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# The Worst Skin Care Habits That Dermatologists Wish You'd Stop

*These professionals hear it all, see it all and have some thoughts about what you’re doing wrong.*

By Julie Kendrick

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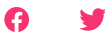


SERGEY MIRONOV VIA GETTY IMAGES

Your [skin](#) is an open book to a professional. If you’re sleeping in your makeup, [popping pimples](#) or [not drinking enough water](#), it’s likely they’ll be able to tell by the state of your skin. What are the habits they wish you’d change? They told us all about it.

## Stop following crazy TikTok skin trends

“Every day I see patients who have attempted to replicate a skin routine they found through social media,” said dermatologist [Hysem Eldik](#). “It’s tricky to think that one influencer’s routine can work for someone else. Skin is unique,



[Agashev](#) offered a similar warning: “It seems that if it’s on TikTok, and it’s a skin care trend, it’s a ‘must try.’ Some of these trends are horrible for your skin or aren’t individually based.”

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And just when professionals think they’ve seen it all, patients start trying even crazier trends. Dermatologist [Naana Boakye](#) has recently had patients tell her they’re using deodorant on their faces because they saw it on TikTok. “I shake my head and ask why, since the ingredients could possibly cause irritant-contact dermatitis,” she said. “Just — don’t.”

There are so many dangerous TikTok skin care trends, in fact, that we have [an entire story about it](#).

### Stop overdoing it with exfoliation

Dermatologist [Courtney Rubin](#) knows that some of her patients tend to think: *If a little is good, a lot will be better*. But this isn’t a smart way to treat your skin. Rubin explained: “Many of my patients over-exfoliate their skin, either with manually abrasive scrubs or brushes, or with chemical exfoliants like glycolic acid. Many people incorrectly think that their breakouts and skin issues are due to the skin being ‘dirty,’ but over-exfoliation often makes things worse because it damages the skin barrier.”

What’s the ideal pace for exfoliation? “Once or twice a week can help to remove dead skin cells from the surface of the skin,” Rubin said. “But doing it five to seven times a week can break down the skin barrier, leading to inflammation and redness, burning/stinging, flaking, dryness and breakouts.”

Similarly, dermatologist [Claire Wolinsky](#), clinical instructor at the Mount Sinai School of Medicine, said she sees many patients overusing products. “Patients often come in with complex skin care regimens, and after reviewing, I find they are using multiple vitamin C products, or a few AHA/BHAs or layering both a retinol and retinoid in the same day,” she said. “Overdoing one ingredient can not only be a waste of money, but it increases the risk of skin irritation.”

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## The Best Products For Face Exfoliation

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### Start cleaning your phone, pillowcase and face masks

While some patients are overdoing it with cleansing, others are ignoring the most germ-ridden parts of their life.

Dermatologist [Marisa Garshick](#) warned about the dangers of not cleaning your phone or [changing your pillowcase](#) or face mask. “They can accumulate oil, bacteria and residue from skin and hair products, which can all contribute to breakouts or irritation on the skin,” she said. “When patients come in with a rash or breakouts only on one side of the face, it often turns out that’s the side they use to speak on their phone, or that they sleep on. That buildup can have an impact on the skin.”

Another place for greater cleaning vigilance is your makeup brushes, said dermatologist [Corey Hartman](#). “The face is a prime spot for bacteria, and makeup brushes pick up this bacteria on the face during application,” he said. “That bacteria can be left in the brush for weeks, if not months. Every time you put a dirty makeup brush on your skin, you risk adding bacteria to the face that can lead to acne or an infection.”



## The Best Silk Pillowcases

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### Start taking shorter showers

You might love long, luxurious baths and showers, but your dermatologist knows they’re not necessarily good for your



patients with atopic dermatitis.

“Water can cause the skin to be excessively dry,” he said. “I recommend getting in and out of the shower or bath, patting dry and then applying a dermatologist-recommended moisturizer.”

## Stop using expired products

Using products past their sell-by date is a no-no, said dermatologist [DiAnne Davis](#).

“The products are no longer effective, and depending on the active ingredient, they could potentially cause irritation to the skin past its shelf life,” she said. “If products don’t have an expiration date, I recommend changing them each season.”

## Stop sleeping on your side

“Side sleeping is harmful to skin, since it [aggravates chest wrinkles and increases sagging](#) on your face and décolleté,” said dermatologist Luigi Polla, founder of [Forever Institut](#) and [Alchimie Forever](#). “I can tell how a patient sleeps by looking at their facial wrinkles, because they’re deeper on the side that’s slept on.”

## Stop tanning

Dermatologist [Hadley King](#) said it’s surprising when patients think that tanning is fine as long as they’re wearing sunscreen.

“There’s no such thing as a healthy tan,” she said. “It’s a defense mechanism that kicks in when the DNA of your skin cells is getting damaged by UV radiation, which leads to increased risk of skin cancer and premature aging of the skin.”

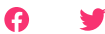
## Stop trying to deal with moles at home

“I’ve had patients come in with spots and scars on their skin after trying at-home remedies to remove moles and other growths,” said dermatologist [Brian Hibler](#). “These treatments typically cause a chemical burn to the skin to remove the growth, and they can result in scarring and infection. In addition, if it were to be a skin cancer, the patient may not have removed all of the cancerous cells, and the cancer can recur or continue to grow under the skin, with risk of spreading.”

## Stop skipping sunscreen

“One of the most harmful habits I hear about from my patients is skipping sunscreen when it’s cloudy,” said dermatologist [Reid Maclellan](#), founder and CEO of [Cortina](#) and an adjunct





be applied every day, rain or shine, because exposing your skin to UV rays can lead to sun damage and skin cancer.”

Dermatologist [Rebecca Marcus](#), founder of Maei MD, noted another type of sun-protection complacency. “Combination makeup/sunscreen products usually don’t have enough sunscreen,” she said. “In order to get the full SPF effect that’s listed on the label, you’d have to use a much larger amount of product than is typically used for makeup. So it’s best to keep your makeup and sunscreen separate, or to use a tinted sunscreen instead.”

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