



# Anti-Aging

INGREDIENTS TO KNOW

**Navigating the swarms of products that promise more youthful skin is more confusing than ever.**

**Knowing what ingredients are powering your skincare is one way to sift through the masses.**



Most anti-aging products will address one or a few of four big signs of aging: dehydration, loss of elasticity, skin texture, and oxidation. As we age, our skin is less able to retain moisture, droops or sags, and begins to wrinkle and spot. Aging also leads to the production of pesky chemicals called free radicals that eventually lead to the breakdown of our skin cells. This is called oxidation in fancy science-speak.

Here's a helpful list of ten powerhouse ingredients to add to your routine that address four main signs of aging.

Tone and texture are one of the first things we notice changing about our skin through the years. These changes are mainly addressed by ingredients that boost skin-cell turnover.

Retinoids, AHAs, and niacinimides boost production of new skin cells by sloughing off layers of older cells that have overstayed their welcome. Though this process happens naturally, skin cell turnover becomes slower as we age, leading to buildup that can alter our skins texture. Over time, boosting skin-cell turnover can make scarring, blemishes, lines and wrinkles, and age or sun spots less prominent.

Retinoids are derivatives of Vitamin A and are considered one of the most effective ingredients for combating fine lines, wrinkles. Retinoids stimulate collagen production, (more on that later) and promote cell turnover, helping to both improve skin texture and firmness.

Alpha Hydroxy Acids (AHAs) work in a similar way to retinoids, helping to exfoliate the surface of our skin. AHAs like glycolic acid and lactic acid are often found in wash-off treatments like chemical peels administered at a doctors office or med spa, and in lesser concentrations, in at home treatments.

Though both extremely beneficial, both AHAs and retinoids can be harsh when used incorrectly. Dermatologists generally advise only applying one of these ingredients at a time when layering your skincare products. Additionally, most encourage the slow adoption of these ingredients into your routine, as it can take skin time to adjust. Using retinoids or AHAs only once a week, and slowly working up to several days is a good way to gage how you'll react to them. You can also couple these ingredients with others that have soothing properties like hyaluronic acid and ceramides.

A slightly gentler ingredient that also helps to stimulate new skin cells can be found in niacinamides. Also known as Vitamin B12, niacinimide works to improve texture and reinforcing our skin cell barrier, which can reduce irritation. The only catch is that they don't work as quickly as AHAs and Retinoids.

# Tone & Texture

# Antioxidants

Fighting pesky free-radicals is a job best done by antioxidants. Think of them as an invisible army combating free radicals produced both within our own bodies and those found in our environment like UV rays and pollution. Luckily, there are quite a few options to choose from. Some antioxidants can even be found in food and eaten as part of a healthy-skin diet.

Vitamin C, when applied topically, helps protect the skin from free radical damage caused by environmental factors such as the sun and pollution. Vitamin C also brightens the complexion and stimulates collagen production.

Coenzyme Q10 is another antioxidant that neutralizes free radicals and protects the skin from environmental damage. CoQ10 also plays a role in collagen production and skin cell energy. This ingredient should also be applied topically.

Potent both when applied topically and when ingested, green tea is a powerhouse antioxidant that also contains anti-inflammatory properties. Inflammation can make our faces puffy and tired, adding to an aged appearance by making us look unwell or worn-out.

Resveratrol is another edible antioxidant found in grapes. It has been shown to protect the skin from oxidative stress and promote longevity of skin cells. Though you can find it in skincare, consuming this ingredient, via the occasional glass of red wine or snacking on fresh fruit, is a great way to incorporate it into your routine.



# Hydration

Not even the fanciest stanley cup can change the fact that as we age, our skin is less able to keep hydrated. To picture the effect this has on our appearance, it's useful to think of a dried peach versus a fresh fruit. The dried fruit looks a lot different - shriveled and \*ahem\* wrinkly, in its dehydrated state. Loosing water emphasizes skin imperfections as it causes our skin-cells to retract, much like the peach in this metaphor.

Two common ingredients to protect against dehydration are ceramides and hyaluronic acid.

Ceramides are lipids found in our bodies. Essentially, they reinforce the skin barrier, guarding against the loss of moisture and literally helping to hold our skin together via our skin cell walls. Overtime our own ceramides begin to break down, weakened by the environment and time. Adding back in ceramides through our skincare products gives the ones that we produce naturally a boost, leading to hydrated and more resilient skin.

Ceramides are great for calming and healing irritation because they replenish our skin on a structural level - even helping to improve chronic skin conditions like rosacea, psoriasis, and exema.

Though it does not work over time to reinforce our skin on a cellurlar level, hyaluronic acid is also a potent ingrediant for dry and aging skin. Hyaluronic acid helps retain and actively draw moisture into the skin, producing a plumping effect that can often be seen relatively quickly. Serums, lotions and even medicinal ointments use hyaluronic acid, as it additionally speeds wound healing and lessens redness.



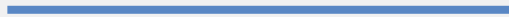
# Elasticity



The fourth main sign of aging is the most challenging to address without medical intervention. The ability of our skin to snap back into shape lessens as we age. Drooping and sagging skin all over our bodies becomes the norm as we age and elasticity becomes compromised.

Adding peptides to your routine can offer some respite. These small chains of amino acids are naturally produced in our bodies and serve a variety of functions. Peptides within a substance called collagen, form the basis of connective tissues - think joints, ligaments, tendons, and of course, our skin. Collagen peptides, along with the protein elastin, give skin the ability bend, stretch and bounce without compromising its structure and resilience. Aging slows our ability to produce peptides, and ironically increases the speed at which our body uses and absorbs those that we do manage to make.

The answer to this predicament is to add in more peptides to our diet and skincare routines to prevent and ameliorate the loss of elasticity. Collagen peptides are easily found in protein powders, beverages, and other health supplements, harvested from either bovine animals or marine plants. Both collagen and synthetic copper peptides are often found in topical skincare and haircare products. Copper peptides can even help stimulate hair growth - good news for the many folks who deal with hair loss in addition to woes like wrinkles as they age.



Until someone finds the fountain of youth, our skin will always bare the affects of time. Fortunately, it's possible to make the changes a little less jarring. The change in tone, texture, and elasticity, dehydration, and oxidation that identify the more *experienced* among us can be treated with targeted ingredients.

Locating these ingredients and knowing a little about them can help us face both the future, and the odd trip to Sephora, with ease.