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# 61



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## Diagnosis

Many people's complexions aren't completely uniform. "Many of my patients have combination skin—it's supercommon," says Ranella Hirsch, an assistant clinical professor of dermatology at Boston University School of Medicine. If you agree with most of the following statements, you officially have combination skin.

- **Twenty minutes after washing** your face with a neutral cleanser, like Cetaphil, you feel oiliness in certain parts of your face and not in others.
- **When you use a moisturizer for normal skin**, it makes your cheeks feel good, but your T-zone looks like an oil slick.
- **The pores on your nose are visibly larger** than the pores on your cheeks and jawline.
- **You have dandruff.** "This isn't a definite indicator, but it is very common for women with combination skin to have dry, flaky patches on their scalp as well," says Fusco.
- **You get breakouts and dry patches** at the same time.
- **When the weather is hot, your T-zone gets shiny** faster than it normally does—usually by midmorning.
- **If your flaky areas are within your T-zone**, have a little bit of yellowness to them, and the skin underneath looks pink and inflamed, you may have seborrheic dermatitis. "I call it facial dandruff," says Fusco. "This condition is often confused with dry skin, but it is actually an overgrowth of yeast that normally grows on the scalp. People often have dandruff along with it." To clear it up, see your dermatologist, who may prescribe antifungal, anti-yeast, or anti-inflammatory creams.

## P.M. Routine

Follow these steps to balance out combination skin and work anti-aging benefits into your regular routine.

- 1 Wash your face with the mild cleanser** you used in the morning. Use the Clarisonic cleansing brush again if your T-zone is very oily.
- 2 Use a lightweight retinol cream all over.** "A lotion with retinol is the ultimate anti-aging moisturizer for combination skin," says Lupo. "Retinol keeps pores from getting clogged, plus it's a great collagen builder."
- 3 Let the retinol sink in**, then coat cheeks and dry areas with a moisturizer for combination skin. Look for ingredients like petrolatum to help repair a compromised skin barrier and prevent flakes.
- 4 Once a week**, spot-treat your face with two masks. Apply a moisturizing mask to the dry areas and an oil-absorbing clay one to your T-zone. "These are particularly good before a big event," says Lupo. Note: You can use the oil-absorbing mask up to three times a week.

**"Look for a moisturizer that has retinol within the first ten ingredients on the list," says Fusco.**

## A.M. Routine

During the day, your T-zone is shiny, but your cheeks may have a few dry patches; you need proper cleansing, strategic spot treating, and, of course, sunscreen all over.

- 1 Wash your entire face with a gentle cleanser.** Then go over the T-zone only with a Clarisonic cleansing brush. The physical motion is enough to remove the dead skin and debris.
- 2 After cleansing**, swipe an alcohol-free toner on your T-zone. Witch hazel and rose water are calming and have anti-inflammatory benefits.
- 3 If you still have clogged pores**, pore strips can be helpful—when used properly. Make sure skin is clean, then apply the strip and wait 10 to 15 minutes until it is completely dry before slowly peeling it off.
- 4 You still need a moisturizer.** "People confuse the oil that's in the pores, which creates shine, with the lipids between the cells that protect and hydrate skin," says Mary Lupo, a New Orleans dermatologist. Use a lotion or BB cream that combines mattifying ingredients (salicylic acid, silica) with oil-free hydrators (glycerin, hyaluronic acid).
- 5 Use a mattifying sunscreen**, which effectively absorbs oil and won't leave skin looking or feeling greasy. Look for SPF 30 or higher. If you have very dry skin, you can use a light lotion with SPF.
- 6 Blot shine throughout the day with blotting papers**, which won't clog pores. Look for ones without powder, like Neutrogena Shine-Control Blotting Sheets.

## Top Products

There's a host of new products specifically made for combination skin. "Your skin is actually incredibly smart and does a good job of figuring it all out," says Lupo. "It just needs a little help." Here it is.

- **Bioré Combination Skin Balancing Cleanser.** It contains glycerin and gentle foaming agents to clean without drying out to the point of tightness.
- **Garnier The Soothing Remover Cleansing Towelettes for Sensitive Skin.** These towelettes make spot-exfoliating much easier and more convenient, and they contain vitamin E to keep skin from getting red and irritated.
- **Vichy Normaderm Daily Anti-Acne Hydrating Lotion.** Salicylic acid helps keep acne-prone areas clear, while glycerin tends to drier ones.
- **Dr. Brandt BB Matte Broad Spectrum.** It's oil-free and specifically formulated for combination skin, so your face won't get shiny after a few hours.
- **Derma Doctor Ain't Misbehavin' Sunscreen SPF 30.** The mattifying formula contains salicylic acid, so while it protects, it doesn't clog pores.
- **Simple Vital Vitamin Night Cream.** Vitamins E and B<sub>5</sub> and glycerin keep skin moisturized without exacerbating oiliness.
- **Philosophy Total Matteness Pore-Minimizing & Mattifying Cleanser + Mask.** It uses kaolin to control shininess without drying out the cheeks and jawline.