

I've Been a Beauty Editor for Years, and This is the Only Product That Has Ever Made My Skin 'Soft'



Zoe Weiner · April 19, 2021



There's a reason why "baby soft" has become one of the pinnacle descriptors of healthy skin. When we're fresh out of the womb, our skin is made up of peak amounts of sebum and fatty acids that make it smooth and bouncy, but as we age, our body produces less of both of those things. And when you've got sensitive skin, achieving that softness as you get older becomes even *more* challenging when irritation-based textural issues arise. Le sigh. Though we may not be able to turn back time, we *can* re-create the type of complexion we were too young to appreciate as infants with the help of skin-softening products. The one our resident sensitive-skinned beauty director, Ali Finney, swears by? Tata Harper Softening Cleanser (\$86)

When you see the term "softening" on a label, it usually means that the product's main job is "to provide an overall better texture to the touch," says Paul Jarrod Frank, MD, a cosmetic dermatologist based in New York City. These formulations also help to strengthen your skin barrier and replenish hydration—which is particularly beneficial as we get older, since our natural reserves of collagen, elastin, and sebum tend to deplete around the time we hit 30. "Products that soften skin are often moisturizing and repair skin barrier function," says **Gary Goldenberg, MD**, a board-certified dermatologist and founder of Goldenberg Dermatology in NYC. "Dry, cracked skin often feels hard, so increasing moisture between keratinocytes [the primary type of skin cell] hydrates the skin, making it feel and look healthier and softer."



Tata Harper Softening Cleanser – \$86.00

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While many soap-based cleansers on the market have a reputation for being stripping and drying (thanks to the fact that they mess with your skin's pH), Tata Harper's softening option does the exact opposite. It was "meticulously curated for sensitive skin," says the brand's founder, Tata Harper, who adds that the formulation excluded more than 80 of the most common skin triggers, including fragrances, harsh alcohols, and acids.

"Our formulations for this collection feature a lot of new green technology to provide anti-aging benefits, barrier reinforcement, and allergen microfilters," says Harper. The cleanser includes a tetra-lipid complex that's packed with fatty acids (including omegas 3, 6, and 9) to help rebuild your skin's lipid layer, a process that Dr. Goldenberg says can "help hydrate keratinocytes, and improve the brick and mortar function of the skin." He explains that a stronger skin barrier will help trap moisture in while keeping pollution and allergens out, which results in a softer complexion overall. "It also features a lot of skin-strengthening minerals, like magnesium, copper, iron, and zinc," says Harper, plus a blend of botanicals that counter stress and offer soothing benefits to hyperactive skin.

"Tata told me that this product should be applied to dry skin, like you'd apply an oil or a moisturizer. The oils in the product bind to the skin to dislodge dirt and grime, as well as condition your complexion before you've even gotten to your treatment steps," Finney says. "My best advice is to sign up for Auto-Replenish, because this softening cleanser is so good, you're never going to let it go." Finney, who has a reactive complexion that's historically been sensitive to botanical ingredients, has been using the product every day and swears that it has made her skin "softer than ever." Or at least, as soft as it's been since infancy. Shop the product above to test it out for yourself.