

# Professional

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# Skincare: 50s

In the fourth of a series of articles *Professional Beauty's* **Nina Richards** discusses skincare concerns and solutions for clients in their fifties.

“Midlife hormonal changes due to menopause affect the production of collagen and elastin fibres that give skin its tensile strength, elasticity and underlying support, resulting in the redistribution of fat in the face, fine lines, wrinkles, sagging and texture change,” says Dr Ava Shamban, cosmetic dermatologist.

Dr Geoffrey Heber, founder of Ultraceuticals, agrees, “Estrogen secretion in the 50s leads to numerous effects on the skin including a loss of firmness, loss of plumpness and dryness.”

By the time we reach our fifties, the skin’s natural protection against moisture

**B**iological, environmental and hormonal ageing will come into play for clients in their fifties. Regardless of whether a client is blessed with good genetics and has protected their skin from environmental aggressors, hormonal imbalances can play havoc with the skin, causing a whole host of problems.

In the fifties the skin tends to lose some of its elasticity and the ligaments supporting the soft tissues in the face also become lax, creating loose skin. The areas where this is most noticeable are eyelids, cheeks, neck and décolletage. The fat pads that once gave a youthful roundness to the face begin to thin out and descend, creating hollows under the eyes. Many of the visible signs of ageing for clients in their fifties are the result of hormonal changes.

loss also deteriorates, leaving it feeling dry and rough and losing its youthful radiance. “As a result of hormonal changes, natural functions such as the excretion of sebum diminish, reducing the skin’s protection against moisture loss and resulting in dry skin. Levels of hyaluronan reduce, limiting the skin’s ability to store and maintain moisture,” says Sue Dann, Omniderm National Training Manager.

Many of these concerns are related to photo-ageing and are most apparent in sun-exposed areas. Blotchy pigmentation and broken surface capillaries can also be attributed to sun damage. While skin was more resilient to environmental-aggressors in previous decades, a fifty year old’s skin is far more delicate and prone to damage. Sun damage from previous decades may also be surfacing for the first time and skin cancers can also become present in this decade.

When it comes to skincare there are conflicting schools of thought as to what clients in their fifties should apply to their skin. There is the gentle preventative approach – whereby skincare containing anti-oxidants, peptides and vitamins is used to prevent and maintain a youthful radiance to the skin – this is often the best option for dry, delicate and sensitive skin types. There is also a results-driven approach whereby topical retinoids, alpha-hydroxy acids and potent vitamins can

be recommended for clients wanting to see greater anti-ageing results but which can cause the skin to become sensitised.

Heber recommends clients treat their skin with products to decrease dermal deterioration. "This should include cream containing stabilised vitamin A in the form of retinol at a minimum level of 0.25 per cent which can have the same effects on ageing in the skin as prescription retinoic acid. I would also recommend clients in their fifties use an ascorbic acid (pure vitamin C) cream or serum to stimulate new collagen, firm skin over time and reduce discolourations. A skin brightening serum containing AHAs, niacinamide and other ingredients, and an SPF30+ moisturiser can also be effective." Heber says it is paramount clients in their fifties don't cleanse with soap as it will strip the skin of its natural oils and moisture barrier.

"One of the biggest challenges women in their fifties face is the ongoing battle against free radicals," argues Shamban. "These cause damage to collagen, elastin and other delicate skin components. The damage is exacerbated by the loss of hormonal protection in mid-life. The most effective way to fight free radicals is by nourishing your skin. Rejuvenating the skin is also very important during this period. Alpha-hydroxy acids, retinol, antioxidants and peptides can all help combat the signs of visible ageing. Since menopause depletes the skin of its own antioxidants, replacing it with topical vitamins such as C and E and alpha-lipoic acid helps firm the skin by preventing further oxidative damage from environmental exposure. Peptides can also help relax the muscles responsible for lines caused by motion and help stimulate collagen production."

"Daily skincare should gently support the skin's natural functions. It should be formulated to rebuild the skin's barrier to moisture loss and to deliver powerful actives designed to support and reinforce the skin's natural regenerative functions. I would recommend a gentle, non-stripping cleanser and balancing toner, a serum with active ingredients such as anti-oxidants, peptides and vitamins and a light oil-based moisturiser formulated for longer lasting hydration. Such a routine will also reduce diffused redness (micro-inflammation) and free radical activity," says Dann. "I would not recommend clients use products that leave skin in a constant state of micro-inflammation, i.e. products containing acids or high levels of vitamins A or C."

Brand manager of Eminence, Belinda Hughes, advises, "Clients in their fifties not to over exfoliate and use plenty of nourishing protective and age-defying products, plus a light weekly exfoliation and age-defying masque. Eminence's Eight Greens range contains a phyto-estrogen from the yucca plant so is ideal for clients over fifty requiring support for collagen depletion due to estrogen depletion. I'd also recommend products containing bamboo to strengthen the skin, hylauronic acid to boost hydration levels and Acai berry, an antioxidant super fruit."

In addition to a good skincare regimen, clients in their fifties can invest in regular professional treatments to target the skin's needs and concerns. IPL is a common

treatment for pigmentation and capillary damage which can have minimal downtime and side effects. Laser treatments are also effective for vascular damage. Fractionated lasers resurface and firm the skin, removing excess pigmentation and stimulating collagen and elastin.

Co2 lasers can work wonders by reducing wrinkles and resurfacing the skin. However, downtime is likely to be 10 days minimum, which can deter clients. Peels such as Bakers Formula Peel can provide similar dramatic results on wrinkles, but again this is no quick fix with lengthy downtime and sedation during the treatment. Skin needling can also encourage new collagen and glycosaminoglycans (GAG) production.

Dann recommends Herbal Aktiv Peel® which serves to visibly reduce the signs of ageing and to slow the processes leading to them, but advises clients to, "follow with biomimetic maintenance and the right skincare regimen to allow the skin to return to normal as quickly as possible."

To target hormonal ageing, another solution for clients in their fifties is hormonal supplements to treat the skin from within. Dr Denis Rebic, a general practitioner specialising in integrative and anti-ageing medicine, would suggest bio-identical hormone therapies for clients in their fifties including a small dose of estrogen in combination with vitamin C to brighten and improve skin's radiance and resilience. Antioxidants could also be recommended such as melatonin, alpha-lipoic acid and vitamin E to protect and improve the skin's condition. Rebic says his patients see greater results from taking hormone supplements than just using

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topical skincare and treatments. "Treat the skin from the inside out, not outside in – skin reflects what goes on inside the body." Rebic also works to improve his clients' inner wellbeing with improved energy and cardiovascular ability and has been conducting anti-ageing studies for 10 years.

A good skincare regimen and corrective treatments cannot always win the battle against biological ageing alone. For such clients, cosmetic surgery can be a great way to maintain and regain some of their natural beauty. However cosmetic procedures should not be sought without careful consideration.

By the time a person reaches their fifties, injectible and dermal filler treatments may no longer give them sufficient results but can be used effectively as an adjunct to a more definitive surgical procedure. Popular surgical procedures for people in their fifties include eyebrow lifts, blepharoplasty (where excess skin and fat is removed from around the eyelids), facelift and necklift.

Facial plastic surgeon Dr Marcell says, "A well executed surgical procedure can take 10-15 years off a person's appearance, and this can boost their confidence and self-esteem. For people with loose or sagging skin, facial surgery may be the most effective way to restore a more youthful appearance."

From the thread lift to deep-plane, there are a number of facelift options which clients should research carefully before undergoing and see which is most suited to their needs. Dr Marcell favours the deep plane facelift technique because he says results are long-lasting and natural-looking, "A deep plane face and neck lift releases the SMAS and mid-face fat pads from underlying muscles and bone, reattaching them at higher anchor points. This means the whole face can be lifted evenly, creating a more defined jaw, neck and cheekbones. There is no 'pulled' appearance with the deep plane technique."

Prevention is always better than cure and it is not too late for clients in their fifties to minimise the effects of further environmental damage on their skin. "Protection from the sun's harmful UV rays and healthy lifestyle choices contribute to keeping the skin in its best possible condition, says Dann. Marcell agrees, "Although the skin may already show obvious signs of sun damage, it's still important to limit exposure to the sun's harmful rays. Maintaining adequate hydration is also important."

As Rebic says, beauty also comes from within and a healthy approach to living will pay off in terms of healthy looking skin. For clients serious about keeping their skin healthy and youthful don't be afraid to recommend they limit their alcohol intake; quit smoking; take adequate care with regards to sun protection; get enough sleep; maintain hydration and a healthy, balanced diet containing lots of antioxidants, super-foods, good protein and essential fatty acids.

With the right skincare regimen for their skin type and condition, topical corrective treatments, internal supplements and a healthy diet and lifestyle – the three causes of ageing for clients in their 50s – biological, environmental, and hormonal – can be effectively targeted. ■

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