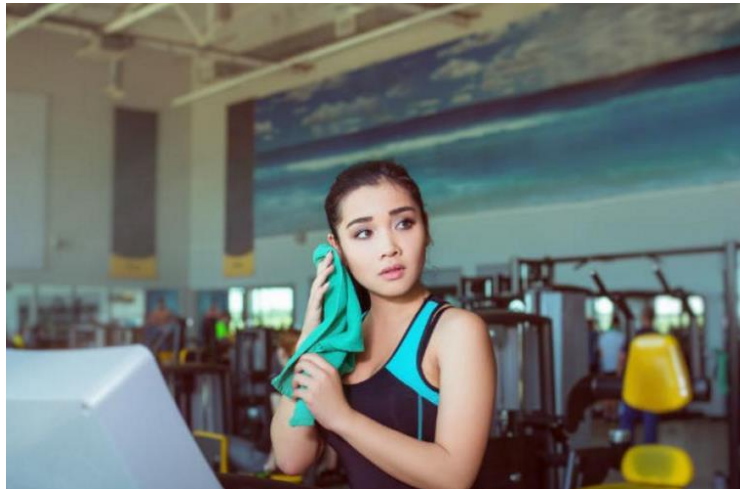


## Post-Workout Habits that are Sabotaging Your Skin

A dermatologist explains what not to do and how to keep your skin healthy and clear



Exercise offers a [long list of incredible health benefits](#).

However, for some, one not-so-great side effect presents itself in the form of acne and other irritating skin issues.

To find out what causes these problems and how you can prevent them we talked with [Dr. Paul Jarrod Frank](#), a New York City dermatologic surgeon and [Charlotte's Book](#) expert. Here's what he had to say.

### **The Cause of Acne and Other Common Skin Issues**

Frank pointed to a number of culprits when it comes to skin irritation and blemishes.

“Back acne and facial acne can be caused by hormones or an increase in oil production,” he said. On the other hand, dirt and sweat can clog pores, which can also contribute to the development of acne.

“Wearing makeup to the gym can cause breakouts,” Frank added. “Perspiration causes pores to open up so that sweat can come through the many layers of the skin. Don't let your pores get blocked by makeup during this natural deep clean. Remove makeup before the sweat.”

For those who are prone to redness or rosacea, Frank recommends applying a toner or facial mist with anti-inflammatory properties before exercise.

“This will help alleviate redness during and after your workout,” he explained,

### **What Not to Do at the Gym**

First off, Frank recommends wearing clothes that fit loosely. “Sweat and tight clothing can aggravate acne and bacteria, especially at the gym,” he said.”

Additionally, he said you should try to never touch your face unless you’ve just washed your hands. “While you’re at the gym, your hands are touching dirty equipment and yoga mats, which are full of bacteria,” he explained. “Avoid touching your face to keep from transferring impurities to your complexion.”

If you have long hair, Frank recommends pulling it back in a ponytail or bun. When you sweat near your hairline, he explained, skin can become extra aggravated.

Finally, Frank recommends bringing your own towel to the gym.

“Gym towels are often bleached with harsh chemicals that can not only harm your complexion, but can also affect your immune system and overall well-being,” he explained. “Bring your own towels washed with a natural detergent to prevent breakouts and skin sensitivities when wiping away sweat.”



### **After Your Workout**

When you’re done with your sweat session Frank recommends taking the following precautions to help keep your skin clear and healthy:

- ◆ Wash your face immediately. “Exfoliating with a scrub or Clarisonic is also beneficial. Cleansers using AHAs such as benzoyl peroxide or salicylic acid help prevent breakouts,” Frank said. “These products will encourage cell turnover and leave the skin smooth and exfoliated.”
- ◆ Protect your skin from the sun, which Frank said can actually worsen acne.
- ◆ Don’t use oily products directly after a workout, as they can further clog your pores.
- ◆ Frank suggests choosing a body wash with Salicylic acid (like Neutrogena Body Clear Body Wash) to reduce back acne.
- ◆ For treating acne, Frank suggests La Roche Posay Effaclar K Acne treatment. “This product contains salicylic acid to treat breakouts and pores,” he said. “It also keeps skin clear of blackheads and whiteheads.”
  
- ◆ In addition to the Clarisonic, Frank also recommends the Zeno acne zapping device. “This is great for individual breakouts under stressful busy times when a patient can’t get to the doctor for a cortisone injection,” he said. “It fits right in a pocket book and works quickly to reduce inflammation of a pimple.”

### **The Bottom Line**

“Acne is multi-factorial and has many different causes,” Frank explained. “It is a disease of the hair follicle and the pores that lead to them in the skin. It appears the process occurs when pores first become clogged. Although acne has been blamed on everything from poor cleaning habits, greasy food and emotional stress, it appears that sensitivities to androgen- or testosterone-like hormones play the most dramatic role. When glands produce too much oil, the pores can become blocked, accumulating dirt, debris and bacteria.”

He stressed the importance of [eating healthy both before and after the gym](#).

“Diet is very important,” Frank said. “Those that are acne prone should maximize their nutritional state. Minimizing dairy, sugars and simple carbohydrates may help reduce acne. Replace these foods with more proteins and vegetables that are rich in color. A diet that has a lot of dairy in it is 'pro inflammatory' meaning that it can exacerbate any condition, like acne, that involves inflammation of tissue.”