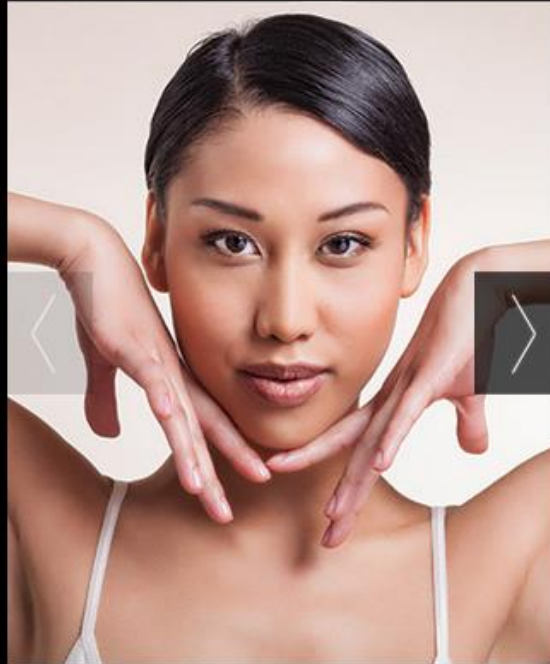


Serums: The Most Overlooked Acne Products That Will Change Your Life

Take it from someone who's tried everything: Serums are an effective acne solution

by [LINDSAY TIGAR](#) | [COMMENT](#)

When you've struggled with annoyingly dependable breakouts for more than 15 years (and you're only 28), you become an expert at acne-concealing life hacks. For example: I can tell you every date spot in New York City that has flattering, ambient lighting. I know the out-of-pocket cost of injecting an overgrown, painful pimple with cortisone. I can also give you a long-winded review of everything from spironolactone to Accutane, all of which promise to clear up your skin if you can endure side effects for months -- or sometimes, years.



I've been battling hormonal acne since the age of 10. I know it's a cliché statement, but I truly have tried everything to fight breakouts. And though I did a stint on Accutane four years ago, my picture-perfect skin didn't last.

Until, on a whim, I tried a day-and-night serum treatment. In the past four months, it has made me a #makeupfreemonday poster for the very first time. I've not only noticed next to no breakouts, but many of my acne scars are fading, too. The star ingredient -- retinol -- might be due the credit. As dermatologist Dr. Tsippora Shainhouse, MD, explains: "Retinol helps to loosen the trapped, gunky dead skin cells that have shed into the pore and combine with sebum to create comedones and trigger inflammation. It also helps exfoliate skin cells and fade acne-related skin discoloration."

The funny thing is that most serums -- as they are traditionally defined -- aren't intended to be acne fighters. Even so, dermatologists say that because of their rich and robust ingredients, they can help hormonal acne sufferers overcome their monthly cycle of breakouts. Why?

"These topical solutions can deliver powerful ingredients to the skin without irritation," explains [Dr. Gary Goldenberg](#), MD, dermatologist and co-founder of Goldenberg Dermatology in New York City. "Serums containing tea tree oil, salicylic acid and alpha hydroxy acid can help fight blackheads and whiteheads and prevent breakouts," he says. "These are especially effective as part of an overall acne regimen, which includes a gentle cleanser and a moisturizer with sunscreen."

After 18 years of hating my skin, I couldn't be more thankful for its new appearance. Here are some acne-fighting serums that could help you gain the smooth, blemish-free skin that you're definitely deserving of, too.