

# Your Skin Workout

by Emma Hobson (as seen in [bellamumma.com](http://bellamumma.com))

Exercise isn't just great for our minds and bodies it's also great for our skin. Sadly there's also a 'flip side' to exercise in terms of its impact on your skin. That's why it's important to know how to get the best from an exercise program and skin routine, to ensure happy, healthy skin.

There are, of course, positives effects that exercise has on the skin such as:



- Increased levels of blood flow, oxygen and nutrients that helps the skin to repair environmental damage that causes premature aging, skin irritation and sensitivity.
- Improved collagen production, therefore improved skin texture and fewer wrinkles!
- Improved immune system to fight infection such as skin breakouts.
- Reduced stress that triggers a cascade of problems including premature aging, acne breakouts and increased pigmentation.
- Increased antioxidant activity which helps prevent wrinkles and other signs of aging.
- Can [reduce the risk of developing psoriasis by 25-30%](#)

Believe it or not, there is a downside impact that exercise may have on the skin such as:

- Increased dehydration and the appearance of fine lines and dull, dry skin. In part this is due to our sweat naturally evaporating from the skin surface, the evaporation of water causes surface dehydration.
- Increased skin sensitivity with redness and irritation.
- Increased breakouts and congestion.

The skin is an organ of elimination, and waste (ammonia, urea, salts and sugar) is flushed out from the body via sweat. It's therefore important to keep the skin clean post exercise to prevent skin irritation. Possible increased incidence of skin infections

There are some easy but extremely effective steps you can take to care for your skin pre, during and post exercise.

## Pre workout

1. Start with clean skin to avoid breakouts and congestion. A quick and easy way to clean the skin in the gym or out on the road is to use a cleansing-oil wipe or a gentle wipe-off cleanser that doesn't

require any water for removal. Remember post work out it's important to remove the sweat, dirt, pollutants, bacteria and dead skin.

2. Before (and after) you work out, spritz your skin with a hydrating toner or an anti-inflammatory, calming mist. Humectants such as Hyaluronic Acid will bind, boost and 'lock' the moisture to the skin. Keep in fridge if you can, it feels so refreshing!
3. Apply sunscreen with a minimum of SPF20 at least 20 minutes prior to sun exposure, then again every two hours.

### **During a workout**

1. Keep skin clear of heavy make-up like foundation, blush or correctors. If you want some coverage wear an oil free, light-weight, tinted moisturizer with SPF20, especially if outdoors. And opt for waterproof mascara, it's better than panda eyes!
2. Keep long hair tied back and off the face, keep your bangs off your face too.
3. Keep styling products away from hair line, they can cause breakouts.
4. If swimming in chlorinated water wear a protective, silicone based moisturizer (water and oil free). It will cover the skin with a protective, lightweight film.

### **Post workout**

It is best to wait a few minutes until the skin has cooled down before applying post workout products so they can absorb effectively. Take a cool shower, use cool facial towels, drink cool water, all these steps will help reduce the skin temperature and stop it from purging waste via sweat.

1. Apply a hydrating booster or serum under moisturizer to replenish lost moisture and combat dryness.
2. If the skin is prone to redness after a workout, apply a calming serum designed to bring down the redness.
3. Finish with a lightweight skin hydrating moisturizer. Nothing too heavy or too active while the skin is hot and the blood flow is increased.
4. Exfoliate and follow with a clearing or hydrating masque a couple of times per week to keep the skin clear of congestion and super smooth.

Some other things to keep in mind when working out include:

- Avoid touching the face with dirty, sweaty hands to prevent clogged pores
- Beware of repeated rubbing with a towel or sweat band, wearing clothing or glasses, goggles that may rub against and irritate the skin—this can cause a condition called 'friction acne'.
- Clean helmets, hats or sunglasses often as sweaty surfaces collect dirt, bacteria and oil.
- Outbreaks of ringworm, herpes, and methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) are highly contagious and common place for many exercisers, so remember to wear sandals or flip-flops in communal showers!

To nourish and boot the skin's performance, look for products that contain a cocktail of multi-vitamins such as:

- **Vitamin A:** to reverse photo aging, inhibit collagen breakdown and stimulate collagen
- **Vitamin B5:** great for healing, essential for lipid and protein synthesis
- **Vitamin E:** great antioxidant that provides skin with barrier protection and improve smoothness
- **Vitamin C:** to protect skin, stimulate collagen, brighten skin and serve as an anti-inflammatory