

# Aesthetic Advice

## Skincare Routine Cheat Sheet

Evidence-Based Morning & Evening Routines + Ingredient Compatibility Guide

### ■ Morning Routine (AM)

Step	Product Type	What to Look For	Budget Pick	Premium Pick
1	Cleanser	Gentle, pH-balanced (5.0-5.5)	CeraVe Hydrating Cleanser	La Roche-Posay Toleraine
2	Toner (optional)	Hydrating, alcohol-free No astringents	Pyunkang Yul Essence Toner	SK-II Facial Treatment Essence
3	Vitamin C Serum	L-ascorbic acid 10-20% + Vitamin E + Ferulic	Timeless CE Ferulic (\$25)	SkinCeuticals C E Ferulic
4	Moisturizer	Hyaluronic acid + Ceramides + Peptides	CeraVe AM Moisturizer	Tatcha The Water Cream
5	SPF (NEVER Skip)	SPF 30-50+ Broad spectrum UVA/UVB	ElaMD UV Clear SPF 46	Isdin Eryfotona Actinica SPF 100+

★ Always finish with SPF — even indoors. UV light penetrates windows and causes 80% of visible aging.

### ■ Evening Routine (PM)

Step	Product Type	What to Look For	Key Ingredients	Notes
1	Oil/Balm Cleanser	For makeup/SPF removal (double-cleanse step 1)	Mineral oil, Jojoba, Caprylic	Skip if no SPF or makeup worn
2	Cleanser	Same as AM Gentle gel or cream	Ceramides, Glycerin, Niacinamide	Lukewarm water only, not hot
3	Treatment Actives	Retinol OR AHA/BHA (not both same night)	Retinol 0.25-1% Glycolic 5-10% Salicylic 0.5-2%	Alternate nights — never layer acids + retinol
4	Serum/ Treatment	Niacinamide, Peptides Hyaluronic acid	Matrixyl 3000, Argireline, HA 3 weights	Apply on slightly damp skin for better absorption
5	Eye Cream (optional)	Caffeine for puffiness Retinol for lines	Caffeine, Peptides, Ceramides	Ring finger only gentle tap-in
6	Moisturizer	Richer than AM Occlusive finish	Shea butter, Squalane, Ceramides	Slugging (Vaseline top layer) 1-2x/wk for dry skin

★ Never use retinol + AHA/BHA on the same night. Alternate: retinol on Mon/Wed/Fri, acids on Tue/Thu.

## ■ Ingredient Compatibility Chart

OK to combine		Use caution / separate AM/PM			Avoid combining	
	Retinol	Vitamin C	AHA/BHA	Niacinamide	Peptides	HA/Ceramides
Retinol	—	Avoid	Avoid	OK	OK	OK
Vitamin C	Avoid	—	Caution	OK	OK	OK
AHA/BHA	Avoid	Caution	—	OK	Caution	OK
Niacinamide	OK	OK	OK	—	OK	OK
Peptides	OK	OK	Caution	OK	—	OK
HA/Ceramides	OK	OK	OK	OK	OK	—

## ■ Retinol Strength Ladder

Phase	Timeframe	Strength	Frequency	Signs Ready to Progress
Beginner	Months 1-2	<b>0.025-0.1% Retinol</b>	2x/week	No irritation, no dryness, no flaking
Building	Months 3-4	<b>0.25-0.3% Retinol</b>	3-4x/week	Tolerating well, no redness
Intermediate	Months 5-8	<b>0.5% Retinol</b>	Every other night	Consistent results, minimal sensitivity
Advanced	Months 9+	<b>1%+ Retinol or Retinaldehyde</b>	Nightly if tolerated	Consider Rx tret with dermatologist
Prescription	As directed	<b>Tretinoin 0.025-0.1%</b>	As directed	Work with a derm; use telehealth

## ■ SPF Quick Reference

SPF Level	UVB Protection	Best For	Reapply
<b>SPF 15</b>	<b>93%</b>	Incidental exposure (office/indoors)	Every 2 hrs outdoors
<b>SPF 30</b>	<b>97%</b>	Daily outdoor use most skin types	Every 2 hrs
<b>SPF 50</b>	<b>98%</b>	Extended outdoor use fair skin, on retinol	Every 1.5-2 hrs
<b>SPF 50+</b>	<b>98-99%</b>	Post-procedure skin chemotherapy pts	Every 90 min

## ■ At-Home Device Schedule

Use this schedule to rotate devices without over-treating your skin. Never use aggressive microneedling + retinol on the same day.

Device	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Session
LED Mask (Red Light)	✓		✓		✓		✓	10-20 min
LED Mask (Blue Light)		✓		✓				10-15 min
Microneedling (0.25-0.5mm)			✓					10 min
RF Device (NuFACE etc)	✓			✓		✓		5-10 min
IPL/Laser (hair removal)					✓			Per device guide
Gua Sha / Face Massage	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	3-5 min

## ■ 5 Mistakes Most People Make

### 1. Skipping SPF

The #1 cause of premature aging. All active ingredients (retinol, vitamin C, AHAs) make your skin MORE sensitive to UV. SPF isn't optional.

### 2. Starting retinol too strong

Going straight to 1% causes weeks of irritation and makes people quit. Start at 0.025-0.1% and build slowly over months.

### 3. Mixing incompatible actives

Retinol + vitamin C + AHA all on the same night = compromised skin barrier. Use the compatibility chart above.

### 4. Using too many products

More products = more chances for irritation and ingredient conflicts. A 4-5 step routine done consistently beats a 12-step routine done poorly.

### 5. Expecting overnight results

Retinol takes 3-6 months. LED masks take 8-12 weeks. Vitamin C takes 4-8 weeks. Consistency over months is the only thing that works.

## ■ Quick Skin Type Guide

Skin Type	Key Characteristics	Focus On	Avoid
Dry	Tight feeling, flaking, dull complexion	Heavy moisturizers, ceramides, HA, facial oils	Foaming cleansers, alcohol, over-exfoliation
Oily	Shine by midday, enlarges pores, acne-prone	Lightweight gels, niacinamide, salicylic acid	Heavy creams, coconut oil, skipping SPF
Combination	Oily T-zone, dry cheeks, uneven texture	Zone-specific care, balancing toners	One-size-fits-all heavy products

<b>Sensitive</b>	Redness, reacts to most products, rosacea-prone	Azelaic acid, centella, ceramides, mineral SPF	Fragrance, alcohol, AHAs, strong retinol
<b>Normal</b>	Balanced, minimal issues, small pores	Preventative aging: Vit C + SPF + retinol	Neglecting SPF because skin 'looks fine'

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