

Complexion perfection



Revitalising acids play a starring role in the best new skincare

Don't be put off by the main word – acid-powered skincare is actually the smartest way to freshen your appearance at home.

“While you may think of acids as harsh solutions that belong in a science lab, the new-generation kind found in skincare are more gentle than ever. When formulated with the correct pH and acid strength, these products help nourish and regenerate tired skin,” says Ian Lirenman, founder and CEO of botanical skincare brand EmerginC.

Sydney-based cosmetic physician Dr Van Park agrees. “Hyaluronic, alpha-hydroxy (AHAs) and beta-hydroxy acids (BHAs) stimulate collagen and elastin production, improve fine lines and increase overall hydration,” she says.

“There’s a misconception that acids can be too irritating for those with sensitive skin,” Ian adds, “but that’s not the case.”

From dry, flaky skin to enlarged pores, sun spots and dehydration, there’s an acid for every concern. Here are five acids you can easily work into your routine.

Fresh faced

1 Hyaluronic

FORMULATED FOR: Hydration and elasticity.
HOW IT WORKS:

“Hyaluronic acid is a naturally occurring substance in the body, but the levels deplete as we age, leading to a loss of volume, the appearance of wrinkles and a change in facial shape. When applied topically or injected, hyaluronic acid strengthens the skin’s natural protective barrier and increases hydration and elasticity,” Dr Park says.

TRY: ModelCo Instant Hydro-Glow Miracle Mask, \$14; Paula’s Choice Resist Hyaluronic Acid Booster, \$69; Sanctuary Spa Peptide Replenish Night Cream, \$32.99



2 Salicylic

FORMULATED FOR: Clogged pores and overall texture.
HOW IT WORKS:

“Commonly derived from aspirin, salicylic acid is an excellent exfoliator for oilier skin types. It can help address stubborn blackheads and whiteheads, and improve the overall look of uneven skin tone,” Ian says.

TRY: O Cosmedics Pure C + BHA Professional Strength, \$62; Formula 10.0.6 Pores Be Pure Skin-Clarifying Mud Mask, \$8.99; Avène Gentle Purifying Scrub, \$43.95



3 Lactic

FORMULATED FOR: Hydration, discolouration and melanin production.
HOW IT WORKS:

“Lactic acid, found naturally in milk and blueberries, is the gentlest acid exfoliator; it only eats away at dead cells on the top layer of the skin, so it’s great for sensitive types,” Ian says.

TRY: EmerginC Triple Threat Peel, \$122; Philosophy Miracle Worker Miraculous Anti-Aging Lactic Acid Cleanser & Mask, \$45; Éminence Firm Skin Acai Exfoliating Peel, \$124



4 Citric

FORMULATED FOR: Age spots, fine lines and pigmentation.
HOW IT WORKS:

“Citric acid is found in citrus fruits. Due to its low pH and acidity, it’s often used to remove dead skin cells from the epidermal layer, helping soften the look of fine lines,” Ian says.

TRY: Arbonne RE9 Advanced Lifting and Contouring Eye Cream, \$80; Germaine De Capuccini Synergyage Glycocure Intense Renewal Exfoliating Mask AHA + BHA, \$79; Estelle & Thild @ Sephora Biocleanse Radiance Micro Polish, \$48



5 Glycolic

FORMULATED FOR: Flaky, dull skin as well as mild pigmentation.
HOW IT WORKS:

“Glycolic acid, found naturally in sugar cane, has the ability to deeply exfoliate. It can stimulate collagen and elastin production, and address ageing, psoriasis and sun damage,” Ian says.

TRY: Skinstitut Glycolic Scrub 14%, \$45; Alpha H Micro Cleanse Super Scrub with Glycolic Acid & Peppermint, \$43; Philosophy Ultimate Miracle Worker Night, \$120



HOW TO USE ACIDS SAFELY

APPLY TO DRY SKIN “When acids make contact with water, they can inflate, generating tingling sensations and even discomfort, so only apply to clean, dry skin,” explains Anne-Charlotte Jakubczak, scientific communications manager for Avène.

TRY BEFORE YOU BUY “Acids that are recommended by an expert can be pricey, however, you should be able to get a sample to see how your skin reacts first,” Dr Park says.

WEAR SUNSCREEN “Direct sunlight can cause redness, burning, itching or pain. Apply a sunscreen with an SPF of at least 30 to protect your skin every day,” Dr Park says.

AVOID EXCESS HEAT “Steer clear of hot showers, saunas and steam after applying acids. Heat increases the exfoliation process and could burn your skin,” Ian says.