



From teenage spots to age spots, frown lines to a blurred jawline – blame it on your hormones. They rule our moods – and that’s a fact. But knowing how they govern our looks is the key to great skin for life

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How hormones affect your

skin

Photographs by **Sheila Rock**




Moisture manifesto for mature skin

Beyond menopause

No beating about the bush – the rate at which our skin changes more than doubles at this time. Instead of oestrogen counts in the 100s, levels plummet to 10% of this. Within the first five years post-menopause, we lose 30% of collagen and elastin, then 2% of skin thickness each following year. Mature skin is thinner, flatter, looser and more fragile. Research also links skin thinning to bone density loss and, says consultant dermatologist Dr Veronique Bataille, 'a thin skin

may indicate a higher risk of osteoporosis'. Sun damage earlier in life also registers now. 'The ability of cells to self-repair diminishes, so the risk of skin cancer is far greater and age spots are extremely common,' adds Dr Bataille. But for most of us, dryness – and the risk of eczema – becomes a sensitive issue. 'Constant moisturising is extremely important, and you may need to use richer, oil-based creams with high SPFs to protect and soothe,' she advises.

What you need Keep skincare simple and effective. Swap detergent-based foams for gentler cleansing balms and buffs. Creams with soy or retinol-based types strengthen skin and help fade age spots, but can cause reactions if skin is sensitive. Extra-dry skin formulas rich in essential fatty acids and shea butter soothe and protect the skin's barrier. Gentle exfoliation shifts dead cells that block incoming moisture.

What to try Sisley Cleansing Milk with White Lily, £45 (020 7491 2722), soothes. Olay Regenerist Daily Regenerating Cleanser, £6.50, has strengthening amino peptides and gentle buffing beads. No7 Lighten & Brighten Age-spot Corrector, £16.75, has plant-based whiteners to fade freckles. Clarins Super Restorative Day Cream SPF20, £55, has moisture sponges that plump lines, plus plant oestrogens to boost collagen. Lancôme Platinéum Complete Restructuring Cream SPF15, £88, contains calcium to strengthen surface skin and improve moisture retention. Guerlain Orchidée Impériale, £200, has protective, super-moisturising orchid extracts. Hope's Relief, £12.95 (020 8748 9200), has anti-inflammatory calendula and liquorice root to soothe itches and eczema. 

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