

Facial Basics

What Exactly Is a Facial, and Is It For You?

Cathy Ulrich

"The one part of our body we see everyday is our face," says Zari Pirasteh, professional esthetician and reiki master from Colorado. "If we don't approve of what we see in the mirror, we eventually develop a dislike for ourselves. It's important that we take care of our skin, especially the skin on our face because it reflects our inner health and life." One sure way to achieve this is with professional facials.

Facials are often thought to be a luxury -- something to do while on vacation or for a special occasion. However, making monthly facials part of a regular self-care routine can help prevent the signs of aging, improve skin, reduce acne, and even improve general health.

conditions change depending on your general health, seasonal influences, and stress factors. Your esthetician may be able to see signs of stress in your skin even before you're aware of them.

2. CLEANSING

The cleansing step gently removes dirt and environmental toxins. Your esthetician will choose a cleansing product based on her analysis. She will also teach you how to effectively clean your skin. Improper face washing can be the cause of many facial skin problems.

3. STEAM

A gentle steam bath helps soften blackheads and open skin follicles to remove impurities embedded deep



While a facial may feel decadent, it is an important part of self-care for many.

What is a Facial?

While variations abound, the basic facial is a process generally involving five steps:

1. SKIN ANALYSIS

Your esthetician will evaluate your skin type, work with you to determine your skin care goals, and decide what products and techniques will help you best meet those objectives. Skin

within the skin. During the steam bath, your esthetician may apply an exfoliant or deeper cleansing agent to remove these embedded impurities. As part of the steam treatment, many estheticians will also perform extraction of blackheads, which clog pores and can be the cause of acne. Once these areas are

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*Forget not that
the earth
delights to feel
your bare feet
and the winds
long to play
with your hair.*

-Kahlil Gibran

Office Hours and Contact

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unlogged, your skin can produce its own natural moisturizers more easily.

4. MASSAGE

The muscles of the face are delicate. Many of them are attached solely to the skin of the face, so great care must be taken to avoid overstretching. A professional esthetician is trained to massage those muscles to help improve tone, relax the muscles, and increase circulation while working along muscle fibers. Facial massage can delay the appearance of wrinkles and stimulate lymphatic flow, helping the skin eliminate waste.

5. FACEMASK

Your esthetician will choose a facemask for your skin type and specific condition. Specialized masks may help to hydrate, tone, or replenish collagen in the deeper layers. Others may have powerful antioxidant effects to help fight pollution, sun damage, and other environmental conditions. Your esthetician will choose a mask with the ingredients designed to meet your individual needs.

By monitoring your skin condition on a regular basis, an esthetician can spot changes in your skin before bigger problems arise. And as part of the service, your skin care professional can recommend take-home products that will help maintain optimal skin health between facials. Your practitioner will also teach you how to use them. Many product lines have regimens that need to be followed carefully, so be sure to ask questions if you're not clear about your home skin care routine.

Facial Frequency

We replace our skin cells every 28 days or so. A monthly facial helps remove dead cells on the skin's outer surface, along with pollutants. When the face is rid of these dead cells, the skin has a much easier job of growing new ones. By nourishing the new cells with the appropriate moisturizers, we can maintain healthy, glowing skin.

In some cases, facials are required more often for best results, or you might supplement your treatments with home treatments. Discuss the optimal frequency of your facials with your skin care professional.

Who's a Candidate?

Most estheticians recommend that women start a regular facial routine in their late 20s, although younger women can benefit, especially when acne is a problem. Teens are discovering that facials can help manage that tough acne that comes during junior high and high school. By starting early, many skin conditions such as dryness, premature wrinkles, and adult acne can be avoided or managed.

Men are learning they can benefit from a regular facial regimen, too. Men experience the same effects of aging as women, but they may be exacerbated by shaving, which damages the skin. Men may also have more of a tendency to forget sunscreen when playing sports or spending prolonged periods outside, and they're less likely to maintain a daily skin care routine. An esthetician can teach a male client the techniques to

protect his skin and maintain a healthy and vital appearance.

Facials For All

For both sexes and all ages, feeling better and looking better boost self-confidence. People are living longer, healthier lives, and they're learning that skin care is an important part of a regular routine.

While diet, water consumption, stress management, exercise, sun screen, and overall wellness contribute to healthy skin, professional treatments go a long way toward stimulating, balancing, and toning your complexion.

Monthly facials can be a key component in maintaining optimal skin health. "When we have glowing, healthy skin, we're also showing the world our inner glow," Pirasteh says. "We care about ourselves, and our face proves it."



Men can greatly benefit from facials, as daily shaving can exacerbate skin conditions.

De-stressing the Commute

Turning Road Rage into Road Sage

The average American commuter spends an hour a day driving to and from work. During this stressful, stop-and-go time, it's likely that blood pressure increases, adrenaline begins pumping, and muscles constrict and tighten. By the time you get home, you're wiped out and grumpy, and you have less to offer to those you come home to. If this sounds familiar, recognize that you have the power to reduce commuter stress. Here are a few tips to make your commuter time contribute to -- rather than detract from -- your life.

- Employ adjustable back cushions, pillows, wedges, and lumbar supports for a more comfortable commute. For more information, check out www.relaxtheback.com.

- To successfully sidestep the late-afternoon slump often caused by the stress hormone cortisol, keep some healthy snacks within arms reach. Celery, string cheese, water, and nuts -- especially almonds -- are good options for the drive home.

- Borrow books-on-tape/CD from the library. Consider purely entertaining novels to ease the intensity of your drive.

- Learn a foreign language. Libraries also loan out these types of tapes and CD, too.

- Use your commute as an opportunity for spiritual or emotional growth. When stressing about a traffic jam, remind yourself that it's completely out of your control. Remember, attitude is everything.

- Practice breathing. When stress occurs, breathing becomes shallow and constricted. Taking full, deep breaths gives the body more oxygen, helping to regulate physical and mental function. Exhaling fully releases tension and built up toxins.

For more ideas on achieving calm in a busy world, consider reading *Serenity to Go: Calming Techniques for Your Hectic Life* (New Harbinger Publications, 2001) by Mina Hamilton.



Creativity goes a long way on your commute.

Coenzyme Q10

The Wrinkle Cure

Air pollutants, toxins, cigarette smoke, cell metabolism, exposure to the sun, and other environmental factors initiate free radicals, which can cause dangerous reactions that destroy cells and damage DNA, proteins, and fats. Free radicals also interfere with collagen production and integrity, resulting in loss of elasticity and, ultimately, aging skin. Although this is a natural and unavoidable by-product of metabolism, an overabundance of free radical damage can cause premature aging and wrinkles. Fortunately, there's a nutritional way to fight the elements.

Coenzyme Q10, also called CoQ10 and ubiquinone, is a fat soluble, vitamin-like nutrient present in virtually all cells and considered the

spark plug of the body, helping to produce and regulate energy as well as fighting free radicals as an antioxidant.

CoQ10 levels are highest during the first 20 years of life and decline with time, so much so that at age 80, CoQ10 levels may be lower than at birth. Yet the body's demand for CoQ10 increases with age. Furthermore, statin (cholesterol-lowering) medications can further deplete the body of CoQ10.

The recommended daily CoQ10 dose is 30 mg, in combination with alpha lipoic acid and vitamins A, C, E, and selenium. Foods highest in CoQ10 include sardines, beef, peanuts, spinach, and albacore tuna. However, it would take a pound of sardines, two

pounds of beef, or two-and-a-half pounds of peanuts to provide 30 mg, and cooking foods at high temperatures degrades the enzyme. Consequently, CoQ10 supplementation is likely necessary to achieve therapeutic effects.

CoQ10 can also benefit topically, as it's a small molecule that can easily penetrate the skin. When CoQ10 is combined with vitamins C and E in creams or lotions, the synergistic effect can neutralize free radicals, thus reducing wrinkles.

Supplementing with CoQ10 is not only a good antiaging strategy for the skin, it can also enhance energy, cognition, heart health, stroke prevention, and immune support.

He who can no longer pause to wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead; his eyes are closed.

-Albert Einstein

The Holidays are fast approaching. Many of you will have school events with your children, functions at work, and visits with your loved ones. Don't get stressed! Take a little time for yourself and schedule that facial or massage. You will be glad that you did.

Best Wishes and See You Soon!

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