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You're Doing It Wrong: How to Clean Your Face in the Morning

Makeup removal is essential to any great skin-care routine. Washing your face in the morning? Not as much.

Like many, you probably give your visage a rinse with H₂O after you wake up and before bed, but according to Beverly Hills-based skin-care expert Brigitte Beasse, you could be stripping yourself of protectant layers.

"Washing your face in the morning removes all the natural oil (also called the acid mantle of the skin) that your body has produced over night to protect you from daytime skin scavengers, such as pollution, dirt and sun rays," explained Alexis Bledel's longtime aesthetician.

A Case Against a Morning Wash: While this doesn't apply to all skin types, it does mean those with dry skin can be deprived of natural protection. And those with oily skin will secrete more oil, overcompensating for what has been removed by hard water.

"Water is alkaline and leaves chlorine dots on the face, exactly as it does when splashed on a mirror," noted the skin expert. "As the skin is naturally acidic, hard alkaline water disrupts its natural balance."

Toners to the Rescue: Instead of washing your face, depend on toners to do the work during your wake-up cleanse. "In the morning, toners are the best beauty secrets. Their PH has to be acidic, that is to say below 7, to respect the acid mantle of the skin."

For Dry or Mature Skin: The skin professional recommended toners with a PH that is "close to the natural PH of the skin (5.6), made with soothing, natural ingredients and are free from artificial fragrance, like Environ Moisturizing Toner or Environ C-Quence Toner," she added. (Editor's note: This brand is only available at dermatologists' offices and medi-spas.)

For Oily or Pigmented Skin: Try toners with a lower PH (4/4.5) than the one of the skin. Look for products containing lactic acid or grapefruit extracts.

For Skin Prone to Breakouts: Try "toners with a more acidic PH (3/3.5) to create a stronger exfoliation but still respect the acidic environment," as to not excite the oil-secreting sebaceous glands. Her recommendation? Environ Toner Forte.

Keep Calm and Carry on With a Nighttime Cleanse: "However, washing at night is a must, making sure that toner is used to remove hard water and help skin reach an acidic PH again," said Brigitte. "I call it the 'Windex' of the face."

We are in a drought, after all.

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