

## Blog II

*NOTE: I removed the product titles because the company no longer makes them. The blog focuses on the beauty industry, skin care products, and dermatology.*

### The Skin You're In

Every living thing has a function, but a human has a reason.

We live in a world where beauty has been set at a very high standard. Powerful marketing and advertising begin distorting our self-image from childhood. The standard for beauty has become increasingly unrealistic over the last few decades, especially in the United States, leaving it up to the individual to choose whether to adhere to growing trends or walk their own path.

The average consumer spends anywhere from \$100 to \$800 monthly on beauty products; most at the higher end of this spectrum are women. However, men have become more involved in maintaining their appearance in recent years. The problem is that most of these beauty products don't work. So why do people still buy them? Excellent persuasive tactics.

Given enough exposure to mass marketing and social media, people start to form opinions and judge themselves and others based on what is now considered 'desirable.' The companies in the beauty industry will continue to do business this way until demands shift. The only way to evoke change is for consumers to educate themselves on the truth about these products.

### ***Some Facts About Your Skin: The Dermis***

The dermis is the second primary layer of skin and comprises two sublayers: the papillary dermis and the reticular dermis. It gives the skin strength and elasticity and serves as its substructure. The two primary fibers in the dermis are collagen and elastin. This area of the skin is anywhere from six to three millimeters thick.

Notable features of the two sub-layers of the dermis are:

- **Papillary Dermis** – an arrangement of collagen fibers pushed up into the epidermis (top layer) to replace the old fibers that are constantly shedding.

- **Reticular Dermis** – thicker collagen fibers that run parallel to the epidermis.

These sub-layers contain skin cells, lymphatic blood vessels, hair follicles, oil, and glands. The glands produce sebum, protecting your skin from bacterial growth and preventing it from drying out. This area also feeds the skin via the blood vessels, removing toxins and supplying the epidermis with blood through circulation. The epidermis and dermis work together to achieve this. Collagen and elastin are connective tissues throughout the skin. It is also important to note that this layer uses moisture to regulate our body temperature.

### ***How Wrinkles Are Formed***

Age and gravity cause our skin to lose its ability to rejuvenate and our muscle mass to deteriorate, producing wrinkles. As your skin ages, its foundation erodes, and the elastin weakens, causing the skin to fall into the muscle. Wrinkles reside not on the top layer of your skin but in the muscles beneath it. This is what we see when we look in the mirror.

It is important to note there are two different types of wrinkles:

- **Static Wrinkles** – wrinkles we get when we reach a certain age. They do not go away, hence the word static.
- **Dynamic Wrinkles** – fine lines and wrinkles that appear when our faces are in motion, like when we laugh, cry, or squint. Many people refer to them as crow's feet. These wrinkles usually become deeper and more static over time.

Sun exposure thins collagen and elastin as we age, making it wear out faster. The skin becomes less elastic and does not easily snap back into shape. Your skin's foundation weakens and falls into wrinkles. Since wrinkles do not reside in the top layers of your skin where you apply creams and lotions, it is only logical to ask...

### ***Do Skin Creams Work?***

Few over-the-counter creams actually penetrate the dermis. If cosmetic companies could penetrate deep down into the dermis, they would have to deal with the FDA (Food and Drug

Administration) more frequently because their product would be classified as a drug, making it harder to release it into the marketplace.

Some skin care products have ingredients that may help your skin, but they usually contain such small quantities that they either don't work or work too slowly, which means that not all skin care products are a complete sham (more on this later). Some products try to go the "natural" route and advertise themselves as chemical-free. They put various ingredients in their product, but nothing that helps the skin. A great example of this is the term **proprietary blend**. This usually means they have taken ingredients available to everyone and mixed them in a specific ratio. They sell you on the notion that more ingredients equals a better product.

Some products claim to have found a secret ingredient no one has ever encountered. This 'secret' ingredient usually ends up being a compound plant or herb with almost nothing to do with skincare, proving how undermining and illegitimate the beauty industry can be.

Then how do we enhance skin? Simple, through natural methods and a select few products. Here are some natural ways to improve your skin:

- **Don't stay in the sun too long** – sun damage is the number one cumulative negative effect on the skin. The sun provides the body with Vitamin D, which is excellent for overall health and the immune system. However, prolonged exposure can damage the skin. Wear an SPF (Sun Protection Factor) of 30 or more. Sunscreen is the only thing proven to impede the appearance of lines and wrinkles directly.
- **Exercise** – every time you exercise, you maintain a healthy lifestyle and increase circulation. When you sweat, you bring sebum to the surface, which keeps your skin young, healthy, and moisturized.
- **Keep hydrated** – this not only helps remove toxins from your body, it naturally moisturizes your skin.
- **Diet** – a healthy diet will pay off and eventually show on your skin.
- **Alcohol and smoking** – this one seems pretty self-explanatory: avoid them.

### ***Skin Care Products That Actually Work***

As stated earlier, not all skin care products are a sham. For instance, hyaluronic acid, Acai Berry oil, (R)-alpha-lipoic acid, green tea extract, and coconut oil are proven to penetrate the dermis over long periods. Retin-A is a tretinoin cream used to treat fine wrinkles, dark spots, and rough skin patches on the face. Olive oil is one of the cheapest ingredients you can use, and it truly makes a difference on your skin and hair.