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Essential Oils for Anti-Aging and Skin Care

by KG Stiles



Treat your skin gently. Good skin care – gentle cleansing, proper hydration and nourishment, in addition to sun protection – can help to keep your skin healthy and glowing at any age.

You don't need to spend excessive amounts of time or money on expensive and intensive skin care therapy to enjoy all of the natural anti-aging benefits of good skin care. Pampering yourself with just a few simple skin care basics, along with a healthy lifestyle, can also help to prevent, or even eliminate, skin problems.

I have to admit that I never once saw a member of my family perform a skin care routine. Neither do I recall seeing any hygienic routines for skin care even from my mom who was a licensed cosmetologist. My mom was really into the idea of beauty. She was always buying the latest skincare lotions, creams and make-up, but cleansing did not seem to be a part of her beauty care routine.

It wasn't until I reached the age of thirty that it suddenly dawned on me that a facial cleansing ritual might be a good idea. At this same time I started hydrating with ample amounts of pure fresh water. It was well before the bottled water craze that came along several years later.

As with all of my health routines and habits, my skin care treatment program has evolved over time. Periodically I'll change things up a bit, but essentially this is the basic skin care and beauty treatment program that I follow.

In addition, I seldom use any body lotions or oils on my skin.

I used to do so, but not anymore. My diet contains quality oils, like olive (*Olea europaea*) oil, that nourish my skin from the inside out and I hydrate with a sufficient amount of pure, fresh water daily to help my skin to stay moist and supple. As I've always had a tendency towards oily skin, my genetic make-up may also play a factor.

For beautiful healthy and radiant skin try a skin care routine like the one that follows and customize it to fit your individual needs. Keep in mind to use the skin care formulas that are most suitable for your skin type.

1. Wash your skin daily with a gentle facial wash.

I recommend that you avoid plain, water-based soaps, or soaps that contain harsh chemicals which clean, but do not protect, your skin. Your facial skin is delicate and it can begin to look damaged, if not taken care of properly. Consider investing in a high-quality facial wash.

Your skin is acidic, whereas soap is alkaline-based. Your skin's natural barrier for protection is made up of an acid mantle. When you use soap, which is extremely alkaline, to wash your face it shifts the normal acid pH balance to alkaline and it throws the skin's natural pH out of balance, which, in turn, weakens

its acid mantle of protection and makes skin conditions worse.¹ Instead, use a cleanser that is formulated for your skin type (normal, oily, dry, sensitive or combination skin) and made with pure, natural ingredients.

Harsh facial cleansers like salicylic acid and benzoyl peroxide, while temporarily ameliorating problems like acne outbreaks, can strip away the natural oils of your skin, causing irritation, and disturbing the natural balance of hydration for your skin. Natural anti-bacterials like honey or oats can help to keep your skin fresh and radiant, as well helping to delay or reduce the appearance of lines and wrinkles.

For facial cleansing I like to use raw, unscented goat milk soap fresh-made from the farm. If you haven't tried goat milk soap then you're missing out on a truly great facial cleanser! It's

certainly the best facial soap I've ever used to date. It is gentle, soothing and nourishing for your facial skin, inexpensive, and one bar lasts an incredibly long time.

Raw goat milk soap is beneficial for dry, sensitive, oily, combination or problem skin conditions like eczema and psoriasis, and also for keeping your skin healthy. I use either a hypoallergenic facial mitt made from flax (my preference) or a natural facial loofah to gently wash and exfoliate my skin daily. Be sure to wet your skin first before beginning to cleanse with your natural facial cleanser.

If you have dry or sensitive skin, or areas of combination skin, you may wish to use your fingertips to wash your face, or use a soft, cotton wash cloth. Apply gentle, even pressure at the areas of your chin, nose, forehead and cheeks where oil and dirt tends to accumulate.

Your Skin Type

Skin falls into five main types: Normal, oily, dry, sensitive, or combination.² Your face may actually fall into one or more of these categories, and different areas of your face can be dry, oily, healthy, or unhealthy.

Normal skin is usually characterized as neither dry nor oily. It feels supple and smooth to the touch with few imperfections and no sensitivity. The skin pores are almost invisible and the skin looks radiant and glowing. Little care is needed for normal skin types.

Oily skin is characterized by large pores, and often a greasy or shiny complexion. There is more prevalence to pimples and blemishes. Stress, hormonal imbalances and exposure to harsh environmental influences may negatively impact oily skin conditions.

Dry skin can look dull, taut, and have dry, flaky patches. It is less elastic and the pores can be fine and less visible. The complexion can look uneven. Again, stress, hormone imbalance and environmental influences may play a factor.

Sensitive skin may be red, burning, itchy, dry or tender to the touch. As with oily and dry skin types, sensitive skin can indicate an overreaction to something in the environment or one's diet, as well as hormonal imbalances.

Combination skin is the most common skin type. It is a combination of all three skin types (oily, dry, and sensitive) and it can vary from perfectly healthy to overly dry or oily. Frequently the combination skin type has a T-zone of oily skin (across the forehead, and down the nose to the chin) and everywhere else is either normal to dry skin.

Be very gentle with your skin when cleansing to avoid exacerbating any problems, or damaging the skin. Rinse your face with cool water, removing all the soap completely, and pat dry.

Some people like washing their skin in the morning and at night time. When I wear make-up I wash my face twice daily, but otherwise it seems to make my face oilier. Experiment and find out what works best for your skin type. As I said, my skin care routine tends to evolve and change over time, so be open to switching things up on occasion.

2. Use a facial toner. Though not an absolute necessity to your skin care routine, I recommend using a facial toner after washing your face to close pores, cleanse the skin of any traces of make-up, in addition to shrinking the appearance of pores.

Facial toners are also excellent for controlling acne outbreaks, skin blemishes, or plugged pores. Add toner to a cotton or wool facial round before applying it to your face in long upward strokes, starting at your décolletage. Facial toner can also be sprayed directly on the face.

3. Moisturize dry skin. After washing, or toning your skin, you may wish to use a moisturizer if your skin is dry. Be sure to use a moisturizer suitable for your skin type. Apply gently in upward strokes, starting at your décolletage.

4. Protect your skin from the sun.

Protecting yourself from overexposure to the sun is not an issue most of us face during the winter months in the United States (unless you're lucky enough to be a snow bird or you live in southern states such as Arizona or Florida or if you travel to some



sunny destination abroad) but it is one of the best ways to take good care of your skin. Sun exposure over time can cause wrinkles, lines, age spots and other skin issues, as well as increase your risk of skin cancer. I'm a sun lover and love sun bathing early in the morning during the summer months.

According to Dr. Mercola, "Fifteen to twenty minutes in sunlight a day helps your body produce the vitamin D it needs to absorb calcium and promote bone growth and keep the heart healthy. But sunscreen—important to protect against skin cancer—reduces the body's ability to manufacture the vitamin."³

For sun protection:

- Cover your skin with protective clothing like long-sleeved shirts, pants and wide-brimmed hats.
- During the peak of the day's heat when the sun's rays are strongest hang out in shady spots and avoid exposure to direct sunlight between 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
- When necessary use sunscreen. If you just can't avoid direct sunlight during the day use a broad-spectrum sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15. Apply liberally on exposed skin and reapply every two hours, or after swimming or perspiring heavily.



5. Don't smoke.

Smoking contributes to skin looking old and wrinkled, and it is well known for causing smoker's mouth wrinkles. Smoking narrows the tiny blood vessels of the epidermis (the outermost layer of skin) which results in decreased blood flow and depletion of your skin's oxygen and the nutrients necessary for skin health. Lastly, smoking damages collagen and elastin fibers which give your skin its natural strength and elasticity, necessary for maintaining its youthful appearance.

6. Eat a healthy, whole foods diet and drink plenty of pure, fresh water.

A healthy, whole foods diet helps you to look and feel your best. Eat foods that nourish you and give you lots of energy. The antioxidants in fruits and vegetables help to fight wrinkles while the hydrating effects of healthy fats found in olive oil and fish help to reduce free radical damage, as well as providing anti-aging effects and helping you to lose weight. Research suggests that a diet rich in vitamin C, and low in unhealthy fats and processed or refined carbohydrates, might promote younger looking skin.

Drink plenty of pure, fresh water daily.

Drinking water eases stress on your liver and helps to flush toxins and waste products from your body which, in turn, improves your skin complexion. The recommended intake of water daily in ounces to body weight in pounds is half your body weight in ounces, i.e. if you weigh 120 pounds you would drink a minimum of 60 ounces of water daily. Your skin is less likely to dry out if you stay well-hydrated.

7. Manage stress.

Uncontrolled stress can make your skin more sensitive, and may trigger acne breakouts and other skin problems. Keeping stress levels low not only supports healthy skin, but it can help you to stay in a relaxed and alert, healthy state of mind. Learn to say *no*, set reasonable limits, be clear on your priorities, scale back your to-do list, make time for regular exercise, meditate, and do the things that you love.

8. Deep exfoliation once or twice a week.

Deep exfoliation once or twice a week, though not absolutely essential, can be a great way to help to remove dead skin cells, so they don't collect in the pores and turn into blemishes. Use minimal pressure and a gentle exfoliating mitt or cotton cloth. For deep exfoliation the time spent on exfoliating is longer than for your daily facial cleansing. You are stimulating the first few layers of your skin with gentle, even pressure. You can use your usual facial cleanser, or a mixture of baking soda (deodorizer/cleanser) and pure, fresh water. Mix baking soda and water in equal portions in a ceramic bowl and make a thick paste to use as an exfoliating cleanser.

You may want to tone and moisturize after exfoliating.

9. Facial mask to rejuvenate your skin, every 1-2 weeks.

This restorative treatment can help to maintain the quality of your skin tissue, as well as its tone. Depending upon the ingredients, a facial mask can be useful for treating anti-aging, spots, wrinkles, skin tone, improving facial radiance, in addition to brightening and toning up your skin.

Face and Body Skin Tonic Spray

A skin toner may be used for your body or face and it is designed to cleanse and freshen your skin, as well as to shrink the appearance of pores. You can use your body and facial toner in different ways, including applying it to a cotton or damp wool cloth, or you can spray it directly onto your body or face as a freshener.

After Shower Body Therapy Blend

Use this simple method of gentle full body exfoliation after your shower.

Ingredients and Equipment:

Small ceramic bowl

Cotton wash cloth for applying scented body oil and gently exfoliating your skin

Sterilized instrument such as a stainless steel teaspoon

1-3 Tablespoons of a carrier oil such as jojoba (*Simmondsia chinensis*), rose hip (*Rosa rugosa*) or fractionated coconut (*Cocos nucifera*)

Essential Oils: 1-3 drops total, as recommended by skin type or condition

- Rose (*Rosa x damascena*): For fade lines and scars. Maximum dermal use level 0.6%.⁴
- Ylang Ylang (*Cananga odorata*): For dry skin. Skin sensitization (moderate risk). Avoid use with disease or damaged skin, and children under two years of age. Maximum dermal use level 0.8%.⁵
- German Chamomile (*Matricaria chamomilla*): For sensitive or problem skin. Drug interaction (all routes) for drugs metabolized by CYP2D6.⁷

- Rose Geranium (*Pelargonium roseum*): For mature and combination skin. Skin sensitization (low risk). Possible drug interaction with oral use for diabetes medication, drugs metabolized by CYP2B6. Maximum dermal use level 17.5%.⁶
- Cypress (*Cupressus sempervirens*): For oily skin.
- Lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia*): For sunburned skin.

Instructions for Making and Use:

Add 1-3 drops of essential oil to 1-3 Tablespoons of carrier oil and blend together in a small ceramic bowl.

Use a warm, damp cotton wash cloth to absorb the blended scented oil and gently rub your entire body all over with it, then allow your skin to air dry. Depending upon the condition of the skin you may use a more brisk motion when applying the oil.

Cautions: Do not apply the oil blend directly on any open sores as this can cause sensitization to essential oils. You may apply the oil blend around an area with broken skin, but not directly onto it.

Aromatherapy Skin Toner

Adding an essential oil or blend to your toner that has skin nourishing and healing properties suitable for your skin type enhances the effectiveness of your toner. Use your body freshener and toner anytime you feel the need. I find it especially beneficial to use after your shower, bath or facial cleansing ritual.

Ingredients and Equipment:

2 oz. colored glass spray bottle

1 oz. purified water

120 drops of pure and natural witch hazel

2 cups distilled water

Liquid lecithin¹² (emulsifier): 3-5 drops
(enough to keep oil and water mixed)

1/16th tsp citric acid powder^{13*}

Optional: 1 tsp glycerin

Essential Oils: 12-24 drops total, as recommended by skin type or condition

- German Chamomile (*Matricaria chamomilla*): For sensitive skin.⁷
- Rose Geranium (*Pelargonium roseum*): Regulating for ALL skin types.⁶
- Lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia*): For burns and sun burns.
- Ylang Ylang (*Cananga odorata*): For moisture balancing ALL skin types.⁵
- Cypress (*Cupressus sempervirens*): For oily skin.
- Myrrh (*Commiphora myrrha*) or patchouli (*Pogostemon cablin*): For dry, cracked and chapped skin. Caution for Myrrh: Might be fetotoxic, due to B-elemene and furanodiene content. Avoid myrrh essential oil during pregnancy and lactation.⁹
- Frankincense (*Boswellia frereana*): For mature skin. Skin sensitization if oxidized (refrigeration recommended).¹¹

- Patchouli (*Pogostemon cablin*): Drug interactions, may inhibit blood clotting. Low risk allergen does not require dermal use restriction.¹⁰
- Palmarosa (*Cymbopogon martinii*): For problem skin. Skin sensitization (low risk). Drugs metabolized by CYP2B6 (oral use). Maximum dermal use level 6.5%.⁸

Instructions for Making and Use:

Half fill a two-ounce colored glass bottle, which has an atomizer or misting top, with purified water. Add 120 drops of witch hazel to the water to act as an astringent and skin tonic. Shake the bottle well after the addition of witch hazel to mix thoroughly into water.

Add 3-5 drops of liquid lecithin and shake the bottle again to mix thoroughly. Add the essential oils one drop at a time (between 12 and 24 drops total which is 1–2% dilution). After adding each drop of essential oil, spray the blend to test the aroma quality and check that the oils are dispersing thoroughly into the water. Add more lecithin if needed to keep oils blended.

Shake well to blend essential oils into the water. Lightly spray the blend onto the desired skin areas to freshen, heal and tone the skin. You may also spray the toner onto a cotton or wool facial pad and apply to your skin with gentle upward, sweeping movements. Allow to dry thoroughly before applying body oil or lotion, if desired.

* Citric acid powder is a natural preservative for skincare products. Citric acid powder can be purchased at many natural health food stores and online. See the note in the highlighted box on page 13 about preparing citric acid powder for use in skincare products.

Toner may be applied after your usual skin washing routine, immediately followed by applying moisturizer after the toner has dried.

The mildest and most gentle types of skin toner that is suitable for all skin types, as well as for dry and sensitive skin, is made with pure fresh water and a small percentage of an astringent like alcohol or witch hazel (0-10%).

Some kind of humectant like glycerin may also be used to hold in skin moisture, as well as adding citric acid to act as a preservative, and lecithin which acts as an emulsifier.

For slightly more skin toning action that's suitable for all skin types, as well as for oily and combination skin, use a bit more astringent (up to 20%) in water, along with a humectant, a preservative like citric acid, and an emulsifier like lecithin, if desired.

Finally, the strongest body toners are excellent for oily skin and controlling excess sebum production. These skin toners contain higher percentages of astringent (up to 60%) and the strongest antiseptic properties and action which help to prevent and control acne outbreaks.

How to Prepare Citric Acid Powder for Use in Skin Care Products

Boil two cups of distilled water and then add 0.05 percent to 0.1 percent of citric acid powder to the water. Stir until dissolved. Set aside to cool. Add, when cooled, to your homemade skincare products, such as lotions, face and body oils, to act as a preservative.

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About KG Stiles

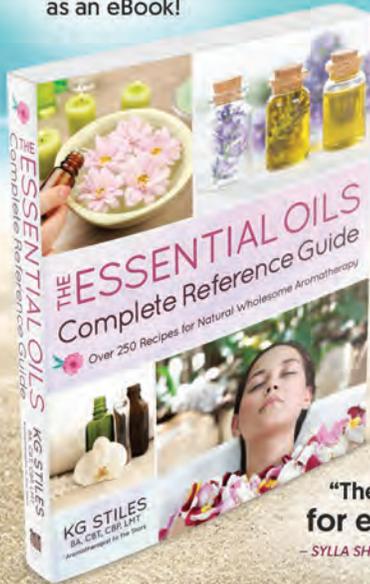
KG STILES, BA, CBT, CBP, LMT is a metaphysician, holistic health educator, certified clinical aromatherapist and consultant providing expert essential oil services since 1980. She is the founder of the *Pure Plant Essentials*, an aromatherapy company, and has published hundreds of articles, which have appeared in *Massage Therapy Journal*, *Massage Today*, *Breast Cancer Wellness*, *Aromatherapy Today* (Australia) and *NAHA Aromatherapy Journal*. Her newest awarding winning book, "The Essential Oils Complete Reference Guide," is available through the [NAHA bookstore](#). KG lives in Ashland, Oregon and is the NAHA Oregon (South) Director. To learn more about KG, please visit her website at: www.kgstiles.com

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