

7 Things Women With Oily Skin Should Never Do

By Krystal Skwar August 25, 2015



Photo by Getty Images

If you've ever blotted your face with hand towels in the bathroom, spotted shiny patches on your forehead and nose in flash photos, or stashed face powder in every bag you own, you get it: "Oily skin is exceedingly common, at any age, whether it's all over the face or just in the T-zone," says [Emmy Graber](#), MD, a Boston-based dermatologist.

Here are 7 things to avoid when you have oily skin to keep it looking dewy and glowing, instead of shiny and slick.

1. Use a stripping toner

Toners are tempting for those of us with oily skin, but they can actually make your issue worse: "Toners dry out the skin, so it overcompensates and actually produces more oil," says Graber. Our skin is designed to stay moist, so superdrying products shift glands into overdrive. Graber suggests using witch hazel, a gentle, plant-based astringent, instead. "We don't exactly know why, but it doesn't dry the skin out like alcohol-based products," she says. Or try People for Plants Organic Face Toning

Mist (\$18, [rodalcosmetics.com](https://www.rodalcosmetics.com)), which contains soothing aloe leaf juice and hydrating glycerin so your skin won't feel stripped.

2. Moisturize the wrong way



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On the opposite end of the spectrum, some ingredients can add unneeded grease to the skin, which stops up pores and can lead to breakouts. "I've seen patients come in with clogged pores due to petrolatum, as well as natural products containing coconut oil, cocoa butter, and even vegetable oils," says Neelam A. Vashi, MD, an assistant professor of dermatology and director of research in [cosmetic and laser medicine](#) at the Boston University School of Medicine.

Instead, try oil-free moisturizers, which tend to contain glycerin and other humectants that draw water out onto the skin rather than suffocating it with more grease. "Instead of using thicker creams or greasy ointments, consider liquids, gels, and serums," advises Vashi. Try Belif The True Cream Aqua Bomb (\$38, [sephora.com](https://www.sephora.com)), a hydrating gel formula that'll keep skin soft without smothering it.

3. Wear thick makeup



Photo by Getty Images/Cecile Lavabre

You had a hunch, and it's true: Wearing a pancake layer of makeup and failing to wash it all off at the end of the day can clog your pores, says Graber. When buying makeup, look for oil-free options, says Vashi, and also look for niacinamide, a B vitamin derivative that has been shown to absorb oil. If you know that you're too lazy to wash before bed, try a cleansing pad like Aveeno's Clear Complexion Daily Cleansing Pads (\$8, walgreens.com). And as for makeup, look for niacinamide-containing picks like MDSolarSciences Mineral Beauty Balm with SPF 50 (\$39, sephora.com) or oil-free Sephora Collection Skin Perfect CC Cream (\$26, sephora.com).

4. Scrub your skin

It seems logical: Scrub the skin clean; get rid of oil. Right? Wrong. Avoid harsh scrubs, because like toners, they can spur the skin to produce more oil, says medical aesthetician Adrienne Fay of the Rockoff Center in the Boston area. Instead, opt for a salicylic acid-based exfoliation treatment like Cosmedix Clear Clarifying Mask (\$42, cosmedix.com) once or twice a week, says Fay. Salicylic acid actually seeps into the pores and dissolves oil and gunk.

Vashi advises using masks containing salicylic acid to dissolve oil. Boots Botanics Shine Away Ionic Clay Mask (\$9, target.com) contains willow bark, a natural source of salicylic acids.

5. Skip a postworkout refresh



Photo by Getty Images/Andersen Ross

It's not the sweat from a workout that clogs pores, but what the sweat swirls around. After a day of work, dust and grime can settle on the skin, and sweat can sweep this gunk into pores. It's important to wash your face postworkout; get it out with a cleanser containing salicylic acid, glycolic acid, or benzol peroxide, says Vashi. One to try: Clean and Clear Continuous Control Acne Cleanser (\$6, walgreens.com), which contains 10% benzol peroxide.

6. Overwash your face



Photo by Getty Images

Washing your face does leave it feeling tighter, smoother, and refreshed—but don't turn it into an addiction. The skin needs its natural oils, and overwashing deprives glands of those oils and sends them into survival mode. They compensate by producing more oil and inflicting your skin with clogged, enlarged pores.

Dermatologists recommend washing your face only twice: once in the morning and once at night. Only add a third wash if you work up a serious sweat. If a basic facial cleanser does not reduce oiliness, you can try a product that includes salicylic acid, glycolic acid, or benzoyl peroxide, says Vashi. We like Neutrogena Oil-Free Acne Wash (\$8, [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)). Use twice per day, once in the morning and once before bed.

7. Slap on several products at once in desperation

Instead of layering a bunch of oil treatments on top of each other, get it right the first time: Dermatologists like Vashi recommend salicylic acid-containing products for controlling oil. "Salicylic acid is lipophilic, meaning it has an affinity for oil. It can therefore get into the pore, which is a sebaceous follicle filled with oil, and help to remove this oil," she says. If an at-home product doesn't work to get the grease under control, see your dermatologist. Try an in-office salicylic acid chemical peel, or ask for a prescription for [spironolactone](#), which Graber says can reduce oil production by about 40%.

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<http://www.prevention.com/beauty/what-avoid-when-you-have-oily-skin>

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