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Makeup-Free Contouring Is The Latest Beauty Craze

Once a technique only used by pro makeup artists, contouring has become a full-on craze in the beauty world. It's not hard to see why — who wouldn't want a more sculpted complexion? But, not everyone wants to take the time to learn the intricacies of applying bronzer, highlighter, and concealer just so.

Leave it to K-beauty lovers to come up with an alternate, healthier option. Instead of relying on makeup, they've figured out how to use skincare to actually create an immediate sculpting effect. But, unlike those painstakingly applied cosmetics, skincare contouring also results in long-term firming benefits.

The secret behind the sculpt? Strategic hydration. By using a carefully curated routine of moisture-bestowing concoctions, you can give your skin lasting radiance and visible definition. Whereas contouring relies on faking shadows in order to make cheekbones look more prominent, skincare sculpting is about making skin better at reflecting light. Add to that ingredients that have known firming benefits and you've got the perfect recipe for long-lasting definition, plumping, and all-around glowiness.

So, the next time you find yourself reaching for your favorite highlighter, take a step back and try this non-contouring contour method instead. Stick to it and you'll be able to cut glass with those cheekbones.

Make Your Moisturizer Do Double Duty

As mentioned above, when your skin is moisturized, it's better equipped to take care of itself as it fights acne, aging, and outside pollutants. It also looks better: Dry skin is often dull and flaky, while hydrated skin looks glowy and dynamic. "The outer layer of our skin is made up of dead cells," says [Dr. Gary Goldenberg](#) of New York City-based Goldenberg Dermatology. "By hydrating the skin — especially this outer layer — one can improve the appearance of fine lines and the overall function and health of the entire epidermis."



When it comes to skin contouring, a moisturizer can do so much more than hydrate. You want to look for products with the words “lifting,” “firming,” and “tightening” — in addition to plumping and polishing dull skin, they’ll also have an actual contouring effect, both short-term and long. ID.AZ’s Face Fit Lifting Cream checks all the boxes of skin sculpting: It’s lightweight and packed with Macadamia Seed Oil that locks in moisture, plus antioxidant Vitamin B3 to restore and strengthen the skin. It visibly lifts, resulting in a defined, smooth complexion.

It’s All About The Application

Your firming cream is meant to be applied all over your face, but you can maximize that contouring effect by doing a simple facial massage. With this method, because you are manually working the product into your skin, rather than rubbing it quickly on top, you are aiding in lymphatic drainage and getting rid of any puffiness that is keeping your skin structure from looking defined.

Scoop out a pea-sized amount of the cream and apply it to your skin, being careful not to fully rub it in — you want your skin to have a little slip so your fingers move easily across it. Starting at your neck, move your hands upwards and outwards along your jawline. Do this for at least a minute, then move on to the rest of your face, again gliding your hands upwards and outwards.

For extra contouring credit, you can target your cheekbones with this special move: After spreading on the cream, take your first two fingers and place them underneath your cheekbones, starting at your nose. Firmly move them down and around the bone towards your jawbone in a swooping motion. Do this for a minute, making sure to apply gentle, but firm pressure. This will give you extra de-puffing power, making your skin your cheeks more defined.

Check out this handy diagram below for the full routine.



Find Your Light

While K-beauty moisturizers are known for their light-bestowing benefits, in order to go all in on your glow, you'll need to be strategic about how you use them. So while you are applying hydration all over, you are also using different textures of moisturizer on different parts of your face. One area that benefits most from this method is your cheekbones. For that added glow, opt for an additional moisturizer that bestows extra dewiness to your already plumped skin.



Blithe's InBetween Hydro Priming Cream is perfect for this technique. The water-based moisturizer is lightweight, so it won't make your skin look or feel greasy — an issue that can come up when you are layering hydration products. Plus, it contains Bifida Ferment extract, a natural probiotic that works alongside Ceramides

to further strengthen skin's moisture barrier and shield against environmental pollutants that can cause discoloration and sagging over time. Ceramides "form a protective layer that plumps the skin and retains moisture, fortifying its natural barrier and protecting it," says Dr. Goldenberg.

Pat it on your browbones, cheekbones, the length of your nose, and your chin to selectively highlight, or use it all over your face as a second moisturizer if it's a full-on glow you're after.



Go Extra Glossy

The K-beauty world has a term for a sculpted, light-reflecting complexion: glass skin. Basically, it's when your skin is so glossy that it looks like you've used an array of highlighters to perfectly craft your facial definition. Except this kind of strobing is done totally with skincare.



When a moisturizer alone doesn't give you the level of glow you want, add an ampoule that hydrates and protects, like Leegeehaam's Vita Propolis Ampoule, to your routine. If you're looking for a more intense contour effect (a.k.a. if you have no problem at all with some healthy shine), you can mix it in with a moisturizer (like the InBetween Hydro Priming Cream), or keep it more subtle by simply layering it on the high points of the face.

In addition to giving good gloss, this ampoule also has some long-term skin health effects. It makes your complexion look plump and evenly toned thanks Seabuckthorn extract, which is rich in Vitamin C, and Propolis extract, which contains a wide range of vitamins. "Antioxidants help hinder free-radical production and thus protect cells from damage," explains Dr. Goldenberg. "This is crucial for slowing the aging process." Free radicals, which are molecules caused by environmental factors like UV exposure and pollution, can cause hyperpigmentation (in the form of sunspots) and texture issues that can make it difficult to create the glass skin look. The smoother and more even your tone and texture, the better it will reflect light and make you look more dewy.

Ready to get a contoured look for real? ID Hospital, Korea's top dermatology clinic, just created Private Doctor, a cutting-edge line using the most advanced skin-firming actives and technologies.

Their debut product, Minus Serum, targets sagging skin and wrinkles with the use of Sodium Deoxycholate, an active ingredient commonly used for in-office slimming treatments. It helps to lift and firm the face to create the appearance of a more pronounced face contour and jawline. As a topical, it's so effective because it contains Spicules, little microscopic needles suspended in the formula that act like microneedles to deliver active ingredients deep into the skin. It's the future of contouring and it's available at Sephora now.