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## The simplest men's skincare routine

Although skincare products are predominantly used by women, everyone should be looking after their skin. A simple three-step men's skincare routine covers the basics of good skincare. There are other steps you can add depending on your skin type, the issues you want to address, and your budget.

### Do men need skincare?

When it comes to the skincare industry, women are by far the biggest spenders. Yet, a good skincare routine can benefit anyone - including men. Dr Catherine Borysiewicz, consultant dermatologist at the Cadogan Clinic<sup>1</sup>, explains why good skincare is important for all men, and why these lotions and potions are so much more than beauty products:

"It's important for men to cleanse and moisturise in order to maintain the health and integrity of their skin. Using daily [SPF \(sun protection factor\)](#) is also essential for slowing the signs of ageing and protecting against [skin cancer](#)."

So why do so many men shy away from skincare? Firstly, men's skincare products are advertised less than their female counterparts. Many women's skincare products are marketed for their beauty properties and have multiple products for each part of their routine. Rahema Akhtar, co-founder and chief medical officer of The Clinic Room<sup>2</sup> thinks that for many men, mindset may also be a factor:

"Most men avoid skincare routines due to the amount of time it can take from start to finish. Men typically look for the fastest way possible to get in and out of applying skincare."

## Is men's skincare different to women's skincare?

Now we know it's just as important for men to look after their skin, should men's skincare routine look different to women's? According to Dr Borysiewicz, the answer is yes:

"Men tend to have a thicker layer of skin (called the dermis) than women, with a higher [collagen](#) (a protein that provides skin with elasticity). They also tend to have oilier skin than women (due to higher testosterone levels), with larger pores and sebaceous glands, making them more susceptible to [acne flares](#)."

For this reason, she says that men's skincare products tend to be lighter weight and contain different ingredients. What's more, products are often tailored for a simpler regime.

## Can men use women's skincare products?

Yes, men can use women's skincare products. Akhtar highlights that for many men, an introduction to skincare typically begins with products designed for women passed on by a girlfriend or sister.

However, she emphasises that "the workability and efficiency of these ingredients for men is a big question mark, as the deeper layer of skin is about 20% thicker for men compared to women. Therefore products formulated for thinner skin are unable to penetrate deep enough, providing no real benefits besides short-term moisture."

## Your simplest skincare routine: the three essentials

There are several potential stages in a skincare routine. To help keep things simple, more budget-friendly, and time-efficient, we've asked the experts for their men's skincare routine essential steps and favourite products.

### 1. Face cleanser for men

Cleansing every morning and evening is an essential first step in anyone's routine. It helps to remove dirt, oil, bacteria, and other pollutants that build up throughout the day.

### **Dr Borysiewicz says:**

"All soap-based products strip the skin of natural oils and can be extremely drying. Try swapping your soap or shower gel for a soap-free face wash. You will notice the difference and may find you do not need to use as many moisturisers. If you have skin problems such as acne or [eczema](#), there are soothing multi-tasking products that cleanse and calm skin."

Soap-free brands:

- [Dove](#).
- [Sanex](#).
- [Cetaphil](#).

### **Akhtar says:**

- [Mesoesthetic Brightening Foam](#) - contains multiple active ingredients to help improve your complexion. It also contains lactobacillus ferment, a postbiotic compound made when [healthy bacteria \(probiotics\)](#) are fermented in your gut<sup>3</sup>. This balances skin microbiota (the microorganisms on your skin) and improves the protective skin barrier and function of healthy skin.

## **2. Men's moisturiser**

Moisturisers, as the name suggests, add moisture and leave your skin feeling soft. They are particularly great if you have a dry skin type, but are a crucial step in everyone's skincare routine, both morning and evening.

### **Dr Borysiewicz says:**

"Always apply moisturisers in the direction of hair growth, as rubbing them the other way will plug hair follicles and lead to spots."

Top tips by skin type and condition:

- For dry, sensitive skin - apply at least twice a day, and for [very dry skin during winter](#) use a thicker cream or ointment.

- For normal skin – apply a light cream, lotion, or gel twice a day. Look for ingredients such as ceramides which really help improve the epidermal barrier (the outermost layer of your skin) and [hyaluronic acid](#) to draw moisture into the skin.
- For [keratosis pilaris](#) (a dry skin condition that often flares in winter months) – use products containing alpha hydroxy acids (AHAs) and beta hydroxy acids (BHAs). These work to help remove dead skin cells from the top layer of your skin.

Recommended high street brands:

- [Bulldog](#).

**Akhtar recommends:**

- [War Paint for Men Tinted Moisturiser](#) – for men looking for a quick-fix daily moisturiser. It's a dual product which gives lasting moisture whilst evening out skin tone and adding colour.
- [Ultimate W+ Whitening Essence](#) – for an uneven skin tone and dark spots. This intensive serum acts as a moisturiser and contains antioxidants and [meso]white complex<sup>®4</sup> to even out skin discolouration.

### 3. SPF (or men's moisturiser with SPF)

This final step in your morning skincare routine is arguably the most important, because SPF products block the [sun's harmful UV rays](#). Cumulative exposure to UV can cause skin cancer, and significantly accelerate visible signs of ageing.

You apply SPF after moisturiser, or to use fewer products, purchase a moisturiser that contains SPF. For a good protection level, experts recommend using SPF 30 or higher.

**Dr Borysiewicz says:**

"Early evidence of sun damage can include uneven pigmentation, melasma, [moles](#), wrinkles, fine lines and [spider veins](#)."

- [LifeJacket men's sunscreen](#).

**Akhtar says:**

- [Mesoprotech Light Water Antiaging Veil®](#) - this multi-tasking SPF also contains hyaluronic acid. The ultra-light texture is rapidly absorbed, creating an invisible protective veil with absolutely no white cast or chalky feeling.

## Optional additions

Now that you have your basic three-step routine, the choice to add in the below steps is yours. This will depend on your skin type or issues you want to address. Of course, it also depends on your budget and how long you want your routine to take.

### Toner for men

Toners are particularly important for men with oily skin and should be used after cleansing and before moisturiser.

#### Dr Borysiewicz says:

"Toners help to remove excess oil gently, encourage pores to close, reduce acne, restore skin's natural PH balance, and help prevent ingrown hairs."

Ingredients to look for:

- Glycerin - for dry skin.
- Antioxidants - for ageing skin.
- Ceramides - for sensitive skin and especially for those with inflammatory skin conditions such as eczema or [psoriasis](#).
- Hyaluronic acid - for all skin types to restore hydration and smoothness.

#### Akhtar says:

- [Brightening Peel Booster](#) - is designed to limit melanogenic activity (the production of the pigment melanin which determines skin colour). This targets hyperpigmentation (where some areas of the skin are darker than others) and imperfections.

### Men's eye cream

If you're looking to reduce the signs of ageing, eye cream should follow cleanser and toner, and be before moisturiser in your routine.

### **Dr Borysiewicz says:**

"Eye creams can help reduce the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles and can also help with dark circles and puffiness, and brighten dull skin."

Ingredients to look for:

- Hyaluronic acid – for hydration and to improve skin elasticity.
- Peptides – for supporting collagen production and reducing lines.
- [AHAs](#) – for treating pigmentation (uneven skin tone).
- Ceramides – for improving strength and moisture.

### **Akhtar says:**

- [Energy C Eye Contour](#) – contains vitamin C to target dark circles and signs of fatigue. Also, plant extracts may help to boost collagen production which helps to prevent wrinkles.

### **Tips for shaving rash**

"[Shaving rash](#) can be sore and can also trigger skin outbreaks due to ingrowing hairs," says Dr Borysiewicz. "Try to avoid irritating alcohol-based products and products that will further clog your pores and inflame hair follicles, such as heavy moisturisers and oils."

"I usually recommend something soothing such as a light aloe vera gel. Apply in the direction of hair growth."

When introducing a new product to your routine it is advised that you perform a patch test (placing a small amount of product on your skin) 24 hours before using. If you experience an [allergic reaction](#), then you should stop using that product and find an alternative.

## **Further reading**

1. [The Cadogan Clinic.](#)
2. [The Clinic Room.](#)

3. Żółkiewicz, Marzec, Ruszczyński, and Feleszko "Postbiotics – a step beyond pre- and probiotics".
4. Mesoesthetic whitening line "High-tech technology with [meso]white complex®".

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Authored by:	Peer Reviewed by: Dr Krishna Vakharia, MRCP	
Originally Published: 20/11/2023	Next review date: 29/06/2022	Document ID: doc_31983

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