

Look and feel fantastic today!

Japanese Secrets of Beautiful Skin & Weight Control

The Maeda Program



HISAYO GRACE MAEDA, Ph.D. with LUCILLE CRAFT

This book is written just for you. It is based on the simple and natural principle that diet and bathing are the most important factors in creating healthy, beautiful skin and a general feeling of well-being. And once your skin glows and you feel full of energy and enthusiasm, you are well on the way to realizing your complete beauty potential.

How would you rate your physical condition and appearance? Are you satisfied with the way you are, or would you say there is room for improvement? Do you feel frustrated because it is difficult to find the time—much less the energy—to give attention to health and beauty maintenance? In today's fast-paced world, time for personal care and relaxation is often forgotten, yet the price of neglect is too high to pay. Your eating habits, beauty routines, and techniques for managing stress all need to be as simple, streamlined, and *effective* as possible. To meet this need, the Maeda Program combines the best of Western medical knowledge with tried-and-true Japanese methods to create an easy-to-follow routine ideal for today's busy woman.

From the wonders of *polei* diet tea to the virtues of Oriental massage, from the amazing benefits of the Japanese bath to the beauty-giving properties of sex, here are all the "secrets" that have been proven successful through actual use by thousands of Japanese women.

Learn how to massage away lines and wrinkles using *tsubo* techniques, how to "think thin" and cut the calories you consume simply

(continued on back flap)

JAPANESE SECRETS

—
BEAUTIFUL
SKIN

—
WEIGHT
CONTROL

—
THE MAEDA PROGRAM



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THE MAEDA PROGRAM

by
Hisayo Grace Maeda, Ph. D.

with
Lucille Crahan

Illustrations by
Motomi Naito

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Preface

All women can be beautiful. If you've ever wondered whether you could be as radiant as a model on the cover of a magazine, the answer is yes, you can. But first of all, it is important to understand that the basic ingredients of beauty involve health, skin care, diet, and makeup appropriate to your skin type. With a commitment to following certain lifestyle strategies and beauty techniques, you can accomplish an amazing beauty makeover that is based on real rather than cosmetic changes. By picking up this book, you have already taken the first step toward looking and feeling great. Allow the Maeda Program to be your guide, and you can develop a lifelong system for health and beauty.

The human body is naturally abundant in health-restoring agents and resources of beauty. By having the courage and the commitment to discipline ourselves in our daily lives, we can mobilize our own natural resources—our healing and beauty powers—to make ourselves over to our personal satisfaction. And when we feel fit and look great, all the other challenges of modern life—at home, at work—become easier to handle.

If you had to give your face, body, and mind a score, would each receive a "ten"? If not, what would each score be? You may give yourself a "seven," and even through the application of modern beauty techniques add another few points, but perhaps you've despaired of ever being a "perfect ten." In fact, though, over eighty percent of beauty derives from your *inner* beauty—your intelligence, tenderness, and sincerity, as well as your health and internal body functions, whereas the remaining twenty percent is manner, expression, and technique. Wouldn't you like to let your inner beauty shine through? Forget about failures and disappointments you may have had in the past; put them all aside and commit yourself to creating a new you *now*.

Japanese women, and men, are famed for their longevity. The long Japanese lifespan is partly a tribute to medical progress, but it is equally a product of the traditional Japanese diet and lifestyle. The Japanese believe that the natural beauty of skin and the suppleness of the body are especially important to maintain, and put a great deal of effort into combating the cumulative effects of stress, sunlight, and changes in the climate and environment. I believe that these efforts combine to strengthen the body and the spirit in ways that promote longevity.

I have advised many women between the ages of sixteen and eighty-four. Each and every one of them expressed a strong desire to stay healthy and beautiful. But of these women, the ones who enjoy the best health are those who maintain a balanced diet and lifestyle. Others are troubled or unhealthy because of worry, stress, or conditions around them that are beyond their control. However, misuse of medicine or cosmetics, lack of exercise, poor nutrition, inadequate skin and body care *can* be controlled, and once they are, the negative effects of stress and worry can be minimized. I recognize, however, that to achieve this it

vital to have accurate information on health and beauty, as well as straightforward, worry-free routines that can be incorporated into a daily schedule for lifelong benefits.

After teaching and lecturing on health and beauty all over the world, it became clear to me that many women don't know the basic techniques for a "beautiful life." What was needed was a common sense program that could be followed without resorting to elaborate or expensive techniques. I have taught mainly in Japan, but my research and lectures have taken me to the United States, Canada, Europe, and Southeast Asia. In many places I found people using unnecessary medicines, impure cosmetics, and complicated diet and makeup routines that often served to create more stress and less beauty in their lives! My message was (and is) simple and natural is best. In every lecture or consultation I insist that diet and bathing are the most important factors in creating healthy, beautiful skin and a general feeling of well-being. And once you look and feel great, the likelihood of illness and the signs of aging are minimized, so that you truly do become beautiful, inside and out.

Japanese women often envy the clear-cut faces, long legs, and well-proportioned bodies that many Western women are endowed with. On the other hand, as Japanese women, we are proud of our smooth, youthful skin and slim figures. I also admire the commitment to exercise that exists in the West, but recognize the wisdom of the East when it comes to skin care and diet. So after many years of travel and research, I see how advantageous it can be to combine the best parts of each, the East and the West, to help women all over the world realize their most complete beauty potential. The Maeda Program combines the best scientific techniques and strategies with traditional Japanese methods to create a simple, practical beauty program that is truly good for you. It is my sincere hope that you find it a helpful guide to rejuvenation that you can follow for life.

—Grace Maeda

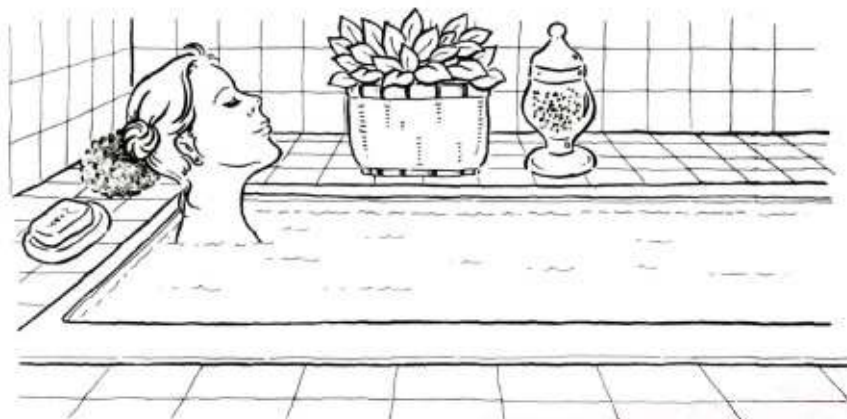
Tokyo

1 The Japanese way of living

In a recent television interview, the oldest person in Japan—a female centenarian—related the secrets of her longevity:

- A life relatively free of worry or anxiety, thanks to a circle of peaceful and supportive family members
- Plenty of Japanese-style food (that is, a daily variety of low-fat foods served in small portions)
- Regular and frequent baths
- A full night's sleep, every night

Her advice was hardly news to most Japanese, who usually live in tightly knit family groups, take nightly baths, and retire early. In addition, the Japanese diet, based as it is on rice, fish, and vegetables, is considered by many experts to be a very healthy one. While a Westerner may view these basic lifestyle and dietary habits as calculated strategies for longevity, to the Japanese they are simply ordinary ways of living. Yet now that Japan's longevity rate is recognized as one of the world's best (Japanese women, for example, reached an average life expectancy of 82.1 years in 1987, setting a world record), more and more Westerners are interested in knowing, and perhaps following, the Japanese way.



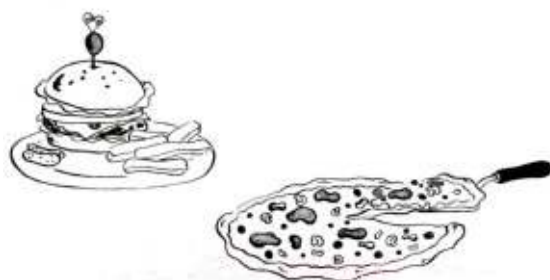
How does all this relate to beautiful skin and weight control? Health, beauty, and fitness are deeply connected. By following a healthy lifestyle, not only will you live longer, you'll live better, too. If you have ever yearned for a better complexion, ever wished you could be slim-forever!—and you hope to enjoy glowing health well past your 80s, then read on, and find out about some of the traditions that have been followed in Japan for centuries.

Of rice burgers and squid pizzas

On the surface, Japanese seem, and in fact do consider themselves, utterly Westernized. Kimonos are reserved for ceremonial or rare occasions, if they are worn at all, school lunch menus often consist of un-exotic standards such as hamburgers, spaghetti, or sandwiches. Yet the Japanese tend to adapt imports to their own tastes. Western salads are served not only at lunch and dinner, but also for breakfast. Hamburgers may be stuffed with the perennial favorite, white rice, and the local pizzeria's choice of toppings may include corn and squid. The veneer of Westernness in Japan conceals a solid Oriental tradition of balance based on the belief that food and medicine are derived from the same source (*i-shoku-do-gen*). Perhaps a Western equivalent would be "you are what you eat." The Japanese accept Western food and customs, but on their own terms, in proportions that make sense in the context of their own lifestyles.

To a discerning observer, the "secrets" of Japanese good health are not hard to recognize. As our resilient senior citizen explained, a sensible diet and a rigorous routine of bathing (that is, cleansing and relaxation), are behind the country's remarkable longevity rate. Neither of these is a fad or a recent lifestyle discovery. Rather, a low-fat diet and hot baths are ways of living developed and maintained over centuries.

The relative material inferiority of a middle-class Japanese home to its Western counterpart may surprise foreigners, but there is no question that despite the restrictions the crowded country places upon them, the Japanese do enjoy and have a lust for life. One of the best examples of this is the bathing ritual. For a Japanese, no more sublime pleasure on earth exists to surpass that of bathing in any of the hundreds of beautiful hot-spring resorts, some so remote they are accessible only after hiking from a mountain train station on foot.



At these watery retreats, known as *onsen*, you can find both indoor and outdoor baths in every description. The very finest are fashioned of *hinoki*, Japanese cypress wood, which is recognizable even through the diminished visibility of a steamy bath by its distinctive and pleasing woody scent. And the famous Japanese attention to detail is put to no better use than at the hot-spring bath, where ceiling, walls, and floor are designed to enhance the atmosphere of relaxation. The warmth of the water, the beauty of the decor, the aromatic scent of the *hinoki*, all serve to create an atmosphere of total self-indulgence and luxury. After the bath, guests are further pampered by being served an elaborate feast of local dishes laid out on low tables in their rooms. Wearing comfortable cotton *yukata*, kimono-like loungewear, they may then opt for an evening stroll before retiring to their freshly laid-out *futon* beds. Is it any wonder that people feel rejuvenated after visiting an *onsen*? They find it so wonderful, in fact, that the ambience of a hot spring is recreated on a smaller, less grand scale at thousands of neighborhood bath-houses and private homes. Never mind the frenetic world outside: in every home the bath is made into a sacrosanct oasis of peace and relaxation,

haven for even the most fervid Japanese workaholic.



A day in the life of "Yoko"

For most people, rejuvenating visits to hot springs are possible only a few times a year, so health and beauty care has to become a daily "at home" regimen. Let's consider the lifestyle of a typical young Japanese woman. We'll call her "Yoko."

Yoko is not a woman of unlimited resources. She works in a typical office, but she doesn't like to sacrifice quality just to save money. Her clothes and makeup are on the pricey side, but she believes the investments are worthwhile, since it means not only fewer dropped hems, but also cosmetics that don't deliver as promised, but also that she looks her best at all times. Her cleansing routine is careful, deliberate, and thorough, and she avoids using cheap skin-care products, knowing that the temporary savings in cost may mean trouble for her complexion later.

In the morning she'll have a cup of tea, toast, and maybe a small green salad. In coffee shops, this repast is known as "morning service." For lunch, she likes to go out for a set meal (usually rice, a serving of meat or fish, some vegetables, and tea), or maybe a bowl of noodles. Dinner may be fish again, or perhaps an Italian or French meal in a fashionable restaurant. Whatever cuisine she chooses, Yoko is unlikely to eat dessert—still not a popular custom in Japan—and the portions served will be about half the size of those in the U.S.

Yoko works hard, but it isn't so much for the money. Like many young singles, she lives with her parents. Her main goal is to be able to belong to a group (that is, to fit in with her peers), and to move according to a prescribed life passage. She may join her workmates at a bar to sing a few rounds of bluesy ballads, called *enka*, to pre-recorded music, before catching the subway home. No matter how late she stays out, Yoko is fastidious about taking a night bath. (Undoubtedly, her exhausted male colleagues will be just as anxious about hitting the tub, too.) She may even shower the next morning before work.

Though she is in good health, and eats well-balanced meals, Yoko is very slim by American standards. Heredity is partly responsible, but much has to do with the fact that the typical Japanese diet is low in fat and comprised of small portions of a great variety of food (Vegetarianism for dietary reasons has never taken off in Japan except among Buddhist adherents, because most people view their diets as being already in balance.)

Japanese women do... and don't...

To sum up, Japanese women generally *do*:

- buy quality products, considering the money spent in the short-term as money saved later
- go to great lengths to maintain their skin, protect it from the environment, and nourish it by eating a healthy diet
- eat many different kinds of food every day, but in small portions
- take a leisurely bath every night, and sometimes a shower the following morning
- work hard and industriously, and put in overtime if called for
- reserve time for regular visits to a spa, to relax and rejuvenate
- sing often (and often out of tune!) to let off steam and they usually *don't*:
- use cheap lotions or creams that are not suited to their particular skin types
- go to sleep with their makeup on
- eat a huge meal late at night—or anytime, for that matter!
- miss taking a bath or shower every day
- forget to "treat" themselves once in a while—to a massage, a facial, or whatever!

How old are you?

Calculating your age according to the year you were born is only one way of appraising how "old" you really are. Consider that you have four other ages: skin age, appearance age, sexual age, and mental age. All of these have an impact on your physical and mental health—on how you feel from day to day.

In terms of **skin age**, all of us are middle-aged after our 22nd or 23rd birthdays. That's when the sebum film that naturally coats and moisturizes the skin breaks down, and needs to be helped by applications of creams or lotions.

Appearance age, unlike skin age or chronological age, is one we can control. An active life, positive outlook, and careful makeup and cleansing routines help determine how old—young—we are in appearance.

Sexual age, again, is up to the individual. A fulfilling and satisfying sexual life with a loving partner is part of the way to stay youthful, whether you're 28 or 82. And keeping your **mental age** low means acting a little like a kid. Not in the sense of being selfish or immature, but in keeping a balanced tension in your life and giving yourself the chance to play once in a while.

No, you can't turn back the clock, but remember that the means of controlling your age are in your own hands. Take control, now!



2 The Way to Beautiful Skin

Your skin serves as an excellent barometer of body and spirit. Sickness, sadness, worry—are reflected in a poor complexion. But when you're healthy, satisfied personally and professionally, and have a lust for life, your face shows it. When people tell you, "You look great!" it's probably a tribute to your lustrous, lively complexion.

To have great skin, be happy. Sound too simple? It isn't—your state of mind has an enormous influence on the condition of your skin. A positive mindset promotes the healthy functioning of nerves and hormones, which in turn ensures good circulation and the production of natural chemicals for all parts of the body, including the skin. Achieving a positive frame of mind requires reducing stress, getting enough sleep, and balancing your nutritional and exercise habits.

By the way, when was the last time you took good care of your skin? Ever go to bed with your makeup still on, or without washing your face? Ever stay up all night, or oversleep? Do you smoke, or tend to have one drink too many at the bar? Do you spend a lot of time in rooms loaded with stale air? Expose yourself to sudden chill or heat? Neglect to wash your skin after a workout?

It's hard living in today's fast-paced society without having your skin take a beating. The trick is to eliminate "skin enemies" whenever possible, and to "train" your skin to be strong enough to withstand foes like extreme temperature and stale, smoky air, without obstructing the natural breathing of the skin.

But, first, let's get down to basics.

What is skin?

The skin is the body's largest organ. We tend to take it for granted—we scrape it, stretch it, expose it to the elements, and still expect it to hold up without much help. How vital is skin? Let's look at the six major functions it performs:

1. *A window on the emotions*

Japanese people are often considered inscrutable and poker-faced, but needless to say, given the right situation, they are as capable of expressing emotions as anyone else. Feelings are expressed by a rush of blood—to the face, when flustered or embarrassed, away from the face, when angry or afraid—and by contractions of the facial skin. Women often try to hold back a smile or other expressions, in the belief that this will stave off the wrinkling process. This is foolish and may even give your face a mask-like appearance. Natural expressiveness is an important human trait, one that distinguishes our personalities. Instead of giving u

smiling, a more sensible approach is disciplining yourself to a good skin-maintenance routine. (On the other hand, you should try to avoid *habitual* frowning, pursing of the lips, or any other nervous tics that can etch deep lines in your face over time.)

2. Nature's armor

Skin wraps the entire body and internal organs, providing a shield against various irritations. This natural armor takes a considerable amount of punishment—it's the only thing between you and bacteria, ultraviolet rays, chemicals, vast temperature fluctuations, poisonous substances, and sudden blows to the body. Cosmetics, if used properly, act as a kind of skin-on-the-skin.

3. A thermostat

The skin does 80 percent of the job of regulating body temperature. In cold environments, the blood vessels and pores constrict to conserve heat. Subcutaneous fat—a layer of fat beneath the surface of the skin—also keeps the body warm. And when it's hot, the blood vessels expand to induce sweating and help the body shed heat. Sweat glands are generally concentrated in the palms, soles of the feet, and forehead. In addition to sweat, a minute amount of moisture—insensible perspiration—is constantly being released both from the surface of the skin and by exhaled water vapor. The water lost via insensible perspiration can amount to as much as 1.5 pints (700 milliliters) a day.

4. In with the good, out with the bad

Only certain kinds of substances can be absorbed by the skin, so understanding its role in absorbing nutrients and excreting wastes is critical to the correct application of cosmetics. Excretion is performed by two types of glands: pores, which expel oil, and sweat glands, which give off perspiration. The pores are also capable of absorbing substances, but ONLY those that are liposoluble, or non-water soluble, that is, dissolvable in fat solvents and alcohol. *Note:* Rubbing lemon juice on the skin or applying other water-soluble substances is a waste of time if deep-down skin health is your goal, because these liquids cannot be absorbed, and work only on the surface of the skin.

In the prime of your youth—when you're around 22 or 23—your skin has already hit middle age. Until then, your skin is preserved naturally by a film of oil and sweat. Even after washing with soap, the skin quickly produces a new filmy layer, a kind of natural skin cream. But after your early 20s, your skin can't manufacture enough moisture by itself, and has to be assisted by lotions and creams with a surface active agent, or emulsifier, which assists your skin with the absorption process.

To avoid an allergic reaction or irritation, care is required in choosing skin preparations. And if your skin is already in good shape (not too dry, not too oily), you must be especially careful not to pile on heavy creams that may disturb your skin's natural balance. The trick is to add only what is needed, leaving all the unnecessary extras where they belong—in the jar. Your goal should be to help your skin maintain its peak condition *naturally*, not to make it dependent on synthetic helpers.

Caring for your skin is like tending to a pair of your favorite leather shoes. With proper maintenance, they will get better with age. But expose them to the elements, neglect to clean them properly, forget to buff them once in a while, and soon that lovely, smooth pair of shoes

will look like bargain-basement junk. Spare your face from a similar fate.

5. *A transmitter of sensations*

Skin transmits a plethora of outside stimuli, anything from heat and cold, to pain and itching to the central nervous system. The softness of a cashmere sweater, the coolness of silk against your body— all are conveyed via the skin.

6. *It breathes, too*

Cutaneous respiration—when your skin "breathes"— resembles pulmonary respiration. What most of us think of as the process of breathing occurs when the lungs take in oxygen and expire carbon dioxide. Your capillaries also take in oxygen, but expel carbon dioxide in far greater proportion. This process is unique to human beings.



Five signs of ideal skin

The skin has a natural ability to guard itself against disease, recover from abrasions, produce new cells, and clear pimples and blotches. Try to avoid interfering with the skin's natural ability to cure itself, and assist it only when necessary.

There's no way to stop the natural biological process, but there are ways to keep your skin looking healthy and younger longer. To begin with, know the Five Signs of Ideal Skin:

- Supple, firm
- Glossy and lustrous, with oil and water content in perfect balance
- Free of blemishes
- Strong enough to withstand normal conditions
- Healthy-colored

What's your skin type?

Knowing your skin type means being able to avoid the pain and hassle of wasted money and skin irritation. You can do a quick diagnosis yourself. (Those with especially sensitive complexions should have a more thorough analysis done by a dermatologist using a tissue sample, and should always test cosmetics on just a small patch of skin first.) Check the size of the pores and the amount of oil on your face by holding a magnifying glass over:

1. *Center of the forehead*

The best place to determine how fine-grained, dry, or oily your skin is.

2. Nostrils

The condition of the skin here will show whether or not you are washing your skin thoroughly. If not, this area will exhibit signs of trouble, such as blackheads.

3. Outer corners of the eyes

These tend to be quite dry, and also show early results of wear and tear, such as wrinkles or droops. The state of your skin here reveals whether or not you have a tendency toward wrinkling.

4. Under the eyes

Capillary vessels are concentrated in this area, and some people—those with allergies or users of steroids—have red and/or puffy skin here.

5. Centers of the cheeks

This is a good place to examine skin tissue to see if the pores are enlarged or blocked with dirt and oil.

6. Chin

Check the hollow under your lower lip to see how much oil your skin is secreting.

There are five basic skin types: Neutral, Oily, Dry, Combination, and Sensitive. To figure out what kind you have, check each of the areas mentioned on the previous page, and then consult the Skin Types chart below.

SKIN TYPE	NEUTRAL	OILY	DRY	COMBINATION (OILY & DRY)	SENSITIVE
1. Forehead	Skin is fine-grained, moist.	Skin is coarse, thick and oily.	Dull, flaky, feels tight after washing.	Oily, coarse.	Easily irritated, thin skin.
2. Nostrils	Few pores visible.	Large pores, tendency toward blackheads.	Fine-grained.	Rather large pores, oily.	Easily irritated, prone to swelling.
3. Eyes (corners)	First signs of wrinkles.	Rather slow to show surface wrinkling.	Wrinkles correspond to age, but may show up in the early 20s.	Dry, with the first signs of wrinkles.	Tendency to redness, swelling, infections.
4. Eyes (underneath)	Healthy color, capillaries not visible.	Smooth, but sometimes with enlarged pores.	Fine-grained, clean skin.	Dry or normal.	Visible or broken capillaries.
5. Cheeks	Few pores, clean, fine-grained.	Shiny, prone to blackheads, blemishes.	Skin is thin, dry.	Dry and flaky, sometimes blemished.	Prone to rashes or blotches.
6. Chin	Smooth, nonshiny texture.	Large, open pores; oily, coarse skin.	Skin tends to be flaky, rough.	Shiny, prone to blemishes.	May be red or blotchy.

The basics of beautiful skin

1. Water your skin

The human body is 70 percent water; the blood, 92 percent water. Water carries nutrients to

the organs, and carries wastes away. It helps regulate body temperature. When the body doesn't get enough water, it affects the heart and brain, and causes sleeplessness and constipation. The skin, of course, doesn't escape damage. Five or six glasses of water a day is the minimum you should drink, unless you are suffering from kidney ailments. Try to drink purified or mineral water.

2. Feed it essential nutrients

Protein is another essential element of skin care. Collagen and elastic fibers of the skin need amino acids, ingested both through protein-rich foods and nutrient creams. Your diet should include ample amounts of vitamins and minerals. (See Chapter 4 for a rundown of good-for-your-skin vitamins and minerals.)

3. Avoid emotional upsets

Well-functioning hormones are vital to smooth, beautiful skin. Emotion does wield some influence on the secretion of hormones, as does a woman's natural menstrual cycle. By striving to remain as calm and cheerful as possible, you can help keep your body's hormone levels in balance. Pregnancy also has a strong effect on hormone levels, with a corresponding change in skin texture. But no matter what the cause of a hormone imbalance, its effect on skin can be minimized by avoiding unnecessary stress in your life. (Note: Hormone creams can't correct a hormone imbalance, but are strictly for wrinkle control.)

4. Don't miss those important eight hours of sleep

The autonomic nervous system, divided into sympathetic and parasympathetic divisions, guides the body's organs, and is responsible for making beautiful skin. It is said that "a beautiful woman is made at night," and in a way this is so. The parasympathetic nerves operate throughout the night to regulate our body functions. For the nerves to do their important task, we need a full night's sleep, every night. This is something creams, vitamin supplements, and cosmetics can't make up for. Try to set a regular bedtime, and stick to it.

5. Wash your face every day

The basis for beautiful skin is clean skin. All of your cosmetic efforts will be for naught unless you maintain a good skin-cleansing routine, so we'll start by first giving you a regimen for removing makeup and oily dirt. Being busy is no excuse—once you get used to it, the routine takes only a few minutes a day.



A three-step cleansing routine

1. To remove makeup, massage cleansing cream into the skin, including eye area and lips, for

10 seconds. Wipe away using tissue mitt (see illustration on facing page).

2. Wash by massaging cleansing foam (preferred), or weak acidic soap into the skin for 10 seconds. Rinse thoroughly by splashing face with lukewarm water for 10 seconds.

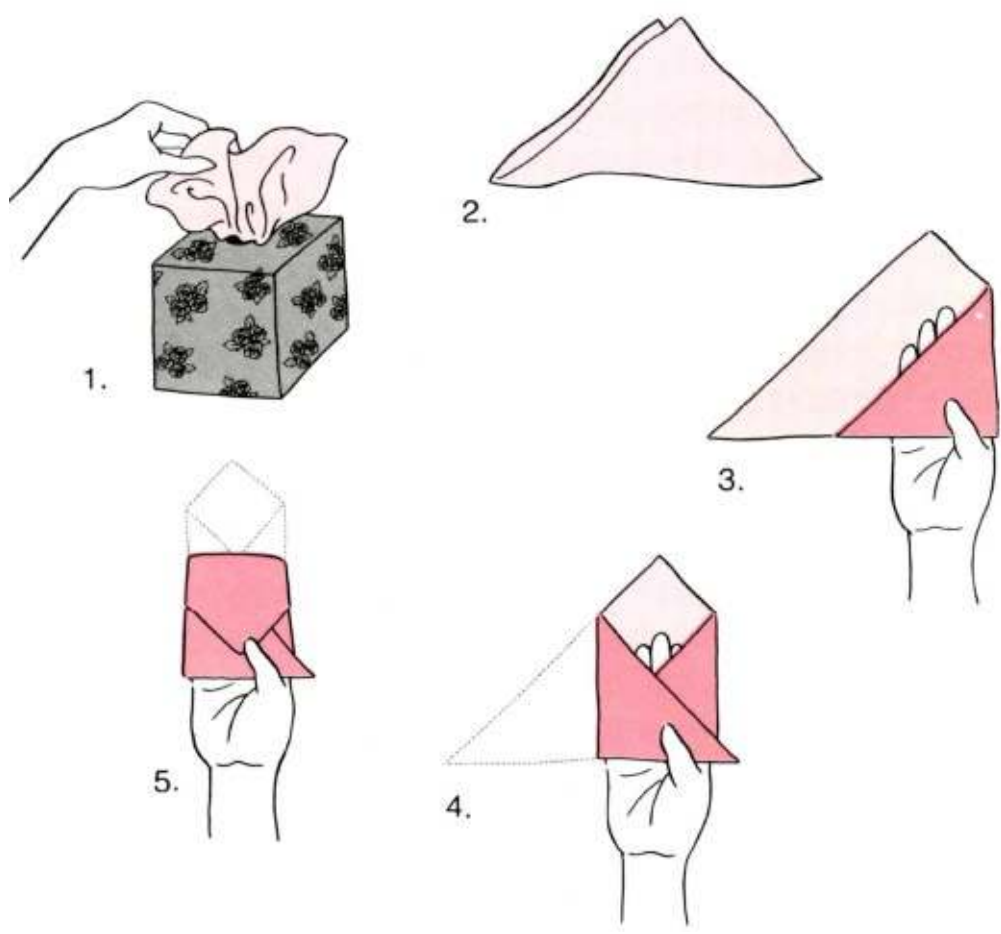
3. Once or twice a week, apply a facial pack geared to your specific skin type for 5 to 10 minutes. The cream type is the easiest to use when taking a bath, but the jelly type is the easiest to remove.

Cleansing tips:

—Many women tend to stop at Step 1 above, but this removes only oily dirt. Steps 2 and 3 are necessary for truly beautiful skin.

—Exercise your skin by massaging in outward circles on cheeks and forehead while you cleanse. Press firmly as you circle up; lightly on the way down.

—While cotton ball fibers tend to pull off and remain on the face, and cotton pads are better suited for patting on astringent, good old facial tissue is the easiest and least expensive tool for removing makeup. Fold tissue in half to make triangle; wrap around four fingers so the point is sticking up. Then fold point down to palm to make a mitt. When mitt is covered with makeup, fold inside out and use reverse side. What it all means: A few lucky people are born with perfect complexions but 99 percent of us are not so blessed. However, developing good basic cleansing habits, proper diet, a calm, optimistic attitude, and regular night's sleep, can make a face of difference.



Treating skin problems

Problem: Acne

The skin's small sebaceous glands secrete an oily substance called sebum, which normally keeps the skin soft, supple, and protected. But when the skin is too greasy, the glands clog with sebum and may become infected, which appears as acne. Acne may be compounded by the presence of *staphylococci* bacteria, which create a yellowish pus. Resist the temptation to squeeze pimples, because this risks scarring and further infection. Serious conditions require treatment by a dermatologist, who may prescribe antibiotics, or vitamin-A acid creams.

There are a host of reasons why acne is triggered. Teenaged girls, for example, often lack enough female-hormone secretions to counter the amounts of male hormone in their systems, which makes sebum secretions more active, and in turn creates acne.

Heredity also plays a large role. If your parents or siblings have acne genes, you are likely to, also, particularly given the fact you and your family live together, are exposed to the same stresses, and eat the same foods. (The probability of inheriting acne genes is 80 percent.)

Acne can be brought on by high temperature and humidity and certain foods, especially those high in acid, fat, and sugar. You can counter these irritants to a degree by avoiding acidic foods or those high in fat and sugar, especially when it's hot and humid.

Stress, constipation, and lack of rest can also induce acne. Regular elimination, a well-balanced diet, and plenty of rest are obvious remedies. Last but not least, keep your face clean. Neglecting to wash your face attracts acne-inducing bacteria.

Treatment: Wash three times a day to remove the dirt and sebum. Soap is alkaline, so after lathering your face, rinse five times with lukewarm water. Apply an astringent, which will remove excess oil (you may want to experiment with astringents of varying strengths to find the one best suited to your skin), and then use a hydrophilic (water-based) foundation rather than an oily one. Before washing your face at night with antibacterial or anti-acne soap, remove the foundation with a cleansing cream. Keep the skin as dry as possible during the day by patting occasionally with astringent and applying a face powder to soak up the oil. Be careful not to apply cosmetics on inflamed areas. These should be treated with antibiotics and special hormonal drugs prescribed by a physician.

Since proper elimination is important to the maintenance of clear skin, try to get moderate exercise every day, drink lots of water, and eat whole, fresh foods (preferably alkaline rather than acidic-based). Vitamin B6 is also helpful in clearing up acne. Take it in a B-complex form of two tablets daily.

Finally, don't treat acne *symptoms* alone. If you aren't getting enough sleep, a balanced diet, and exercise, you aren't treating the whole problem.

Problem: Blotches (liver & sun spots, freckles)

When your skin is young, it replaces itself about every four weeks. But as you age, the process slows, leaving the skin susceptible to permanent deposits of black pigment, called melanin. This condition can be brought on by overexposure to the sun, taking contraceptive pills, or other drugs, or occasionally, cosmetics. A hormone imbalance, either because of pregnancy or the natural aging process, can induce blotching, as can liver-related ailments.

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