

Facial Cleansing

In 2014, oil cleansing officially became "a thing" in the beauty industry. Face washes formulated with oil took the world by storm, and at \$40 to \$60 a bottle, these wonder tonics promised smooth, ageless skin. It was a surprising turn of events, since oil had previously been viewed as the enemy of a beautiful complexion for years. As far back as the Victorian era, women powdered their faces with everything from chalk to talc to arsenic to give their skin a matte look. Even today, entire aisles of drugstores are dedicated to products that tout "oil-free" ingredient lists and the ability to kill shine and absorb excess grease.

But unfortunately, many of them do more harm than good. Those grapefruit-scented antibacterial foaming face washes actually dry out the skin, stripping the complexion of naturally occurring hydrating oils along with makeup and residue from the day. Without those natural oils, which keep skin in check, it has to work overtime to produce moisture and rebalance itself—and that only serves to bring on *way* more oil than normal. And then: greasiness, shiny, uneven skin, and more pimples.

The surprising (and somewhat unbelievable) solution to the problem of acne and shiny skin? Fight fire with fire. Or rather, oil with oil.

Cleansing skin with oil actually dissolves dirt and pimple-causing oil that's sitting in the pores, leaving skin clean and soft. And you don't need to spend \$60 on a bottled cleansing oil product—we'll show you how to make your own, totally customized version for a fraction of the cost.

DIY Facial Cleansing Oil

The rules are simple: Use two base oils, and add whatever essential oils you like for your skin. Just like in aromatherapy, different oils have different effects on pores, so it takes a little bit of exploration to find your perfect fit.

For your two base oils, we recommend castor oil and one more emollient carrier oil. Castor oil is a bit more viscous than most oils and acts as an astringent, but it's also anti-inflammatory and very healing.

Then pick a carrier oil—jojoba, sweet almond, apricot, avocado, and grapeseed are all gentle options that won't aggravate skin or clog pores for most people.

Mix your oils together in a small bowl, or in the palm of your hand if you don't mind getting a little messy. Massage skin gently with your oil blend for about 30 seconds to remove makeup and dirt, then add a little water with your fingertips and continue to work the oils into your skin. For extra pore-opening power, run hot water over a washcloth and lay over skin for about ten seconds. Then, buff skin with a wet washcloth to remove oil.

The result? Soft, clean skin that may not even need a ton of moisturizer. Your skin might be a little funky for the first few days of oil cleansing, but be patient and play around with the combination of oils until you find one that works for you. We've laid out our favorite blends for every type of skin below.

Oily and acne-prone

Start with a ratio of 30 percent castor oil to 70 percent carrier oil. Don't go too crazy—a little of this cleanser goes a long way! For added beautiful skin benefits, try adding a few drops of tea tree, rosemary, or sandalwood oil into the mix.

Combination

Because your skin produces less oil naturally, you can get away with 20 percent castor oil to 80 percent of a carrier oil like sunflower seed oil or sweet almond oil. Balancing, soothing essential oils like cedarwood, lavender, and lemongrass can be added into the mix for a more even skin tone.

Dry

For skin that's on the drier side, skip castor oil altogether. (The biggest advantage of this oil is its astringent properties, and if your skin is delicate already, you really don't need it.) Instead, use a super softening blend of a carrier oil like jojoba or argan oil and essential oils like rose, geranium, ylang-ylang. Lavender and myrrh can help keep mature skin looking youthful, fresh, and clear.

You should immediately notice a difference in the look of your skin after oil cleansing—but the real changes will take a few weeks to show up on your face. Stick with it, play with different oils, and see how it goes!