

A 5-Step Guide to Your Smoothest Face Ever

No one wants to hear that they have a problem they didn't even know existed—a truth I experienced firsthand during a recent facial appointment. After years of familiarizing myself with my complexion, I'd really gotten into a good groove with my skincare and knew which products to rely on when any of my usual issues arose.

But I was wrong: As the esthetician pampered my face, she made an observation that threw me for a loop. "You have uneven skin texture," she said. "Tone?" I responded, confused. "No, *texture*," she repeated. "Your nose is a little bit rougher than the rest of your face. It's normal!"

Was it, though? I had never heard of it before, and at the risk of sounding completely pompous, I consider myself pretty well versed in all manner of common skin problems, particularly my own (a hazard of the job). But it turns out that having an uneven skin surface really *is* run-of-the-mill. It's just not talked about too often.

"Uneven skin texture is commonly a result of excess dead skin cells that build up on the surface of the skin," explains cosmetic dermatologist [Paul Jarrod Frank, MD](#). "This can make areas of the skin feel rough or bumpy to the touch and can also give the skin a dull appearance." As for how it happens, there are a number of potential factors.

"In addition to dead skin cell buildup, chronic sun exposure can also play a big role in uneven skin texture and pore-size irregularity," he says. "Natural aging of the skin will also make the skin look duller. Factors such as smoking may also contribute, and other skin conditions such as eczema and dry skin can severely affect skin tone and texture."

Frank guesses that the reason uneven texture isn't as buzzy as uneven skin tone (which deals with pigmentation, to be clear) comes down to the ability to treat it—those who deal with chronic texture issues will see the best results with laser treatments. But there are a few ways to get a more even skin surface at home. Keep reading for a five-step guide to smoothing out your face once and for all.

Exfoliate.



If skin cell buildup is the issue, remedying the situation could be as simple as sloughing those dead cells away. Make sure you're exfoliating once a week with a dedicated scrub, sonic cleaning brush, or chemical exfoliant, and target the areas that feel uneven.

This all being said, it's worth noting that using scrubs that are too abrasive—or scrubbing too often, for that matter—can cause oil overproduction and micro-tears in your skin, which will only exacerbate your texture issues. Stick with formulas that use gentle ingredients like jojoba beads and natural grains and make sure you abide by that once-a-week rule. (I'm partial to this clay mask by Kypris, which doubles as a gentle scrub and smells like the Pacific Northwest. The alternative is to ditch scrubs altogether in favor of chemical exfoliants—more on that next!

Try a chemical peel.



Frank recommends glycolic acid peels at home, or, if you have the opportunity to try it, a chemical peel at the dermatologist's office. It's an more acute way to resurface skin than just exfoliating by hand. "This can remove sun-damaged skin and stimulate its healthy regrowth in a controlled fashion," he says. "The resulting exfoliation removes dead cell layers, promotes underlying collagen regeneration to reduce fine lines, and evens out the texture and pigment of one's skin."

Apply an oil to the problem area.



This piece of advice came from the facialist who pointed out the problem in the first place: In keeping with the philosophy that oil-based products are best for regulating sebum production, she guessed that my rough, blackhead-speckled nose would experience less buildup with a facial oil. She dabbed a bit of the Herbivore Botanicals oil pictured above on my T-zone, a practice I've adopted at home since that fateful appointment, and I have to admit that my nose is much smoother since doing so.

Stock up on vitamin C.



"Adding vitamin C to your skincare routine will help improve skin texture by providing a powerful antioxidant to repair and defend the skin from environmental damage and restore suppleness while reducing pigmentation, scar tissue, and age spots," says skincare guru Ling Chan. That defense is key if you want to avoid more texture problems down the line.

Wear SPF (always).



Add this to the endless laundry list of reasons protecting your skin from the sun should always be your first priority.

Bonus: Reduce the Appearance of Scars



Now that you have your five-step routine down, it's all about maintenance. Whether you have a new or existing scar, it's important to diminish its appearance—especially those pesky ones that have a raised, discolored texture. With regular use, this refreshing, oil-free gel that's filled with good-for-skin botanical extracts actually helps soften, smooth, and diminish the appearance of scars—but you have to be diligent to see results! Use a small amount two to three times a day and you'll notice an improvement in as little as two months.