

SKIN FITNESS

# Is it time to *downsize* your skincare?

Leading dermatologists say, well, yes. Here’s how embracing the new era of ‘skinimalism’ could save cash – and equal healthier skin

BY RACHEL SHARP

Quick pop quiz: how many lotions and potions are currently hiding in your bathroom cabinet? And how many daily steps have you added to your skincare routine lately? Is it three? Possibly four if you include eye cream? Confession time: mine’s blown out to seven steps – all with the requisite 60 seconds in between each layer of product to let it sink in. That’s probably the only occupational hazard of beauty journalism – it’s hard to unlearn the benefits of power products once you’ve done a deep dive.

Still, I’m a far cry from the 18-or-so steps we’re now seeing as the aspirational norm on social media. Apparently, most beauty influencers in 2024 firmly subscribe to the notion you can’t have too much of a good (and typically outrageously expensive) thing in the quest for what’s now being referred to as ‘baby dolphin’ skin (yes, really). The problem, though, is that layer upon layer of even the most luxurious stuff can be uncomfortable if your face errs on the sensitive side.

In fact, experts say marathon skincare sessions don’t do our complexion any favours. “The downside is that there’s a point of saturation where the products can’t perform their job anymore,” explains dermal therapist Dr Giulia D’Anna, founder of Dermal Distinction in Melbourne. Anything beyond roughly step eight, she says, simply won’t get to where it’s needed in the skin. “The other concern I have is



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– DR GIULIA D’ANNA

that many skincare ingredients can’t be layered – they just don’t play nice together at all. Some perform the same function and others [are even] counterproductive.”

Instead, go for quality over quantity. That’s according to industry-leading New York plastic surgeon, Dr Lara Devgan, whose own premium skincare line is now available in Australia via Mecca. “I think beauty consumers want to avoid what we’re seeing in fast fashion, where you have a closet full of clothes that are really inexpensive, but you only want to wear them once,” she reflects. “People want fewer, better, higher-quality products that deliver efficacy and give you a difference between the before and after.”

Likewise, D’Anna’s best advice, other than asking a dermal expert to make you a streamlined regime, is to invest in products that work. And the good news is that a hefty price tag doesn’t always mean better. “What’s more important is the quality of the ingredients,” she says. “Look at the label. You want your actives listed close to the top of the list. If they’re not... you’re not getting a quality product.” Her other hot tip? Skip vitamin C serum and abrasive exfoliation steps, which she says most of us probably don’t need.

D’Anna recommends a simple four-step skincare routine at most, with an extra cleansing step added at night to wash away the day’s dirt, pollution and make-up. In the morning, she suggests starting with a vitamin B serum for hydration

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### TO REPAIR

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### TO FIRM

**Allies of Skin Peptides & Antioxidants Advanced Firming Daily Treatment, \$208**  
Sure, there are some research-heavy niche products in this premium range. But this do-it-all ticks every box – from brightening to hydration – in one silky formula.

and brightening, before layering on some eye serum, moisturiser and finishing with sunscreen (a non-negotiable in any AM routine). At the end of the day, her top skincare tip post-cleanse is investing in a quality vitamin A (retinol or bakuchiol) product, then following it with a depigmentation serum (such as kojic acid) to help even skin tone, and a hyaluronic acid serum to amplify hydration. Finally, before hitting the pillow, finish with the fourth and final step: a moisturiser and eye serum.

So where does this leave all those well-meaning social media stars whose job it is to tout their bathroom cabinet’s wares? Well, turns out some of the savvy ones are tapped into the wisdom of skinimalism, too. Popular Aussie beauty content creator, Ali Whittle, for example, recently streamlined her regime to just one brand, using a plan tailored to her skin’s needs. “I’ve long been a product junkie, but as I get older, I’m less captivated by brands just launching products for launching sake,” she says. “I need research, innovative science, data and results to really woo me. It can be expensive and exhausting trying to keep up with skincare trends.”

After all, who’s got time to stand around waiting for 18 different layers of face serum to sink in? Luckily, science and common sense both say you really don’t need to.

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