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# SKIN GYM

*Alternating between gym workouts to improve energy levels and tone? Your skincare routine deserves the same consideration for a silky, youthful afterglow*

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s religious gym goers will already be aware, there's a startlingly strong connection between working out and your skin. As well as an insurance policy for your health, exercise increases blood flow – which, in turn, sends fresh oxygen and nutrients to your skin cells – not to mention accelerating the removal of waste products and free radicals. Its boost of serotonin, sometimes known as the happy chemical, also lowers levels of the stress hormone cortisol, which is responsible for breakouts and red, irritated patches that bloom across the skin.

But today it's about taking a more literal approach to fitness for your face: serums laced with a key ingredient that is like an energy source for your skin cells and routines that embrace hits of high-intensity actives but, crucially, also incorporate time for recovery. Welcome to the new world of cardio-inspired beauty... ➤





## Energy upgrade

In the same way that we need energy to work out at the gym, our skin needs energy to stay moisture-saturated, turn over fresh skin cells and produce skin-plumping collagen and elastin. Specifically, it needs ATP (Adenosine Triphosphate), an organic compound

"When applied topically to the skin, this powerhouse ingredient encourages more oxygen for optimised cell function, which helps boost collagen and strengthen the skin," says plastic surgeon and founder of 111Skin, Dr Yannis Alexandrides.

"Much like our body relies on calories for energy," he continues, "ATP mimics this effect when used topically in skincare, providing energy to fuel living cells." Hence just a few drops of his 111Skin Cryo ATP Sports Booster will reignite lacklustre skin.

Another reason ATP is currently enjoying a moment in the skincare spotlight is because there are few corners of solace for skin when faced with the demands of our increasingly fast-paced lifestyles. As such, ATP has become a core tenet of the Soho Skin 24/7 Treatment, a skincare line created by the Soho House members' club to restore cellular energy to weary skin.

111Skin Cryo ATP Sports Booster (Dhs500) will reignite lacklustre skin



The Oxygen Mist and Glide, two products designed to be used alongside its at-home laser, Dhs545 for both



Kiehl's Retinol Fast Release Wrinkle-Reducing Night Serum, Dhs370 for 28ml



By Terry's Hyaluronic Global Serum (Dhs375) contains a hefty 10 per cent concentration of hydrating hyaluronic acid

## Interval training

Interval training that alternates low and high-intensity exercise forms the basis for skin cycling, a viral TikTok trend that dermatologists approve of. The premise is simple: "Alternate the days you use active ingredients such as retinols or chemical exfoliants to resurface the skin, with recovery days where you solely use moisturising ingredients to strengthen the skin barrier and minimise the risk of inflammation," explains Dr Fadi Haddad, dermatologist at the Dr Kayle Aesthetic Clinic in Dubai.

The idea is to give skin time to recuperate, then step things up again with a boost of brightening or line-smoothing action. A four-day cycle where you only switch up your overnight routine is most popular and typically comprises of using active ingredients for two nights of the week, followed by two nights of rest – and then repeat.

It makes sense. Even the fanciest serums will stop working over time because skin cells get used to the ingredients. Likewise, overstimulation compromises the skin barrier, meaning skin leaks moisture through microscopic tears and slips into paper territory. "Night one is set aside for exfoliation, which helps to resurface skin and allows for better penetration of actives," says Dr Haddad. So invest in a leave-on AHA exfoliator such as Naturism Glycolic Acid Resurfacing Gel 10%. Retinoids, like those found in Kiehl's Retinol Fast Release Wrinkle-Reducing Night Serum, are the star ingredient for the second night to fade hyperpigmentation and improve the look of wrinkles.

"The penultimate and final night are "recovery" nights where you skip the active ingredients and simply apply hyaluronic acid, followed by moisturiser," notes Dr Haddad. By Terry's Hyaluronic Global Serum contains a hefty 10 per cent concentration of hydrating hyaluronic acid. While Clarins Hydra-Essentiel Night Cream boasts two different weights – one high to plump the outermost layer of skin, the other low to trap water in the deeper layers.

## And breathe...

Breathwork, a practice that focuses on the conscious control of breathing for therapeutic benefits, is all the rage with celebrities including Gwyneth Paltrow and Wim Hof. Likewise, improving our cell's respiratory system is a crucial way to keep skin balanced and functioning optimally.

"Oxygen is, quite literally, a super ingredient," says Lucy Goff, co-founder of high-tech wellness brand Lyma. "It boosts the skin's metabolism and helps to eliminate waste, which, in turn, helps with the production of collagen, elastin and increases cell turnover." Improving your skin's oxygen uptake is particularly important after the age of 40 when skin loses 60 per cent of its oxygen capacity. "The skin usually renews itself every 28 days, but if oxygen and nutrients aren't available, the cell reproduction process is slowed down and the new cells produced aren't as healthy, which results in faster ageing," Goff notes.

For this reason, Lyma has launched The Oxygen Mist and Glide, two products designed to be used alongside its at-home laser. Both are uniquely formulated with 100 per cent active stabilised oxygen (ASO), where oxygen is delivered in liquid form. "ASO quite literally floods the skin with this critical antioxidant, reaching the base layer of the skin where regeneration take place and subsequently helps with cellular production, blood flow, and moisture retention," she notes.

A post-workout glow from the comfort of your bathroom? Bring on the rush of a feel-good skin routine. ■