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SKINCARE

Red Light Devices Compared: Should You Buy a Mask or a Panel? Dermatologists Explain

The benefits and advantages of this coveted beauty tool.

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I'm in my mid-30s and started incorporating red light therapy into my wellness routine about a year ago. At first, I didn't fully understand the benefits, but over time, I've become a regular user and I've noticed smoother skin texture and fewer visible fine lines and creases.

Red light therapy devices have surged in popularity, thanks to their potential benefits for skin, hair and overall wellness. But with so many options on the market, it can be overwhelming to figure out which one is actually worth the investment.

To demystify the buzzy beauty tool, I spoke with dermatologists to better understand how these devices work and which ones may deliver real results. Given the often high price points, it's important to know what to look for before you buy. So, which is better: a red light therapy mask or a panel?

Our top picks

Best red light therapy devices



Budget-friendly

Lifepro RevitaGlow Pro Light Therapy Mask

\$139.99
~~\$214.99~~

LIFEPRO FITNESS

Learn more 



Expert-approved

Omnilux Contour Face Mask

\$395.00 [OMNILUX](#)

[Learn more](#) ↓

Editor's choice

Megelin Duo-Lux LASER&LED Light Therapy Mask

\$569.05
~~\$599.00~~ [AMAZON](#)

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Editor-approved panel

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How does red light therapy work?

“Red light therapy works at the mitochondrial level to increase ATP production, which in turn supports collagen synthesis, reduces inflammation and promotes tissue repair,” explains dermatologist and nurse practitioner Dr. Jaclyn Vinagre. In essence, red light therapy is actually red light (which uses light-emitting diodes, aka LEDs) that penetrates the skin where cells absorb it. This technology was implemented by NASA in the 1980s to treat several medical conditions.

“Red light therapy uses specific wavelengths of red and near-infrared light to stimulate mitochondrial activity, which increases cellular energy (ATP), reduces inflammation and promotes collagen production. Over time, this can improve skin tone, fine lines and overall skin quality,” shares board-certified dermatologist Dr. Jenna Queller.

“Many systems also include a small amount of infrared light — which is not visible on the spectrum of light — and penetrates the skin more deeply,” a dermatologist and skin cancer surgeon at NYU Langone Health, Dr. Mary Stevenson, previously told TODAY. She recommends looking for wavelengths between 630 and 700 nanometers (nm) for effectiveness in boosting collagen and speeding up wound healing.

What is a red light therapy mask?

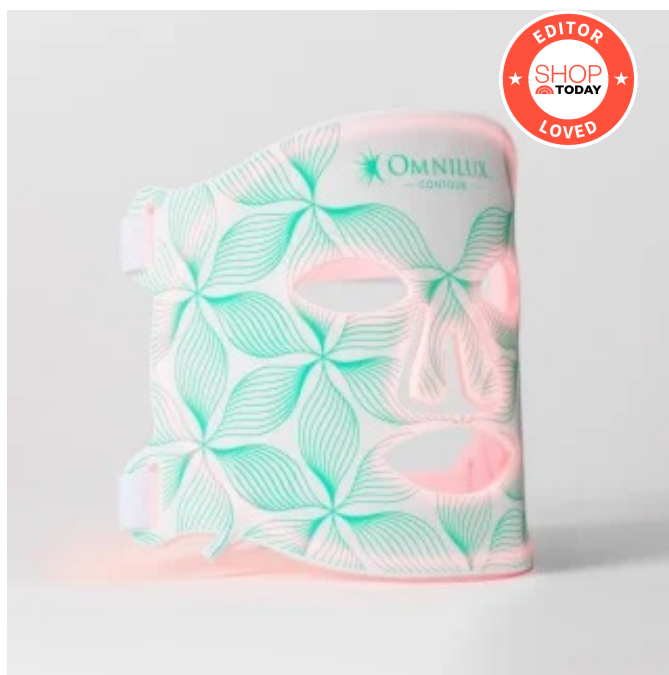
Red light therapy masks are face-contoured LED devices that deliver consistent light exposure.

It's easy to incorporate into your skin care routine and can contribute to overall skin health and skin tone. "LED efficacy is primarily related to the bulb count; masks with higher bulb counts and placement over areas like the perioral (around the mouth) and periorcular (around the eyes) areas are preferable because they're targeting areas of the face that tend to age more rapidly," explains board-certified dermatologist Dr. Jessica Weiser.

However, masks may be "limited by lower energy output and coverage area, while panels can be more expensive and less portable. Ultimately, consistency matters more than the device itself—patients who use either regularly tend to see the best results," concludes Queller.

Expert-approved red light therapy mask

Omnilux Contour Face Mask



\$395.00 at Omnilux

What to know



Weiser recommends this mask, which is often sold out. “When used consistently, I’ve noticed an improvement in my skin’s pigmentation and overall glow,” shares editor Vivien Moon, who uses this device as an instrumental part of her skin care routine. “I was drawn to it because it offers the right wavelength and a contoured fit that makes it easy to wear. It also gives me confidence that it’s tailored to my face, allowing me to get the most out of the LED lights.”

Red light therapy masks, tested by editors

Lifepro RevitaGlow Pro Light Therapy Mask

\$139.99 ~~\$214.99~~ at Lifepro Fitness

Now 35% off

\$149.99 at Amazon

What to know



This budget-friendly option works on both neck and face to deliver five light modes and targeted wavelengths. I've used this whenever I want a complete red light therapy session while working on my laptop or watching the news. I like how this comes with the neck/chest portion to target wrinkles and fine lines. It also comes with blue light to help target breakouts, which seems to be helping my skin look smoother.

Therabody TheraFace Mask Glo



\$649.99 at Amazon

\$329.99 ~~\$379.99~~ at Dermstore

Now 13% off

\$329.99 ~~\$379.99~~ at Therabody

Now 13% off

What to know



Moon says this red light therapy mask is a winner for its numerous functions. "It has the right specification on the tech side — is FDA-cleared, has red and infrared technology, including blue wavelengths and multiple settings," she says. Aside from its lightweight design, the mask is portable and comfortable to wear around your home.

This red light therapy mask feels lightweight and doesn't need to be connected to a power bank. **Courtesy Vivien Moon**

Shark CryoGlow™ LED Face Mask

\$349.99 at Amazon

\$349.99 at Shark

What to know



Vice president of commerce Jennifer Birkhofer says this mask has been an essential device in her skin care routine. “I know it’s expensive, but I think it’s 100% worth it. I’m in my late 30s and have had some hormonal breakouts, and the ‘skin clearing’ setting has made a huge difference. I also use the anti-aging setting and I love it. The instructions are very clear, and the settings only run for six to eight minutes,” she says. Plus, this device was a Shop TODAY Beauty Awards winner.

Megelin Duo-Lux LASER&LED Light Therapy Mask

\$569.05 ~~\$599.00~~ at Amazon

Now 5% off

\$529.00 ~~\$799.00~~ at Megelin

Now 34% off

What to know



I have also been using this red light therapy mask for over two months and love that my skin feels smoother and more glowy. The device comes with a power bank, which is easy to control and maneuver. Initially, I felt like the tool was intimidating but after

a few tries I enjoyed the 3D-contoured design, which allows me to move freely, watch TV and even read while using the tool. The mask offers 595nm wavelengths to help hyperpigmentation, fine lines and even crow's feet. Even with the mask on, you cannot really see the red light through the corner of the eyes thanks to its spacious design.

What is a red light therapy panel?

“LED panels are larger, more powerful devices that can treat broader areas like the face, neck, chest or even the body,” shares Queller. Due to their bigger size and higher output, panels can “provide more robust collagen stimulation and deeper penetration, but they require more effort in terms of setup and positioning.” While red light therapy mask offer convenience, red light panels can “emit somewhere in the range of 40-60mW/cm² whereas masks range from 5-25mW/cm² on average. The amount of energy absorbed also depends on the distance from the light source,” adds Weiser.

Expert-approved red light panel

LightStim for Wrinkles

\$249.00 at Amazon

\$249.00 at LighStim

\$249.00 at Revolve

What to know



This device takes a different approach but works effectively, according to Queller. “It’s a targeted, handheld LED system designed to deliver higher intensity light to a focused area of the face. It’s less about covering a large surface area and more about precision treatment. Many patients like it for its simplicity and shorter, localized sessions,” she says. While you need to hold it, you can target different and specific areas. “In practice, it’s often used more like a spot treatment device, especially for fine lines and periorbital or perioral areas,” she adds.

Red light therapy panels, tested by editors

MMSkincare MMSphere2Go LED Light Therapy Device



\$316.00 ~~\$395.00~~ at MMSkincare

Now 20% off

What to know



Editor Shannon Garlin and I have tried this device before — personally, I love the different color options and how you can easily move it around to your neck and face. “I got to try out this innovative red light and loved how portable and easy it was to use. I like that you can prop it up while you read, watch TV, or take a bath, while enhancing your skin care routine,” says Garlin.

MMSkincare MMSphere2Go LED Light Therapy Device is portable. *Courtesy Shannon Garlin*

Clearlight Personal Tower

\$699.00 at Clearlight

What to know



Moon has been using this red light panel for over a year and says, "It meets all the requirements I have for a red light device (right number of diodes and wavelengths for the bulbs), so on days when I feel like I need a little extra TLC, I can easily take this out from under my bed and use it for five to ten minutes." While it's a bit heavy, Moon adds that it can cover other body parts without requiring a trip to a red light therapy chamber.

Recharge Health FlexBeam Wearable Red Light Therapy Device



\$599.00 at Recharge Health

What to know



This is the new device in Moon's skin care lineup, and she's been impressed by the design's ability to target different body parts. "It's great for those who want the benefits of red light on their body in a specified location, but don't want to sit in front of a panel like me. I am always moving around and doing things, so having a red light device that I can wear on my arm, back, shoulder, leg, wherever, is ideal for multitasking," she adds.

Which red light therapy is right for you: Panel or mask?

It all depends on your needs, but Vinagre prefers red light therapy panels for their versatility. "In real life, as a busy working mom of two, I find panels easier to incorporate than a mask I have to wear. A panel can stay plugged in and be used passively. I keep mine plugged in on my nightstand and use it while winding down at night or when I'm sitting with my laptop ordering groceries," shares Vinagre.

Whereas a mask features a face-contoured design, it is a wearable device and sits directly on the face, "delivering consistent, targeted light in a very convenient, hands-free way. These are ideal for patients who want something easy to incorporate into a daily routine and are primarily focused on facial rejuvenation," adds Queller.

How we chose

Our team includes qualified experts and contributors in our broadcast segments who reveal the latest trends, remarkable sale events and all things shopping across a variety of categories. Products were independently chosen by members of the Shop TODAY team and our experts.

We selected red light therapy devices based on expert recommendations and asked

our staff to review the devices they have tested, considering the key criteria for this beauty tool.

Meet the experts

At Shop TODAY, our reporters interview a range of qualified sources and experts to capture a wide scope of perspectives on a given topic. We also ensure that all expert guidance and recommendations are provided independently and without any undisclosed financial conflicts of interest.

- **Dr. Jessica Weiser** is a board-certified dermatologist and founder of Weiser Skin MD and Weiser Skin West.
- **Dr. Jaclyn Vinagre** DNP is a New York City-based dermatologist and nurse practitioner.
- **Dr. Jenna Queller**, MD, FAAD is a board-certified dermatologist based in Boca Raton and founder of DermWorks, who specializes in dermatologic surgery and cosmetic dermatology.

