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Wipe That Stress Off Your Face

How you can undo the damage that anxiety wrecks on your skin.

By Sandra Nygaard

Sleeplessness and stress mess with more than your mood. Look in the mirror.

Any new lines or jowly-looking skin could be traced back to last night's news or yesterday's office hassle. That's because stress spikes levels of the hormone cortisol in your body, which "creates oxidative stress that results in increased sagging and less ability to repair skin," says Angela Lamb, M.D., a Manhattan-based dermatologist. "It can also aggravate preexisting skin conditions or create new ones." Now that researchers are developing products with ingredients known to counter this damage, you can worry less about worry lines and do something about them.



DRYNESS

Cause: Excess cortisol reduces the amount of water your skin retains.

Fix: Cetaphil Gentle Foaming Cleanser, \$7, cetaphil.com

Pro Tip: Wash with lukewarm water, then apply moisturizer quickly.



DARK CIRCLES

Cause: Sodium and lack of sleep slow circulation, expanding blood vessels beneath thin under-eye skin.

Fix: Kiehl's Eye Fuel, \$23, kiehls.com

Pro Tip: De-puff morning eyes by applying ice or frozen tea bags. "The cold reduces puffiness, and tea provides antioxidants," says dermatologist Paul Jarrod Frank, M.D.



ACNE

Cause: For some, a surge of cortisol can lead to an increase in oil production.

Fix: Jack Black Oil-Control Toner, \$25, getjackblack.com

Pro Tip: Wipe your phone with a cleaning tissue to remove oil and bacteria. Change pillowcases weekly so your skin oils and products from your hair don't touch your face.

DULL SKIN

Cause: Cortisol restricts blood flow and slows repair; a lack of sleep means there's less time to grow new skin cells.

Fix: Peter Thomas Roth 10% Glycolic Solutions Moisturizer, \$45, peterthomasroth.com

Pro Tip: Light cardio gets blood flowing for an easy refresh.

WRINKLES

Cause: Cortisol raises blood sugar, damaging connective tissue and making it harder for skin to repair itself, thus accelerating aging.

Fix: SkinCeuticals Retinol 0.3, \$62, skinceuticals.com

Pro Tip: At night, apply a cream with retinoids, like this one, which shrinks pores and builds collagen to help diminish fine lines and wrinkles.



Sean Laurenz (model)