



# Start your day with a clean slate

Do the right prep work and your face will look flawless. Follow these three simple steps

ou've stocked up on foundation, blush and lipstick, but until you tackle what's underneath, you might as well be throwing your money away. The key to a great-looking face is to focus, quite simply, on your skin—not just the powders and potions you put on top. Commit to a little prep work and you'll be well on your way to a pretty and polished new you.

By Andrea Cheng

# STEP 1: A QUICK CLEANSE

Begin your a.m. routine by washing with a gentle formula.

Even though your skin repairs itself while you sleep, get in the habit of washing your face in the morning—not just at night. Cleansing also helps exfoliate, which is essential in preventing pores from getting clogged and skin from looking dull. Worried about overdrying? Opt for a mild cleanser, or completely skip the soap and rinse with lukewarm water.

### KEEP IN MIND

Limit washing time to less than a minute—any longer can strip skin of natural oils.

Pass on the washcloth—the rough texture can cause irritation, and the fibers are a breeding ground for bacteria. Use your hands instead.

Choose the best cleanser for your skin type.

Normal to oily:
Foaming gels are
typically water-based
and oil-free. They're the
best choice if you're
prone to shine.

Dry or sensitive, or – both: Pick a soothing cleanser that's packed with moisturizing ingredients such as cocoa butter.



Boots No. 7 Beautiful Skin Cleansing balm (Dry/Very Dry), \$9; at Target.

# The truth about toners

With the right cleanser, you can eliminate a step and save money, too.

You might have grown up believing that toning was necessary between washing your face and applying moisturizer. Although toners were originally intended to wipe away residue left by ineffective cleansers, today's face washes cut through oil and dirt better than before, leaving you clean from the get-go.



before bed.

# STEP 2: MOISTURIZE

Slather on lotion with sunscreen while your face is still damp to seal in moisture.

After cleansing, your skin's moisture barrier has been compromised. A hydrating lotion helps restore that balance. Why not a night cream? Daytime formulas tend to be lighter, making it easier to apply makeup on top. Plus, they usually contain sunscreen.

### KEEP IN MIND

Think about the SPF. For optimum protection, make sure your moisturizer has a broad-spectrum sunscreen and is at least SPF 30. Have a day cream you love that contains no sun protection? Dab sunscreen on top of the moisturizer with a clean makeup sponge. That

helps minimize the gunky, tacky texture sunscreen sometimes has.

Consider a mineral block if you have sensitive skin. Zinc oxide and titanium dioxide are natural, mineral ingredients that protect skin without causing irritation.

Choose oil-free and non-comedogenic products if shine and acne are your biggest worries. This one is formulated with soy, an ingredient

that helps improve uneven skin tone and makes brown spots less noticeable.



# STEP 3: PRIME

After moisturizing and before you apply foundation, prep your face with a pea-size amount of primer.

Primer does just what the name implies: It preps the skin for makeup. Most formulas contain silicone, which fills in fine lines and pores, creating a smoother base for cosmetics. Other benefits to adding primer to your routine? You'll use less makeup and what you do apply stays on longer.

### KEEP IN MIND



If you're looking for a matte finish, pay close

attention to your T-zone and other shine-prone spots. Got wrinkles or large pores? Apply a pore-minimizing primer in those areas.

Find a formula that's right for you: If you have oily skin, look for one that will give you a matte finish. If you want to soften the look of fine lines and wrinkles, pick a primer designed for aging skin, like this one, which also is paraben-free.



HydraPrimer, SPF 30, \$16: at Target.



# A primer on primers Stumped by the rainbow of products on the market? Use this guide to find the right one for you.

If it's green...

The primer aims to neutralize redness (including rosacea). TRY: L'Oréal Studio Secrets anti-redness primer, \$13: at mass retailers.



### If it's lavender...

Purplish formulas brighten dull skin and lighten a sallow complexion.

TRY: E.I.f. Studio mineral-infused primer, \$6; at Target.



## If it's vellow...

Buttery shades color-correct dark circles under eyes. **TRY: Physicians Formula** Cosmeceutical Youth-Boosting concealer, \$13; at mass retailers.



Sources: Kimara Ahnert, makeup artist in New York City; Leslie Baumann, MD, dermatologist and author of The Skin Type Solution; Joanna Vargas, founder of Joanna Vargas Salon and Skincare Collection in New York City