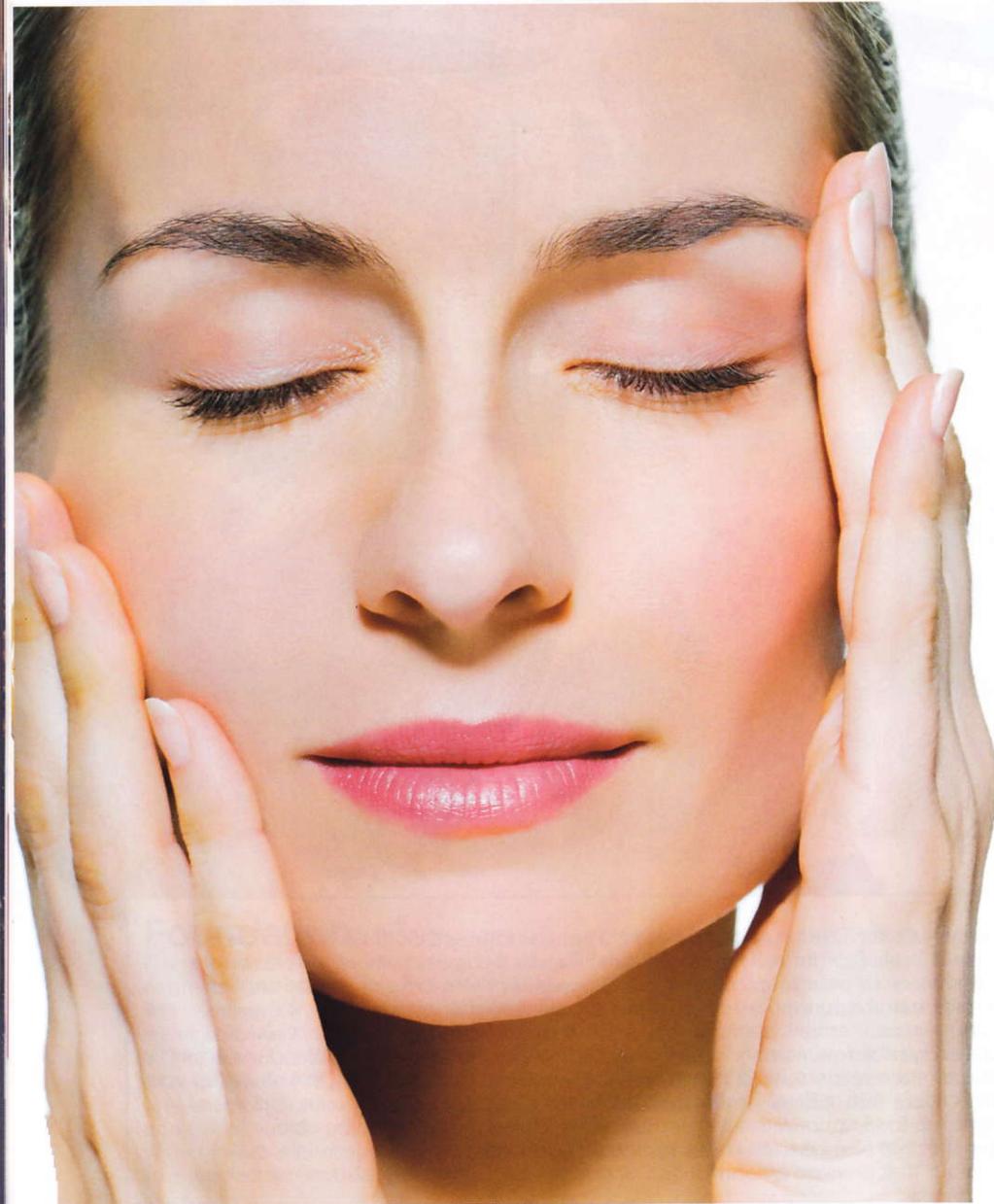


Step It Up...

...or not? With the emergence of pre-serums and post-moisturisers, **JUSTINA TAN** finds out from experts if introducing more steps to your skincare routine is better – or if less is more.



How Many Steps Are There In Your Skincare Routine?

WE POLLED 25 READERS, AND:

50%

have six and above

13%

have three

37%

have less than three

3 What to look out for when introducing new products into your skincare regimen.

It's not a good idea to use an indiscriminate assortment of skincare products without first finding out more about the products in question. If you have sensitive or acne-prone skin, Dr Ho suggests starting on a simpler routine and adding on products for targeted concerns like pigmentation, acne or wrinkles, if necessary.

Dr Alvin Wong, medical director of SKN MediAesthetics advises patients with thin, sensitive skin or oily, acne-prone skin to consult a doctor prior to using any new skincare products, as they are more likely to suffer from skin irritation or clogged pores when increasing the number of products in their skincare routine.

4 What happens when you layer products.

Some products work fine when applied one after another, but acidic products, such as alpha hydroxy acids (AHA) take a few minutes to work, so to avoid neutralising their affect on the skin, it's best to wait five to 10 minutes before applying the next product, says Dr Ho. She adds that retinoid products degrade rapidly when exposed to UV rays, so they should be applied only at night.

5 Why one product cannot do everything.

"The skin is a living organ and constantly changing, so having devoted treatment products allows you to customise a routine to best suit your skin," says Kati.

Dr Perricone adds that separate serums or creams are created to tackle specific concerns because certain active ingredients function best in tailored carrier systems that can deliver the optimum level of nutrients to the skin. "It is impossible to dissolve all the ingredients into a solution without the cream being so thick it would be unusable," he says. **SH**

1 The effectiveness of using numerous skincare products.

Using more skincare products doesn't necessarily make your skin better or worse. Other factors such as product compatibility, genetics and the skin's constitution also contribute to how effective or helpful the skincare will be. "Formulation is key. The active ingredients, the concentration of the ingredients and the base of the product are more important than the number of products used," says Dr Kelvin Chua, medical director of SkinLab Medical Spa.

2 The ideal number of steps a skincare routine should have.

Youthful, problem-free skin should do just fine with a cleanser and sunscreen, says Dr Jean Ho, consultant dermatologist with Jean Ho Skin and Laser Clinic. But Kati Kasza, founder and managing director of Evolu, says that as skin ages, its natural mechanisms become less efficient, so expanding your skincare routine helps to compensate for the skin's reduced ability to recover and regenerate.

Dr Nicholas Perricone, clinical and research dermatologist and founder of Perricone MD, adds that needs vary with age, the environment, sun exposure and many other factors. "Fragile, mature skin needs more nutrients and more help than the skin of a person in their teens or twenties," he says.

More Or Less

These two readers have great skin. The only difference - one uses just one skincare product, while the other uses nine.

"I'm very fuss-free. All I use is a gel-type face wash and sunscreen if I go hiking or cycling. I haven't had any major breakouts, but I do have a few small freckles on my left cheek."

ANG YIYING, 28, JOURNALIST

"As a flight attendant, I can't afford to have bad skin. I have a nine-step skincare routine and when the climate changes, I switch moisturisers and add on face masks."

MATILDA HUI, 32, FLIGHT ATTENDANT

STRIKING A BALANCE



Dr Jean Ho, consultant dermatologist with Jean Ho Skin and Laser Clinic, recommends a skincare routine that helps you make the most out of the latest developments in skincare - without going overboard.

- 1 **Cleanse** morning and night.
- 2 **Tone** to restore the skin's pH level from alkaline (after cleansing) to mildly acidic (skin's natural pH level).
- 3 **Antioxidant serum** to combat early signs of ageing like fine lines and wrinkles.
- 4 **Prescription product(s)** for specific skin concerns like acne or pigmentation.
- 5 **Moisturiser** if your skin needs additional hydration.
6. **Sunscreen** in the day.