



# RETINOL POWER

VITAMIN A HAS PROVEN BENEFITS IN THE BATTLE TO STEM THE SIGNS OF AGEING. BUT FIRST CONSULT AN EXPERT.

I feel sure I'm not alone when it comes to admitting that I have tried just about every single 'hope in a jar' out there, spending God knows how much on moisturisers, eye creams, serums and whatnot as I (fruitlessly for the most part) battle the creeping signs of ageing. There's certainly no way to escape them, but a little softening here and there is more than welcome, and if you can find a product that gives your skin that extra boost, then embrace it with open arms.

In the skincare world there is one thing we know absolutely delivers the goods and that's retinol. Some are so potent they can completely change your skin overnight; but not all are created equal. There are a lot of misconceptions about retinol, too. There are 'Retin-A' products, and 'retinol' products – and both are 'retinoids'. It's all vitamin A, but the first kind is pretty heavy duty (i.e. you need a prescription) and the second type you can buy over the counter. Unlike standard exfoliators, retinoids work at the cellular level to increase collagen, smooth out annoying fine lines and even out skin tone, all of which are highly desirable outcomes.

This is where the experts come in, as you shouldn't embark upon the use of a retinol without first consulting one. Before selecting the best retinol formula for me I spoke to Skin Institute's Dr Sarah Hart, who is a fount of knowledge when it comes to all things skin. What this woman doesn't know about how to transform and take years off your visage is just not worth knowing, and when I first met her I was immediately struck by her incredible knowledge base and her approachability.

When it comes to the kind of patients Sarah sees, discretion and a caring approach is key, and she has both in spades. "It is so important that you talk to someone before trying retinol," she says of the proven skin rejuvenator, adding, "For some people, even the weakest retinol can cause havoc if they haven't first restored the barrier of their skin." She says the first thing to do when you want to try one is look at your cleanser, "as so many people are using ones that are just stripping their skin with ingredients like sodium laurel sulphate. The trend towards just using oil to cleanse your skin is much preferable and really effective."

Adding vitamin A to a non-prepped skin can be "a recipe for disaster, with redness, irritation and flaking that can put you off for life", Sarah tells me. If your skin is particularly sensitive you can also wait 10 minutes after cleansing before applying your retinol, to allow your natural oils to start appearing again.

Sarah says once your skin is ready, adding small amounts of vitamin A is the way to go and it can take up to 12 weeks to work your way up to the level that will start making a real difference to your skin. "Then you'll start to get that elusive dewy look and your skin will feel thicker and pigment will be fading." She likes to use a moisturiser before or after applying retinol, and this is again when your skin expert will step in and advise which of the two is the better for you. You'll find some of our top picks over the page, but if you are looking at adding a retinol to your skincare arsenal please ask advice beforehand and always, always, use a sunscreen. You will reap the benefits!



Dr Sarah Hart



## SkinMedica Retinol Complex

SkinMedica's retinol offerings are three, and can be tailored depending which level works with your skin. They are practitioner-only products and have true clinical data behind them. You can even swap between strengths depending on season. The strongest is Retinol Complex 1.0, an exemplary, high-strength retinol product whose fragrance-free formula also includes an outstanding mix of antioxidants, cell-communicating ingredients and repairing agents – all in packaging that keeps these beneficial ingredients stable and effective during use.

## Dermalogica Overnight Retinol Repair 1%

Retinol is the key ingredient in Dermalogica's new Overnight Retinol Repair 1%, which takes things up another notch from their much-loved Overnight Retinol Repair 0.5%. The highly concentrated treatment cream offers clinical-strength retinol for users who want advanced results in a formula that won't compromise skin health or comfort. Key to the formula is pure vitamin A, a highly active form of retinol. Because the retinol molecule on its own is extremely delicate and can lose its potency as soon as it is exposed to light or air, Overnight Retinol Repair 1% was developed using the most advanced micro-encapsulation technology to protect the molecule within the formula. This allows the retinol to retain stability and deliver results.

## La Prairie Cellular Power Charge Night

La Prairie Cellular Power Charge Night is a luxury power player in the realm of anti-ageing skin treatments. Thanks to a unique delivery system that creates synergy between previously incompatible substances, La Prairie adds a revolutionary combination of retinol and oxygen to the unprecedented skin-renewal energy of 'Cellular Power Infusion'. Designed to take advantage of the 'recovery mode' your skin assumes while your body is asleep, its ingenious formula emboldens the proven de-ageing power of retinol with a uniquely energising oxygen support system. Together they fortify the skin's natural renewal functions, enabling you to awaken to revitalised skin. The sleek pump bottle holds two separate chambers: one containing smooth, white, microencapsulated retinol cream; the other, an oxygen power gel. With a gentle press of the pump, the two come together and magic happens – at night, when your skin is most receptive to rejuvenating treatments.

## Eve Lom's Time Retreat Collection

The superstar facialist's Time Retreat Collection is Lom's signature superior skincare, but now with the added benefit of liposome encapsulated pure retinol included within its silky formulas. We particularly like Time Retreat Eye Treatment, a highly concentrated yet lightweight formula for the delicate eye area that helps to fade fine lines and wrinkles with the power of retinol, while nourishing and balancing skin tone. Time Retreat Radiance Boost Treatment is another winner, a multi-purpose serum that instantly exfoliates skin to boost radiance (while firming) and unifying tone in one swift step. Skin appears brighter, smoother and renewed.

## Chantecaille Retinol Body Treatment

French-born Sylvie Chantecaille is beauty royalty, having created a cosmetics line with Diane von Furstenberg and launched the iconic Prescriptives brand with Estée Lauder. The unrivalled sophistication of her Chantecaille brand has her discerning eye behind every product, with the end result being a mix of New York efficacy and a sexy French twist. Modern, natural and luxurious – these are the foundations of the Chantecaille brand and the Retinol Body Treatment takes high-performance skincare well below the neck. Designed to dramatically improve skin texture, tackle ingrown hairs and reduce hyperpigmentation, the transformative body treatment is powered by encapsulated retinol and potent botanicals. This smoothing body cream – the first of its kind – uses active, nanoencapsulated retinol on a 24-hour delivery system to ensure prolonged efficacy. Add to that pure rose water, moisture-binding sodium hyaluronate, softening shea butter and antioxidants eldeweiss and vitamin E to reverse free radical damage and you have skin that is firm, flake-free and smooth, without any irritation.

## Dr Dennis Gross Ferulic and Retinol Fibroblast Anti-Aging Moisturiser

As the Hollywood A-lister's superstar dermatologist of choice, Dr Dennis Gross' clinic on Fifth Avenue, New York City, is a hotbed of R&D. Using his expertise in perfecting complexions for his discerning clients, he has created a super-active line of medical-strength formulas to transform the skin. These include Ferulic and Retinol Fibroblast Anti-Aging Moisturiser, one of the most powerful in the range. A triple correction anti-ageing moisturiser that contains a combination of ferulic acid + retinol and ECG Cellular Complex to target the fibroblast cell, it aims to visibly improve the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles at the surface level and beyond.