

Banish Every Skin Woe With This One Product

Say adios to acne, spots, and wrinkles with one magical ingredient.

The product that can do it all, also known as the superhero of the [skincare industry](#), the maestro (should I keep going?)—we're talking of course about retinol. But what is retinol, what can it do, and how do you use it? Join us as we discover the wonderful, effective world of retinols.

First and foremost, what is a retinol?

Well, actually, it's the natural form of Vitamin A. And that Vitamin A is known to have brilliant benefits for the skin, from erasing signs of aging to fading skin discoloration to declogging pores. When applied topically, retinol instructs the skin cells to behave "normally," boosting the natural functions of the skin. Basically, retinol encourages skin cell turnover, increasing the shedding of old skin cells to reveal a fresher, younger appearance.

"It is used to increase cell turnover to help smooth skin, retard collagen breakdown to reduce fine lines, and unclog pores," says New York plastic surgeon [Dr. Melissa Doft](#). "It tightens pores, improves skin tone by increasing elasticity, decreases fine lines by increasing skin thickness, lowers collagen breakdown, improves texture, and evens skin color by lightening brown spots." (Wow!)

There are so many types of retinol. Where do I begin?

From prescription retinol to retinol-infused products, it can be really overwhelming to know where to start. You don't have to use a pure retinol product; in fact, you may want to start using a retinol that's better tolerated and not as strong as a prescription strength (called a tretinoin), says Dr. Doft. "It is okay to use a mix, but it is important to understand the concentration of retinol that you are applying to your skin."

There are a couple different varieties: Retinol is over-the-counter (aka, in products at Target and Sephora), and tretinoin is prescription strength. "Tretinoin is 100 times as strong as over-the-counter retinol. And a retinol may take three to six months to see effects, whereas tretinoin will take six to eight weeks."

Okay, cool, how do I use it?

At night, for starters. Sun is the enemy of retinols, so make sure you use sunscreen in the a.m. when incorporating a retinol into your regime. "Apply a pea sized amount at night, and start by using it every other night to avoid irritation and redness," says Dr. Doft.

Gotta have a retinol now? Us too. If you don't have sensitive skin (like, at all), try out a

prescription strength from your dermatologist. For the rest of us, over-the-counter is actually your best bet, as it's much easier on the skin while still being really effective.

And there are some really incredible and diverse options out there. We've rounded up our favorites right now, each with a strong point of view (but not a strong prescription). If in doubt, also ask your dermatologist about what percentage of retinol is right for you. (Also, retinols are not safe while pregnant or breastfeeding.)



The One for Eyes

Verso Super Eye Serum, \$80

Swedish skincare line Verso is entirely based around Vitamin A, and they've clinically tested different concentrations to assure their formulas are eight times as effective, yet half as irritating as traditional retinols. (Leave it to the Swedes to perfect it!) This eye cream increases skin's natural production of collagen for a smoother appearance around eyes, thanks to the brand's trademark Retinol 8 complex. But it also has amino acids in the formula to diminish dark circles and fine lines.

Direct link: <https://domino.com/what-is-retinol-guide>