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wrinkles

PLUS...

When it comes to messing with your complexion, wrinkles often get an assist from dark spots, acne, rosacea, or some other skin issue. Experts explain how to battle more than one beauty foe at once.

BY LESLEY ROTCHFORD

PHOTOGRAPHS BY DONNA TROPE

+ Whoever decided two was company clearly never had wrinkles and acne. Or wrinkles and rosacea. Or wrinkles and any of the other skin problems that tend to pop up alongside fine (and not so fine) lines. These vexing conditions are the result of a perfect storm of factors—sun damage, natural aging, and hormones—all of which start in your thirties.

Making matters worse, skin issues tend to coexist about as well as a couple of *Real Housewives* castmates—offer one the star treatment and the other gets aggravated—which makes managing them tricky. “Many treatments for common skin conditions can dehydrate the skin, and dryness can make wrinkles more noticeable,” says Gervaise Gerstner, M.D., a dermatologist in New York City. “Plus, some wrinkle products are too harsh for skin issues like rosacea.” The answer? Choose compatible products (and use the right amounts)—or, in other words, treatments that won’t get on each other’s nerves.

DOUBLE TROUBLE: wrinkles + acne

Just as wrinkles start to make you feel old, zits bring you back to your youth. "Adult acne can be caused by unbalanced male and female hormones," says Susan Obagi, M.D., an associate professor of dermatology at the University of Pittsburgh.

PRODUCT POWER COUPLE:
Alpha and beta hydroxy acids, which you can find in one serum

While alphas take care of the wrinkles by whisking away dead skin cells and building up collagen, betas unclog pores and put the breaks on sebum production. "In combination, these can be very effective for treating wrinkles and acne without over-drying the skin," says Paul Jarrod Frank, M.D.,

a cosmetic dermatologist in New York City. Try SkinCeuticals Blemish + Age Defense (\$82, skinceuticals.com).

APPLICATION TIP: After cleansing at night, smooth four or five drops of the serum over your face, says Frank.

WHAT A DERM CAN DO: At a dermatologist's office, a derm-administered concentration of salicylic acid peels can address both troubles. These peels cost about \$275 (you may need one a month). Or try the CoolBreeze laser, which smooths fine lines by stimulating collagen production and nixes pimples by heating the oil glands, says Obagi. You'll need three treatments per year, at around \$350 each.



DOUBLE TROUBLE: wrinkles + sagging

Blame collagen loss for both members of this lovely duo: It naturally occurs with age but is expedited by sun exposure.

PRODUCT POWER COUPLE:
Retinol serum + plumping lotion

Retinol is the most powerful OTC ingredient for both softening lines and firming skin over time. Try Neutrogena Rapid Wrinkle Repair Serum (\$20, at drugstores). For an immediate effect, look for a lotion

that stimulates the production of hyaluronic acid, which hydrates and plumps out skin's hollows. Try GoodSkin Labs Filextra Facial Revolumizing Treatment with Collagen (\$44.50, kohls.com).

APPLICATION TIP: Apply the plumping product all over your face

daily before makeup. Smooth on the retinol at night.

WHAT A DERM CAN DO: Ultherapy improves wrinkles and sagging by using ultrasound to stimulate collagen production. It costs \$1,500-plus for one treatment, but results last up to two years.



DOUBLE TROUBLE:

wrinkles + dark spots

Sometimes fun in the sun isn't so fun for your skin. Spots and premature wrinkles are both primarily caused by UV exposure. D'oh.

PRODUCT POWER COUPLE:
Retinaldehyde cream + brightening lotion

"Although tretinoin is the best topical prescription for treating wrinkles, it can have irritating effects on the skin: peeling, drying, and redness," says Obagi—and since dark-spot faders also can contain intense ingredients, it's key to use a soothing fine-line fixer. Obagi recommends a cream with retinaldehyde, a gentler version that converts to retinoic acid at a deeper skin

level, dodging surface irritation. Try Eau Thermale Avène Eluage Cream (\$42, drugstore.com).

As for fading spots, while Rx hydroquinone creams used to be the gold standard, they can cause skin sensitivity (and should only be used for three months at a time), so many derms now recommend hydroquinone-free potions that can be safely used daily. Elure Advanced Lightening Lotion (\$150, lovelyskin.com) contains a mushroom enzyme that breaks up melanin found on the skin's surface.

APPLICATION TIP: Rub a pea-size amount of the brightener all over your face twice a day. At night, wait a few minutes, then follow it with a pea-size dab of retinaldehyde all over.



WHAT A DERM CAN DO: The Clear + Brilliant Perméa laser will diminish both issues. It creates tiny wounds across the surface of the skin, stimulating your body's production of collagen to shed old pigmented cells—but requires less downtime (usually hours, not days) than its predecessors. You'll need at least three treatments, at about \$500 a pop. ■

DOUBLE TROUBLE:

wrinkles + rosacea

Know a woman in her thirties who loves red wine and is stressed? We could name a couple hundred. Unfortunately, "if you have rosacea, these things can lead to flares," says Patricia Wexler, M.D., an associate clinical professor of dermatology at Mount Sinai School of Medicine.

PRODUCT POWER COUPLE:
Peptide cream + prescription anti-inflammatory gel

Those with rosacea tend to have touchy skin that can get redder when treated with retinol, so use a nonretinol wrinkle product for sensitive skin, such as Clinique Repairwear Uplifting Firming Cream (\$59.50, clinique.com). This hydrating potion fights lines with peptides, antioxidants, whey protein, and Mitostime (an extract from brown algae).

Prescription Metrogel 1%, which contains an antibiotic ingredient called metronidazole, is usually the first line of treatment for rosacea, says Heidi A. Waldorf, M.D., director of laser and cosmetic dermatology at The Mount Sinai Medical Center.

APPLICATION TIP: Once a day, after cleansing, apply a thin layer



of Metrogel over the inflamed area; smooth the antiwrinkle cream all over your face before bed. If you are using the Metrogel at night, apply it first.

WHAT A DERM CAN DO: The Vbeam laser targets the dilated blood vessels that cause flushing, while also improving collagen production and the appearance of wrinkles. You'll likely need yearly or biyearly touch-ups—"rosacea is a chronic disease," says Frank—which cost \$500 to \$800 each.

Conceal Your Age

Skin-care products can take weeks to show results. For gratification, like, now, reach for concealer. Makeup artist Matin Maulawizada, global artistry director for Laura Mercier, suggests using a creamy formula, as liquids can cake in wrinkles.

Undereye Circles Rub a concealer brush in a pot of orange-based concealer (orange neutralizes the purple and blue tones of circles); try BeneFit Erase Paste in Medium (\$26, sephora.com). Working from the inner corners out, brush over dark areas; if darkness still shows through, apply an extra coat.

Acne A yellow-based concealer will cut the redness and help the pimple fade into the surrounding skin. Using a concealer brush, apply a dot the size of the blemish directly on it and blend the color out and around the mark; tap translucent powder on top to set the concealer. Try Physicians Formula Youthful Wear Cosmeceutical Youth-Boosting Concealer (\$13, at drugstores).

Crow's-Feet You should actually avoid concealer and "spackle"-type products: "These would help if you didn't smile or move your face at all," says Maulawizada. "The less texture you put on wrinkles, the better they look." What you can use? A brightening serum, to reflect light in a softer way. Try Laura Mercier Flawless Skin Repair Eye Serum (\$80, sephora.com).

Rosacea Dip your ring finger into a yellow-based camouflage, and then lightly tap over the patch of rosacea until redness has disappeared.

Dark Spots After dabbing orange-based cover-up onto a spot with a concealer brush, blend by lightly tapping with your ring finger; repeat until the spot is invisible. Set with translucent powder.

