlusive," meaning it forms a thin film on skin to prevent water loss, according to a review published in April 2018 in *Drugs in Context*. An ointment is also the most heavy-duty hydrator you can find.

You might also consider setting up a humidifier, particularly as you start to turn on the heat in your home. Its real benefit is keeping mucous membranes — nose, mouth, eyes — moisturized, though a humidifier can make a small difference in skin, says Baxt. “Nothing takes the place of actually applying a good moisturizer on the skin,” she says.

Finally, scan your anti-aging products and look for the following ingredients: alpha hydroxy acid (AHA) and retinoids. These are ingredients that exfoliate the surface layers of skin, and therefore can be potentially irritating for dry skin types, says Hollmig.

## **FOR MANAGING COMBINATION SKIN, ADOPT A TWO-PRONGED APPROACH**

***Combination skin types often notice that they have an oily T-zone with drier cheeks. What seems like a complexion challenge is actually straightforward, says Baxt. Though your tendency may be to use a strong, medicated cleanser to control oiliness, instead, she recommends erring on the dry skin side, and washing with a mild cleanser in cool water, so as not to exacerbate parched areas and trigger irritation.***

***Next, “Simply treat the two areas [cheeks and T-zone] differently,” she says. For combination skin, you’ll need to reach for two levels of moisturizer. Now that drier fall weather is here, your T-zone might be far less oily than it was in the summer, and you may be more willing to moisturize. In the T-zone area, apply a lightweight moisturizer (these are lotion-based, not creams) labeled noncomedogenic or none at all, says Baxt.***

On cheeks, step up to a slightly stronger moisturizer. La Roche Posay Hydraphase Intense Light Hyaluronic Acid Moisturizer (\$35.99 for a 50-milliliter bottle; LaRoche-Posay.us) is designed for combination skin. Hyaluronic acid, a natural component of skin, is capable of drawing in and holding moisture, which is why it’s used as a topical skin hydrator, according to CosmeticsInfo.org.

## **IF YOU HAVE SIGNS OF AGING, BRING BACK RETINOIDS**

Retinoids and retinols, vitamin A derivatives, have been the gold-standard in preventing fine lines and wrinkles because, as Harvard points out, they stimulate collagen production, the most commonly present protein in the skin that helps maintain its smooth texture, per the Cleveland Clinic.

***Here’s the rub: Retinoids exfoliate the top layer of skin, and are known to increase sun sensitivity, says Baxt. “Many women choose to avoid using retinoids in the summer because of this sensitivity and then go right back to using them after Labor Day,” she says. As long as your skin type allows (meaning: You don’t have exceptionally dry, eczema-prone skin), this is a good opportunity to bring back a retinoid in your nightly routine, like Skinbetter Science’s AlphaRet Overnight Cream (\$120 for a 1-oz tube; Skinbetter.com), which contains a combination retinoid and alpha hydroxy acid (AHA).***

A randomized study published in December 2017 in the *Journal of Cosmetic Dermatology* found that using this retinoid-AHA combo for 8 to 12 weeks was just as effective as a prescription-based retinoid in reducing the appearance of lines and wrinkles and improving tone. The

company-led research, which involved 47 participants ages 30 to 65, also found that it resulted in less irritation, a common retinoid side effect.

Last, continue to use sunscreen. This is true for everyone, but especially if you're using retinoids or retinols again and are looking to prevent skin damage that leads to lines, wrinkles, and discolorations. "So many people think that once fall starts, they don't need an SPF anymore, but the sun is still out and you still get a fair amount of incidental exposure when you're walking into work or out to lunch," says Baxt.

A moisturizer with built-in sunscreen is the way to make life easy, she says. Try Neutrogena Visibly Even Daily Moisturizer with Sunscreen (\$18.99 for a 1.7 fl oz bottle; Neutrogena.com), which provides broad-spectrum SPF 30 protection. It also contains soy, which, according to a review published in February 2018 in *The Journal of Clinical and Aesthetic Dermatology*, is an ingredient that can help with post-summer pigmentation and even tone.

<https://www.everydayhealth.com/skin-beauty/how-tweak-your-skin-care-routine-fall/>