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Is it time to ignore the hype and go back to basics with our skincare?



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How many beauty products did you apply this morning? Four, five, maybe six? According to a recent survey, the average woman uses a minimum of 16 products everyday. Five of these sit in the skincare category, which might not sound like a lot, but when you consider that Clinique's three step system of cleanse, tone and moisturise ruled the roost not so long ago, it's clear that our approach to skincare is no longer minimalist.

While few of us might be willing to extend our routines to the 14-steps favoured by Korean women, the K-beauty phenomenon has certainly influenced the contents of our bathroom cabinet. These days you're likely to use a serum, maybe an essence, a weekly peel and you've almost definitely put your faith in a sheet mask to brighten up your complexion.

But have our regimes become too maximalist? For those who are feeling a little jaded with purifying bubble masks and snail slime eye gels, a new simplified approach could offer some light relief - and it requires just three main products. Enter Lixir, the new skincare brand that you might have seen on your Instagram feed, created by Colette Haydon, a renowned dermo-pharmacist. Having worked in the beauty industry for over 20 years, formulated products for some of the largest and most renowned brands, including Ren, HealGel and Aromatherapy Associates, and seen countless trends come and go, Haydon finally decided to create her products.



Lixir Vitamin C Paste

At the core, are what she's dubbed her 'universal good skin trio', the ElectroGel Cleanser, £25, Vitamin C Paste, £32, and Universal Emulsion, £29. "They are absolute essentials and are multi-taskers to the max," says Haydon. "They are for all skin types and ages, and they work together seamlessly, taking only a few minutes of your time to apply." The cleanser works as a make-up remover, face wash and a mask, if left on for long enough. But, it's the Universal Emulsion that is a real game-changer. The lightweight moisturiser is somewhere between a face cream and a serum, yet hydrating enough to leave skin feeling soft and smooth - the perfect base for make-up.

For those who require a more targeted treatment, Haydon has also formulated three Night Switch products with pure active ingredients that are added to the Universal Emulsion, including BHA/AHA 10%, £20, for blemish-prone skin types; PHA/AHA 10%, £20, for those battling with pigmentation and uneven skin tone; and Retinol 1%, £28, to combat the appearance of lines and wrinkles.

While she recommends just focusing on one active at a time, Haydon called them 'Night Switch' as she's a big believer in not sticking to the same ingredient for too long, "The skin likes a change of scenery. An active ingredient used for too long saturates the skin and it no longer delivers results," Haydon explains. "It is good to switch things around to keep the skin interested and avoid the plateau."



Allies of Skin Overnight Mask

Haydon isn't the only one taking a more straightforward approach, Allies of Skin is a beauty brand that promises effortless, effective skincare with a [1A All Day Mask, £79](#), [1A Overnight Mask, £87](#), and [Molecular Saviour Mist, £36](#), with a cleansing mask coming next month. Like Lixir, the formulas are incredibly light but still pack a nourishing punch. The arrival of cult US brand Glossier and its simple skincare offering to UK shores cements the idea that the minimalist approach to beauty is gaining momentum.

"There are so many products on the market today and the messaging about ingredients and results is confusing for customers," says consultant dermatologist [Dr Sarah Shah](#). "The skin is a self-regulating organ and actually needs less help than we think it does." Dr Shah recommends a good quality cleanser, a topical antioxidant such as vitamin C to protect, as well as a retinol overnight to repair and sun cream. "Broad spectrum SPF is the most beneficial way to slow down ageing," says Dr Shah.



Not everyone is on board though, 'A simple skincare routine is no better than a complicated one, it just depends on what your skin needs,' says skincare expert and founder of Paula's Choice, Paula Begoun. "A simple regime won't help someone who battles dry skin with breakouts, some rosacea, sun damage and discolorations all at the same time."

Although Begoun has very little time for trend-focused or gimmicky beauty buys, "Trends are rarely well researched and it's unlikely that the products will offer anywhere near the results that are promised on their labels." Begoun's approach through both her skincare brand and her website [Beautypedia.com](#), which is a fountain of knowledge about ingredients, isn't too dissimilar from Haydon's in that you have your essentials and you add in the necessary treatments.

"We need to pay close attention to our skin in the same way we do to our body," says Begoun. "For example, your body might be telling you to eat chocolate cake or to have that second martini, but your mind steps

If you're still on the fence, perhaps it's worth taking a leaf out of [Cultbeauty.co.uk](#) founder and beauty expert, Alexia Inge's book, "I tend to be minimalist during the week and maximalist at the weekend. Sunday Self Care where I'll use a mask or a gadget is my favourite."