



(Skin)

Finally, A Pore-Minimizing Skin Care Routine That Actually Works

Flawlessly smooth.

by JESSICA FIELDS

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Pores have always been a major skin care concern. As a teenager, you probably wrestled with blackhead strips designed to flush them out, then moved on to strong astringents to tighten and make them smaller. Now, as an adult, you may have discovered the magic of niacinamide serums, hoping you've learned how to shrink pores for good. Unfortunately, it is impossible. "Pore size is genetically determined, and there's not much you can do to physically decrease that," says Dr. Melanie Palm, M.D, board-certified dermatologist and cosmetic surgeon at Art of Skin MD in San Diego.

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Dr. Marina Peredo, M.D., a board-certified, a dermatologist at Manhattan's [Skinfluence Medical Center](#), elaborates, "It's a skin care myth that's stood the test of time," she says. While you can't permanently change their size, she explains that there are many ways to make pores appear smaller. The beauty aisles are filled with products aiming to give you a smooth and even complexion, but just how do you sift through the sea of options to find what *really* works? "The key is to build a solid routine at home and incorporate certain in-office treatments," says Dr. Palm.

Ahead, TZR tapped three skin experts to learn how to create an effective routine for minimizing pores. Read on to see the products and ingredients they recommend for flawless results.



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What Makes Pores Look Big?

There are different reasons why your pores can look enlarged. “Most commonly, they may be clogged from oil, dirt, and dead cells that build up on the skin,” says Dr. Peredo. By definition, pores are the tiny openings on the skin that surround the hair follicles. Under the surface, sebaceous glands (attached to the follicle) produce sebum that help naturally lubricate the skin. As the oils are secreted, they can seep into pores and cause them to fill up and appear bigger than normal.

According to Dr. Rachel Westbay M.D., board-certified dermatologist at Marmur Medical in New York City, many people mistake enlarged pores for blackheads and therefore go about treating them incorrectly. “The overwhelming majority of enlarged pores are actually the result of sebaceous filaments,” she says. Found just below the skin, the tube-like structures line the walls of the pores and facilitate the direction of oil flow. “Much like blackheads, sebaceous filaments tend to be found on oily areas of the face, like the nose, inner cheeks and chin. However, because they are a normal part of anatomy, they cannot be removed.” As she explains, when the pores become filled with oil they’re stretched to the point that the filaments become more visible.

How To Make Pores Look Smaller

You may be tempted to slap on a pore strip before bed, but as Dr. Westbay notes, it will only temporarily fix the problem. “Even if you’re able to dislodge sebaceous filaments, they’re likely to re-emerge to the point of visibility within 30 days,” she says. Instead, the experts suggest creating a routine that involves products and ingredients to improve the overall quality of the pore.

Cleanse Properly

Since excessive sebum production is most commonly the cause of enlarged pores, you’ll need a good cleanser to help remove and balance the amount of oil on the skin. “A gentle option is best for breaking down leftover dirt and oils that can cause clogging. This will also help prep your skin for the rest of your routine,” says Dr. Peredo. Along with your go-to face wash, Dr. Palm recommends incorporating noncomedogenic products that will exfoliate for a deeper clean. “Look for items with active ingredients like salicylic acid, glycolic acid, and retinoids, which help rid the skin of dead cells while controlling sebum production,” she says. At night, consider double cleansing with an oil to thoroughly break down makeup and sunscreen before washing your face.

Moisturize Your Skin

While enlarged pores often mean excess sebum, Dr. Palm notes that there’s no reason you should skip moisturizing. “Hydrating your skin is a crucial step in controlling sebum production and minimizing the appearance of pores,” she says. If you have oily or acne-prone skin, she recommends choosing a lightweight or water-based product to decrease the chances of clogging your pores. “Ingredients like hyaluronic acid, peptides, and ceramides are all hydrating without being too heavy,” she says. Furthermore, Dr. Peredo suggests adding products containing hydrochloric acid, which aids in maintaining moisture and tissue regeneration.

Don’t Forget SPF

Sun damage can amplify the appearance of large pores. With that in mind, the last step of your morning routine should involve some sort of protection. “Apply a broad spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher daily, and don’t forget to reapply every one and a half hours if you’re outdoors,” says Dr. Palm.

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In Office Treatments To Make Pores Look Smaller

In addition to your skin care routine, **in-office treatments** can be beneficial. “**Microneedling** can help smooth out the skin’s texture and reduce the appearance of pores,” says Dr. Peredo. However, if you’re looking for an alternative with more dramatic results, Dr. Westbay adds that **lasers** may be the better option. Specifically, she recommends ablative erbium lasers, such as Halo, Profractional, Contour TRL, and MicroLaserPeel. “The ablative superficial wavelength effectively diminishes pore size, and you get the added benefit of collagen synthesis as a result of the deeper wavelength,” she says.

Dr. Palm tells TZR that non-ablative laser treatments are also ideal for managing pore size. “Pico lasers like Spectra, Picosure, or infrared lasers like ResurFx and Clear & Brilliant increase collagen production and can camouflage the appearance of pores,” she says. In addition to these procedures, **monthly facials** and superficial chemical peels will exfoliate and even tone. “Hydrating facials, such as the Hydrafacial, deeply clean the skin and remove anything clogging your pores,” says Dr. Peredo.

While you can’t control the size of your pores or shrink them, you can make them look less apparent. True, it takes a bit of effort. But for airbrushed-looking skin that’s smooth and even, it’s worth it in the end.