

Q Buying products to minimize my lines is like doing research for a chemistry class. What key words should I look for?

A **SUN PROTECTION:** A daily sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or higher is the number-one wrinkle cream of all time, says Kathy Fields, M.D., co-creator of Rodan + Fields skin-care products.

PEPTIDE: These protein bits are tiny enough to penetrate aging skin and stimulate cell activity, which gives you that youthful glow.

KINETIN: This plant-based ingredient has been shown to reduce signs of photoaging (sun damage), says Porter.

Q10: This coenzyme is produced naturally by your skin, but it diminishes as you age, leading to

saggy jowls and droopy eyes. Replenish the lost nutrient with a product like Nivea Visage Q10 Advanced Wrinkle Reducer, \$11, drugstores.



Q Do I really need a special serum? It seems like I'm paying a lot for very little.

A Whether it's for firming skin, moisturizing or building collagen, a serum is more effective at delivering active ingredients to your skin than a lotion or cream is, says Daniel H. Maes, Ph.D., vice president of research and development at the Estée Lauder Laboratories. It's also much more expensive, so if you don't have any special skin concerns, such as wrinkles or extreme dryness, you're fine skipping this one. If you do need that extra boost, a good buy is Olay Regenerist Daily Regenerating Serum, \$19, drugstores.



Q Is there a difference between "dermatologist tested" and "dermatologist recommended"?

A Sure, an eye cream may have been extensively tested by an army of doctors, but that doesn't say anything about whether the doctors liked it or not, says Dr. Murad. If you're looking for something that a doctor would suggest, you're better off choosing the one that is "dermatologist recommended" — that means they tested it and they're comfortable telling their patients to slather the stuff on their faces. Dermatologists adore Eucerin Q10 Anti-Wrinkle Sensitive Skin Lotion, \$11, drugstores.



Q I'm running out of space on my bathroom vanity. What can I toss for good?

A The most overpurchased non-essential item is toner, says Audrey Kunin, a Missouri-based dermatologist. After you wash your face once, toners

claim to lift up the extra grit that you don't see. But, Dr. Kunin explains, toners do nothing more than strip the skin of essential oils. And if you have sensitive skin, she adds, "Toners and astringents can parch the skin due to their high concentrations of alcohol." Ouch!

A Glowing Complexion — Made Easy!

Take the guesswork out of gorgeous skin by opting for an all-inclusive system

For Breakout-Prone Skin

Salicylic acid for the a.m., benzoyl peroxide for the p.m., and sunscreen all day long — everything you need to banish unwanted blemishes. Neutrogena Advanced Solutions Complete Acne Therapy System, \$29, drugstores



For Very Sun-Damaged Skin

You'll save more than 20 bucks (the retail value is \$89) on this antioxidant-pumped system designed to fight the damage caused by sun, smog and pollution. Murad Vitamin C Infusion Home Facial Kit, \$65, murad.com



For Combination Skin

Because each item in Almay's three-step line (also available in oily- and dry-skin formulas) is sold separately, you can buy only what you really need. Almay Cleansing Lotion, \$10; Toner, \$9; and Daily Moisturizer for Normal/Combo Skin, \$12, drugstores



For Dull Skin

Some at-home microdermabrasion systems can set you back nearly \$100. But this dermatologist-created kit sloughs off dull skin and leaves you with a fat wallet to boot! Skin Effects Micro-Dermabrasion Kit, \$25, CVS stores

BEST BUY



Does the Miracle Zit Tonic Work?

Crooners Vanessa Williams and Jessica Simpson have both sung the praises of Proactiv, one of the country's best-selling acne treatment systems. But is the \$40, three-step system worth it? "Three percent benzoyl peroxide, the amount of active acne-fighting agent found in Proactiv, is a little on the low side, because you can find products with up to 10 percent at the drugstore," says James Leyden, M.D., professor emeritus of dermatology at the University of Pennsylvania. On the other hand, you can use a low-strength product daily, helping to break the cycle of acne. It's worth a try if you have normal skin and moderate acne, but if you have severe cystic breakouts, see your dermatologist. Proactiv 3-Piece System, \$40, proactiv.com

