



# five steps to flawless skin

## STEP ONE

The first step is to use products or procedures that increase exfoliation, such as cleansers with hydroxy acids, chemical peels and microdermabrasion. When skin cells are formed, they are plump, hydrated and arranged in orderly columns. As they age, these cells push towards the surface, becoming disorderly and forming thickened layers of dehydrated flattened dead cells. Increasing exfoliation will soften the skin; reduce blemishes and surface irregularities such as pimples and blackheads. Cleansers with hydroxy acids contain chemicals that dissolve the thickened layers and using it daily can quickly improve surface smoothness and skin texture. Microdermabrasion and chemical peels are a more intensive treatment should be performed under the direction of a physician or aesthetician trained in skin care. Microdermabrasion uses a machine to apply suction to the skin and fine crystals to mechanically exfoliate the skin. There are many different types of chemical peels and they come in a variety of strengths. Both microdermabrasion and chemical peels produce smoother glowing skin.

## STEP TWO

The second step is to control breakouts. Increasing exfoliation will help decrease breakouts, but acne prone individuals may need a cleanser with salicylic acid for more effective control. Topical gels or creams containing salicylic acid and/or benzoyl peroxide can be useful for spot treatments. Individuals who suffer from more than an occasional acne breakout may need to consult with a dermatologist.

## STEP THREE

The third step is to control pigment. Melanin protects the skin from the damaging effects of UV light. People of color have more melanin and are more resistant to the signs of photoaging, but can be plagued by hyperpigmentation. Dark spots or blemishes can occur following even a small amount of trauma. A small pimple, ingrown hair or even an insect bite can cause inflammation and dark spots. Products that contain hydroquinone help control dark spots by suppressing the production of melanin. Over-the-counter preparations may only contain 2% hydroquinone and often are not as effective in darker skin individuals. The goal is not to create the Michael Jackson phenomenon, but rather to fade darker spots and create an even healthy complexion.

## STEP FOUR

The fourth step to beautiful skin is to reverse the unwanted natural changes due to aging. An anti-oxidant will correct sagging skin, fine lines and wrinkles caused by the loss of collagen. Originally used to treat acne, Retin-A is the most potent topical anti-oxidant available. Clinical studies have shown that Retin-A stimulates skin cell turnover, collagen production and decreases the appearance of fine lines, wrinkles, greatly enhancing skin texture and tone. Retin-A is a prescribed medication and must be obtained from a physician.

## STEP FIVE

THE fifth step is to protect skin from sun and environmental damage. Although people of color are more resistant to the harmful and aging effects of sun exposure, they are not immune to sun damage and should apply sunscreen daily. A small amount of sun exposure may improve acne, but it will increase most forms of hyperpigmentation. Sunscreen is a must. A non-comedogenic product with SPF15 is a good choice for daily use, but a product with SPF30 is better for more direct exposure.

To obtain the best results, use a comprehensive skin care line under the supervision of a physician specifically trained in skin care. Medical grade products available at a physician's office and may be a little more expensive but unlike department store products have been clinically proven to work.

Flawless skin is like a flawless diamond, very rare. By following these simple steps, you will be on the road to a more beautiful, healthy and age defying skin.