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Healthy skin 365: Suggested steps for healthy, hydrated skin

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The uppermost thin layer, stratum corneum, plays a crucial role as a water impermeable skin barrier. After acute damage, it recovers automatically, but with aging, psychological or oxidative stress, the recovery is delayed. The main goal of a skin care regimen is then to rebuild protect the stratum corneum barrier, and to allow repair and improve recovery processes to maintain its structural and functional integrity. Healthy skin begins with a healthy stratum corneum, the outer most layer of skin that serves as a barrier against desiccation and environmental stressors. The key to a healthy skin barrier is a continuous cycle, which includes: cleansing, exfoliating, nourishing, moisturizing and protecting. The cycle for healthy skin is a skin care regimen which includes the use of medical grade skin care at home and in-office treatments. The cycle to healthy skin and a healthy skin barrier begins with cleansing. The natural acidity of the facial skin acts like a skin barrier that fights bacteria and other environmental aggressors. It is important to use a cleanser that won't strip your acid mantle and that will leave your skin at a 4-6 pH. Exfoliation at-home can be done by using alpha hydroxy acids (AHAs). AHAs dissolve the cement that holds the dead skin cells together, which increases cellular turnover. They also help to support a healthy skin barrier. In-office exfoliation treatments would include chemical peels (chemical exfoliation) and micro-exfoliation (mechanical exfoliation) treatments; which cause an intraepidermal injury, which then stimulates fibroblast activity and leads to collagen remodeling. After exfoliation, nourish the skin with an antioxidant to help with premature aging. Antioxidants help to neutralize free radicals and can help to rebuild the skin's barrier. In-office micro-exfoliation also nourishes the dermis through circulation, bringing nutrients & O₂ to the surface. Next, moisturizing the skin helps to reduce TEWL, increases hydration and helps to repair the skin barrier. Last, protecting the skin with a broad spectrum sunscreen of SPF 30+ is imperative for a healthy skin and skin barrier. All skin types, whether oily or not, need a moisturizer. Achieving and maintaining a healthy skin barrier and healthy skin requires a synergistic approach by combining the use of medical grade skin care (proper pH, active ingredients, etc) at home and in-office chemical peels (chemical exfoliation) and micro-exfoliation (mechanical exfoliation) treatments with a trained skin care professional.

Biography

Laura L McDermott has been in the aesthetics industry for over ten years, helping people look and feel better. She has practiced as an esthetician, medical assistant and laser technician in Arizona. In 2005, she received her Bachelor's Degree in Communication/Mass Communication at Arizona State University. Combining her hands-on experience as a skin care professional and her passion for skin, she then began working as an educator and a trainer. Over the last five years, she has taught at the Skin & Makeup Institute, Clearskin Laser Centre and various CME workshops, which include lecturing at SDSS and ASLMS. She has also created and recorded online educational webinars for Universal Companies. Currently, she is working with DermaSweep as the VP of Training & Development, where she works closely with UCI Dermatology, UCSF Dermatology and Scripps Dermatology on resurfacing protocols.

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