



by Rob Trow

skin | how to

Shrink Large Pores

How to best treat enlarged pores is a problem that has plagued skin care professionals and their clients from time in memoriam. While there have been a myriad of remedies and products claiming to reduce pore size, few, if any, have proven effective. There has also been a dearth of clinical research on the cause of enlarged facial pores, and an accompanying lack of empirical information on how to treat this condition.

The sebum factor

Prior to recent findings, common thought was that enlarged pores were related to photo-aging, gender, genes, acne and seborrhea. However, recently, in the first study focusing solely on enlarged pore size, it was found the most significant factor that affects pore size is sebum output. Reducing sebum output levels is highly beneficial in decreasing pore size.

The study also indicated that the severity of acne or even acne itself were not dominating factors that control pore size.

Release the grease

There are many different schools of thought regarding the most effective method to normalize sebum production. The modus operandi of many skin care professionals has been to use skin-drying agents. These products are often harsh and cause the skin to become drier and

thus stimulate more sebum. This can create a vicious, never-ending cycle. The treatment of enlarged pores should focus on normalizing sebum output.

There is little efficacy and sense in one product claiming it is the panacea for reducing pore size. However, a good skin care regimen, with the right ingredients and followed with discipline, can

toner that will enhance penetration of the next step, the application of a vitamin A-based skin care product.

Step 3: Vitamin A is one of the most effective, long-term ways to normalize sebum production. You can use retinyl palmitate, retinyl acetate or retinol (or a cocktail of all three) as opposed to retinoic acid. The latter,

To help reduce pore size, apply a clay mask, which will absorb excess oil without drying the skin.

reduce excess sebum production. When coupled with professional treatments, the results are even better.

Treatment plan

Step 1: Thoroughly clean the skin using a cleanser, not soap. Add a pre-cleanser that has highly refined, micronized mineral oil. While using mineral oil may seem controversial, today's mineral oil is highly refined and has very small molecules, which attract the skin's oils through absorption. This makes it easier to remove the oil on skin. Have you ever tried to wash oil away with water? It just doesn't work. A clay-based mask, especially one with kaolin, can be added to the pre-cleanse step, again absorbing excess oil without drying the skin.

Step 2: A toner should be used next, and ideally an alpha hydroxy-based toner or alternatively a salicylic acid

the acid form of vitamin A, can cause redness, flaking and can create poor client compliance. Make sure that the vitamin A treatment product is packed in a manner to protect the vitamins from degradation from air, light, heat and bacterial contamination.

Step 4: Lastly, and very importantly, always apply a sunscreen. This should be recommended for daily use and contain chemical and physical blockers plus antioxidants, which help fight free radicals. ■

Rob Trow owns *DermaConcepts USA*, the Eastern United States (excluding metro NYC) distributors for *Environ Skin Care*. Trow is a published author and frequent speaker on current and emerging topics of interest to medical spas, estheticians and physicians. He holds two master's degrees and did his doctoral studies at Harvard University.