



Lipstick

The Best Tricks to Get Your Skin Ready for Summer

There are few things in life that make us giddier than the first warm day of spring. But we confess that there's always one tiny moment of sunshine-induced panic when we can't help but think *my skin is not ready!*—for tank tops, [sundresses](#), and all the other comparatively revealing clothing items (and shoes) that have been hiding in the back of our closets all winter.

That's why this year we're vowing to be ready for the big spring skin reveal. We're declaring April our spring skin boot camp, when we'll hit our most annoying skin issues with the most-proven, instant-gratification(ish) fixes recommended to us by top dermatologists. Want to join? Here's how to target each problem zone with treatments that should get you visible results in a month or less.

Skin Issue: Cracked Heels

Quickest Fix: Massage [Aquaphor](#) into your feet at night and top with cotton socks to soften thick, dry skin while you sleep. In the morning, gently slough away that skin using a pumice stone or file and rub in a cream that contains an exfoliating alpha-hydroxy acid (like urea, lactic acid, glycolic acid, salicylic acid, or ammonium lactate), recommends dermatologist Rebecca Kazin of the [Washington Institute of Dermatologic Laser Surgery](#). A great drugstore pick: [Eucerin Intensive Repair Foot Cream](#). "You can exfoliate the area every day until the problem is fixed, then maintain by doing it once or twice a week," she says. Bonus power move: Get the [Clarisonic Pedi](#)—an investment at \$119, but one that will make heel-smoothing a ritual you're never tempted to skip (so soothing, plus extra-effective thanks to two different exfoliating brush heads and sonic vibrations). *So* worth the splurge if your heels are the sort that require nonstop maintenance.

Skin Issue: Bumpy Arms

Quickest Fix: Rather than avoid tank tops for five months, switch up your shower routine. "To treat allover acne or [ketosis pilaris](#) on the arms—also known as chicken skin—wash daily with a soap-free milky cleanser that will deeply cleanse pores while naturally conditioning stressed skin," advises dermatologist [Marnie Nussbaum](#). Then opt for an exfoliating body lotion that contains an alpha-hydroxy acid like lactic acid; dermatologists love [Amlactin Ultra Hydrating Cream](#). What this will do is help de-clog pores and hair follicles to reduce overall irritation. If you haven't had luck with this routine in the past, a dermatologist can prescribe a stronger topical that's effective for your skin.

Skin Issue: Textured Thighs

Quickest Fix: No cream is going to miraculously erase cellulite—an unfortunate fact we have finally come to accept. However, when applied diligently, firming and re-texturizing creams *can* keep this problem zone looking firmer and smoother. Start using one daily now and you should start seeing results within about three weeks, says Nussbaum, who likes [Sebamed Q10 Firming Body Lotion](#) because it contains antioxidants and argan oil, to boost skin's elasticity. Power move: Kazin suggests using a [retinol](#) lotion on your thighs to increase skin-cell turnover to resurface the look of them. Just start slowly (every other day at first) while monitoring redness/irritation, and be extra-cautious with sun exposure, since it makes skin more vulnerable. "I like [PCA Intensive Brightening Treatment](#) because it contains a time-released retinol, which is not as irritating," she says.

Skin Issue: Bacne

Quickest Fix: Your pre-bikini workouts can easily exacerbate bacne, so be aware. Vow to shower immediately after you work out, and ease up on the tight-fitting tops (opt for looser cotton options that breathe). "If you can't shower right after, at least take off your sports bra so your skin can breathe," Kazin says, and wipe off as much of the area as you can using an [anti-acne medicated wipe](#). When you do shower, combat existing bacne with a glycolic- or salicylic-acid body wash, like [Peter Thomas Roth Beta Hydroxy Acid 2% Acne Wash](#). And if your bacne is severe, see a dermatologist now about a topical or oral antibiotic, which can help you get ahead of the issue before peak plunging-back-sundress season.

Skin Issue: Chalky or Dark Knees

Quickest Fix: Because the skin is stretched thin over your joint and exposed to lots of clothing friction, knees can look especially worse for wear post-winter—and drink up body lotion with seemingly no positive effects. The best time to soften and re-hydrate them is post-shower, while your skin's still warm and damp. Gently pat the area dry and then massage in an oil—a drugstore one like [Neutrogena Body Oil](#) or plain-old coconut or almond oil. "Oils absorb deeply into the skin for lasting moisture," says cosmetic dermatologist Paul Jarrod Frank. "Moisturizing daily will heal dehydrated skin while preventing future irritation." This will also help reduce the appearance of irritation-induced pigmentation, but to reverse it, Kazin recommends a hydroquinone fading/brightening treatment like [Neocutis Blanche](#) or [SkinMedica Lytera Brightening Complex](#). Just be sure to go heavy on sunscreen once those knees see the light of day.

Skin Issue: Red Elbows

Quickest Fix: Much like knees, elbows are thin-skinned and subjected to tons of friction, so treat them gently in advance of short-sleeves season. Apply an over-the-counter cortisone cream like [Cortaid](#) once or twice daily until the redness subsides. *Don't* try to smooth out this issue with a body scrub. "If skin is red and inflamed, do not aggravate it with exfoliation," Frank says. "Exfoliation is only for when skin is thickened and flaky, not irritated."