

BEAUTY

Age Defying AHA Facial Exfoliant, €45, KORÄ Organics

"Vitamin C is tricky to keep stable, so if it's in a see-through bottle, steer clear"

Brightening UV Defense SPF 30, €41, SkinCeuticals

Deep Forest Clay, €102, KYPRIS

The Probiotic Concentrate, €53, Aurelia



BEAUTY MOOD

POST-SUMMER SKIN REPAIR

Despite the best efforts to faithfully practice safe sun, your skin inevitably takes a beating during the summer months. Especially when it's been the warmest on records in decades.

As sorry as we are to say it, summer is officially over (sniff, sniff) and at this time of year, most of us are dealing with dehydrated skin as a combination of sun, travel and air-conditioning leaves our complexions desert-dry. Whether you were home or away, wore plenty of sunscreen and even made good use of the shade, chances are you picked up some incidental UV exposure this summer. Too much sun, chlorine and sun-soaked boozey brunches can lead to long-term consequences for the skin - think hyperpigmentation, fine lines and dryness - so it's worth doing some damage control now to limit the effects. Here are some steps to erase the signs of summer in preparation for the coming season.

BEAUTY

DO A DEEP CLEAN AND POLISH
 After months of fun in the sun, sweat mixed with makeup and environmental impurities can take a toll on our complexions, making our pores appear larger and more congested. To bring your skin back to its pre-summer silky-smooth self, use a renegade clay-based mask once or twice a week to detox and help prevent breakouts. It's a good idea to gently and regularly chemically exfoliate your skin too, to promote cell turnover and address any UV damage. Unlike physical exfoliators, i.e. scrubs which can remove the dead surface cells by force, alpha hydroxy acids (AHAs) such as glycolic, lactic and citric work to dissolve the upper layer of cells, triggering deeper repair and renewal. If your skin is sensitive, look for formulas that combine an AHA with an amino acid, to slow their penetration into the skin.

BOOST GOOD FATS
 Using the best hydrating serum or cream on skin with a damaged barrier is about as effective as carrying water in a leaky bucket, letting water evaporate out and irritants get in. Sun, pollution and stress are the main causes of barrier damage, but it can also be self-inflicted - as the barrier is made up of lipids (or fats), over-enthusiastic cleansing, scrubbing and peeling can remove this vital layer along with the dirt and dead cells. If your skin feels tight and taut after you do any of these, be more gentle and think about changing products. Creams rich in ceramides (the fatty mortar between bricks, if the bricks are your skin cells) and coo (a medicinal herb known in full as centella asiatica) will work toward healing the barrier and keeping it intact. Plus, as with our gut, a healthy skin microbiome (good bacteria) is important; creams and serums with pre- and probiotics can be the answer to chronically irritated, red or dry skin.

PLUMP IT UP
 Crispy skin, fine lines and dull complexions can owe more to dehydration - especially around the eyes - than to ageing. Greater hydration means greater suppleness, but also better elasticity, fewer wrinkles and an overall plumping effect. In terms of hydration and moisture, no other ingredients compare to hyaluronic acid (HA), which is considered a gold standard skincare ingredient. It has the ability to hold 1,000 times its weight in water and is found naturally throughout the body, but HA supplies dwindle as we get older, leaving skin locking drier and therefore more susceptible to showing the signs of wear and tear. The best serums use both low- and high-molecular-weight HA, as they ensure that the skin is hydrated both on the surface and just below. Oiler skin types can choose lighter, oil-free HA serums, but whichever sort you use, do apply a cream over it to seal in the benefits. For the body, mixing a cream with a dry oil makes an excellent combination for treating sunken parched skin.

GET EVEN
 Once your summer glow begins to fade, you may start to notice some signs of sun damage: new-found freckles, dark spots, or an uneven skin tone. Pigmentation issues are caused when UV light activates melanin-producing cells, called melanosomes, deep within our skin. These melanosomes increase in size and number while at the same time, the enzyme tyrosinase, responsible for the creation of melanin pigment, is synthesised. Melanin pigment then migrates up to the skin's upper layers and darkens, creating pigmentation on the skin's surface. Hormonal imbalances, pregnancy, medication and lifestyle can all cause excess pigmentation in the skin and while you can't undo damage caused by UV rays, here are a few topical solutions to fade dark spots over time, or prevent them forming in the first place. Vitamin C is a notoriously brightening antioxidant, due to its capacity for regulating melanin production. It's tricky to keep it stable, so if it's in a see-through bottle, steer clear. The BiLuminon-C Serum by Dermagica boasts an effective vitamin C complex, the natural skin-brightening lactic acid, and sophora japonica flower extract which helps return skin to a calm state after experiencing oxidative stress.

PROTECT YOURSELF STILL
 Just because summer's over, doesn't mean you're off the hook when it comes to wearing broad-spectrum SPF. There's no point trying to fade pigmentation if you're not taking the necessary precautions to prevent it in the first place. UV light is present all year round, so wearing sunscreen post-summer is essential. For extra protection against environmental aggressors and to help minimise the visible signs of ageing, pair your broad spectrum SPF like SkinCeuticals' Brightening UV Defense SPF 30 with an antioxidant-rich serum. Together, antioxidants and SPF make an anti-ageing force to be reckoned with. The future will be brighter with it, and that goes for your visage, too. ■

Multi-Molecular Hyaluronic Complex, €45, NIOG

Ceramidin Liquid, €32.50, In-Vitro Biotech, Thunau

Retinon-C Serum, €195.00, Dermagica

AGE DEFYING AHA FACIAL EXFOLIANT, €45, KORÄ ORGANICS

BRIGHTENING UV DEFENSE SPF 30, €41, SKINCEUTICALS

DEEP FOREST CLAY, €102, KYPRIS

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