



It's a well know fact that drinking lots of water every day and cutting back your alcohol will give you better skin right? Hey, it will make you feel healthier too!

How about stopping smoking and getting enough sleep? Sounds easy enough doesn't it?

But do you find that even when something sounds straightforward and simple very often it's just the opposite?

At the start of the New Year is when I'm thinking about getting down to the gym. Improving my health and my diet. I see out the old year with a bang and march into the new with determination that it's going to be different this time.

But then life kicks in and it's back to the old grindstone and not being able stick to any new habits I wanted to start.

Suddenly the year isn't feeling so new but I discovered something that changed that for me this year...

A Simple Positive Change

By making myself feel happier and healthier without spending loads at the gym or tracking down to a slimming club, I've introduced myself to a **skincare routine**. This simple change now gives me an instant uplift every morning.

Now that doesn't sound like such a big deal does it? And I was surprised at just how looking after my skin could have such an impact on how I start and finish the day.

Just by giving myself that little bit of extra attention has improved my attitude and perspective.

So Why Did I Establish A Skincare Routine?

After such a busy month like December I find that my eczema flares up on my hands or spots appear in random places on my face.

Also my skin dries out quicker over the winter months. This is because the skin has to work harder to produce **sebum** (a waxy lubricant excreted through the **sebaceous glands** to keep the skin oily). So I decided to make special effort to keep my skin soft and in good health.

In the past I used my creams and lotions in a haphazard way, sometimes irritating my skin or not allowing them to work as efficiently as they could. Now I moisturise to keep my skin healthy and to prevent the development of dermatitis and eczema. Also, dear I say it, to look youthful.

Keeping My Skin Healthy

As a designer and writer I spend long hours in front of a screen almost every day. Does this affect me? Definitely.

It makes me feel tired and my eyes get the brunt of it. All this can start to show on my skin. Particularly the dark puffy circles that appear under my eyes. So it's essential I establish a routine that combats tiredness and aging.

Good quality skincare products are a must for me. If I'm going to rub a cream into my skin every day I make sure that its contents is natural and sensitive.

I mean I try to drink at least 8 glasses of water a day and get enough sleep and exercise but that's not always possible. With the demands of running a small business and being a mum I need a little bit of extra help to keep my skin looking bright and healthy.

My 5-Step Skincare Routine

I didn't splurge on the most expensive and latest skincare range. Neither did I stick to a cheap brand. I took awhile to find the right range for me. Taking into consideration my skin type and pigmentation. As a black woman I concentrate on tonal properties and medium density lotions for my skin. The best range I found that cater for what I need is the [Vitamin C range from Body Shop](#).

Body Shop founded by Anita Roddick in the 1970s has been going strong ever since and has never changed it's core values of Fair Trade, being Eco Friendly and against animal testing.

I've been using Body Shop products for over 10 years and they have never let me down. But as I'm getting older I wanted these products to

work a little harder for my maturing skin.

Now I have dry and sensitive skin and it may surprise some but using heavy creams is not ideal as these can sometimes irritate my eczema and take ages for my skin to absorb. I find lighter emollients better for my face, neck and hands. But I discovered that it's not only the creams that are important in my routine, making sure my face is washed and properly prepared first is essential to a good skincare regime.

1. Nutragenics Foaming Facial Wash

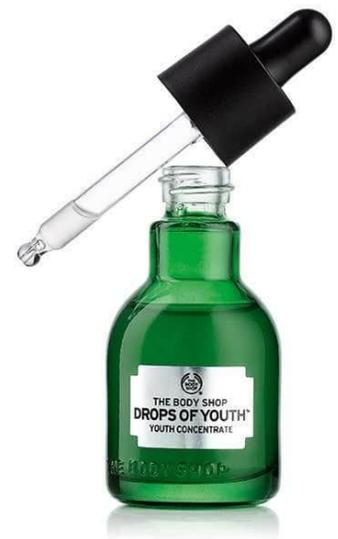
My first step is washing my face in warm water with this ideal facial wash. Its lush texture is soothing against the skin and gives it a deep cleanse. Getting rid of all impurities from the day. It's not as heavy as using soap and doesn't leave my skin completely dry after washing. After rinsing it off, my face is left with a radiant flush.



2. Drops of Youth Concentrate

This serum comes in a small green bottle with a pipet. The fluid is thick and only a few drops are needed to completely cover the face and neck. Whenever I apply my facial products I make sure to include my neck and collarbone. Sometimes even passed my shoulders maximising on the treatment.

Drops of Youth Concentrate has an immediate effect to the areas I treat. The corners of my eyes, cheeks and around my lips begin to feel tighter. And since I've been using the serum for a few weeks now I've started seeing some real positive results. This product softens wrinkles and gives my skin a plumper



complexion. Especially as I get up around 6:30 in the morning it's important for me to try and reduce tiredness and get that radiant look from the word go. I found products to do just that.

3. Vitamin C Energising Spritz

As soon as I use this I find myself smiling and getting ready for the day ahead, the spray is light and fresh. It has the same tightening affect as my serum and adds that instant rush really waking me up in the morning.

The above three steps are great preparation stages before applying moisturising cream – something that I didn't do before. I used to just wash my face and stick the moisturiser straight on there but using the serum and spray before my cream is something totally new to me. Now I do this, my skin feels 100 times better.



Combating Wrinkles and Aging

According to the BBC's 'The Truth About Looking Good' up to 75% of wrinkles are caused by UVA rays from the sun. And believe it or not, UVA rays can affect the skin not only in summer but throughout winter. It's advised that if I want younger looking skin then I need to use sun cream all year around. But sun cream can be sticky and uncomfortable. For my skin it is far too heavy for regular use. I found an ideal alternative:

4. Vitamin C Glow Protection Lotion SPF 30

I have used this product for well over 10 years. It evens out my skin tone, tightens and brightens my face and neck leaving me with a radiant complexion. It also has the built in sun factor



30 meaning I can use it every day of the year giving myself continuous protection against those harmful UVA rays.

5. Vitamin C Skin Reviver



Now I tend to use this when my skin starts flagging during the day. Its silky texture compliments the protection lotion and it's absorbent enough not to over saturate my skin. I also use this at night after my **tightening serum**. It's wonderful to wake up with in the morning having refreshed supple skin straight out of bed.

When I don't have time to go through my 5-step routine I will use **Vitamin E Aqua Boost Sorbet**. This is a hydrating cream and ideal for use in the winter if my skin is feeling ultra dry. Again it's light and highly absorbent.

So What Next?

Well my night-time routine is much the same as my daytime one. But there are products out at the moment that I wouldn't mind trying this year.

Drops of Youth Bouncy Sleeping Mask

A memory shape gel cream that forms to the contours of the face overnight. And while you sleep replenishes and renews the skin so you wake up feeling refreshed with a plump and supple complexion.



Drops of Light Range

This complete range is formulated to even tonal imbalance while tightening, brightening and refreshing the skin. With the [Skin Defence Multi-Protection Essence SPF 50](#) and the [Brightening Serum](#) this is something I could definitely get on board with!

My Local Body Shop

As I live in a small Yorkshire village getting to main high street shops isn't always convenient. I order a lot of my products from my local [Body Shop Consultant](#) Helen Smithies. She is totally on it when it comes to getting the products that I like. And I can look through the Body Shop ranges on her [Facebook page](#) taking advantage of the weekly offers which are often cheaper than the high street store.

So that's it! My skincare routine for 2018. It's fuss-free and not as complicated as some skincare plans but as I use these products already – applying them correctly has been the key to really making a difference to my skin and how I continue to welcome the New Year.

I'd love to hear about your routine and tips so why not share your ideas in the comments below.

Humilta Abigail Holmes is a freelance designer and copywriter for hire. She specializes in self-improvement, interpersonal and lifestyle topics. Using marketing, customer insights and life experience she creates compelling content for small to medium businesses, solo entrepreneurs and start-ups.

