



Facial Oils

Experts explain why the use of oils on the complexion, once considered a no-no, is now a trend. *By Rachel Kossman*

Describe some of the misconceptions surrounding the use of facial oils.

Melanie Sachs, co-founder of Diamond Way Ayurveda, San Luis Obispo, CA: The use of facial oils dates back hundreds of years. Then fancier face creams came along, offering similar moisturization and protection benefits. I believe some people still shy away from using facial oils because they (mistakenly) think it will result in shiny, oily skin, which may be considered unsophisticated—or even dirty. Plus, facial oils are often thought to be congestive and are associated with breakouts. The truth is that refined oils are wonderful for our complexions.

Veronica Schwartz, certified aromatherapist and founder of Veronica Malibu Skin & Body Care Center, Malibu, CA: I think the general public was under the assumption that oils were too thick and wouldn't penetrate the skin, and that they would leave the complexion greasy. Little did they know that a good oil is the best thing you can put on your skin!

Linda-Anne Kahn, certified aromatherapist, esthetician and president of Beauty Kliniek Aromatherapy Day Spa & Wellness Center, San Diego: I'm from South Africa, where facial oils have been popular for decades. When I arrived in the U.S.

nearly 40 years ago, I couldn't believe that nobody here was using them. I think people were afraid that all oils were comedogenic and would clog the pores. Plus, the trend at that time was for skin to be matte, with no shine or dewiness.

What are the benefits of using facial oils?

Schwartz: Pure oils penetrate deeper into the epidermis because they're usually a finer blend of ingredients. When clients are in their late 30s and early 40s and their skin begins to dry out, they're doing themselves a disservice if they don't add a high-quality, pure essential oil to their nightly skincare routine. I recommend putting on oils right after a shower or bath, when the skin is still moist. But they must be high-quality oils, otherwise the skin may break out or become irritated.

Sachs: Applying oils is a simple way of nourishing the skin, protecting it from the sun, wind and chemical pollution, and delivering antiaging benefits to mature complexions. Ayurvedic practice has long espoused the benefits of facial oils, and research has shown that just like gut health, healthy skin may be attributed to the right balance of microorganisms. Oil feeds beneficial microbes in the skin, which in turn encourages the body to produce fatty acids and, in

FACIAL OILS



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a sense, moisturize itself. Essential oils and herbal oils are made up of smaller molecules, so they can penetrate the skin more deeply to deliver nutrients.

How should one select a facial oil? Are certain oils best for certain skin types?

Schwartz: Overall, I encourage clients to educate themselves—they truly get what they pay for in this arena. My rule of thumb is to look at the first five ingredients and make sure that the pure essential oil is at the beginning of the list. If almond or avocado oil (or any other carrier oil) is listed first, that blend is likely to be heavier or greasier. I opt for *sage* and *geranium* essential oils for clients with larger pores, and choose *citrus*, *peppermint* and *rosemary* oils for those with acne.

Kahn: As a carrier oil, *apricot kernel* oil is extremely high in fatty acids, so it's ideal for dry, prematurely aged or sensitive skin. *Evening primrose* essential oil also has a high fatty acid content and can be great for women experiencing menopause or adult acne. My go-to for oily skin is *kukui nut*—it's a very light carrier oil, with lots of antioxidants. My absolute favorite essential oil is *sea buckthorn*, which is extremely healing and ideal for repairing the skin, because it's filled with vitamin E, antioxidants and carotenoids.

Sachs: *Jojoba* oil (which is actually a liquid wax) is thought to be the closest substance to the skin's sebum and is therefore widely considered the best carrier oil for all skin types. According to ayurvedic practices, *sesame* and *sunflower* oils boast warming qualities, and *mustard seed* essential oil and *coconut* oil offer cooling properties. Fruit oils, such as *grapeseed* and *apricot*, are lighter-weight carrier oils. In the essential oils category, *rosehip seed* is rich and nourishing, and *shea nut* and *meadowfoam seed* are protective.

What's the best way to incorporate oils into a facial or treatment?

Kahn: During facials, I typically concoct a personalized essential oil blend for each guest, based on his or her skin type, and apply it just before the massage segment. I also use this type of mixture during lymph massage or acupressure treatments.

Sachs: Our estheticians use oils over a moisturizing mist, which is rich in gold, silver and copper colloids. I also recommend that my clients use oil and warm water as a simple, at-home makeup remover.

Schwartz: Post-cleansing and toning, I apply a pure essential oil appropriate for that client's skin type. After the mask and treatment, I blend that essential oil with a carrier oil and massage the face. For older clients with mature skin, I typically end with another application of a pure essential oil that offers antiaging benefits. ▣