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GROOMING

MEN'S SPECIAL

Clever skincare
solutions, modern
fragrances and
hot new haircuts
– for men who
want to think
smart *and* look
amazing



THE SKIN HE'S IN

Is your other half always stealing your products? Turns out, he may be short-changing his skin by treating it as unisex, says *Fiona Embleton*

Now that your favourite fragrance is likely to be an aromatic cross-dresser, which smells just as amazing on you as it does on him, should we also be stepping outside the box of male and female skincare? Your other half, who piles on your La Mer moisturiser like a face mask when you're not looking, would say no. As would the other 64 per cent of men who don't consider male-only skincare important, according to market researcher Mintel. In the opposite camp is the grooming industry. It has spent millions peddling

the benefits of 'his and hers' bathroom shelves and the idea that a mysterious alchemy makes male skincare different from a woman's. But does skin have a gender? Word in the derm office is yes. 'It's very sensitive to male and female hormones,' says cosmetic doctor Dr Maurice Dray. 'Men have much higher levels of testosterone, which makes their skin 25 per cent thicker and behave differently to a woman's.' So, without the right high-performance ingredients, he may not be doing as much to help his complexion as he should. Here's why...

HORMONES

HIS SKIN 'Adult men produce about ten times as much testosterone as women, which makes their skin oilier,' says Dr Dray. 'Men also typically have larger pores and pump out more sebum that's thicker, in turn causing congestion.' If he's a die-hard soap fan, Baxter Of California Deep Cleansing Bar Charcoal Clay, £16 (1), absorbs impurities. 'It's also harder for oily skin to shed dead cells,' says Dr Anjali Mahto from London's Cadogan Clinic, who recommends a cleanser spiked with salicylic acid to dissolve the paste-like mixture of oil and dead cells in pores. Try Lab Series Oil Control Clay Cleanser + Mask, £23 (2).

YOUR SKIN In women, the predominant hormone is oestrogen, so no wonder your skin throws a temper tantrum when there's an increase in testosterone the week before your period. 'PMS and the drop in oestrogen drives acne and increased oil production,' says Dr Mahto. Oil cleansers are a beauty fad best avoided if you want to swerve spots. 'They leave behind residue, which can block pores,' she says. Opt for a gentle foaming cleanser, such as Neo Strata Foaming Glycolic Wash, £30 (3), and follow up with a topical probiotic to balance the natural bacteria on the surface of your skin. Allies Of Skin Molecular Probiotics Mist, £48 (4), contains the probiotic lactobacillus ferment, plus antibacterial colloidal silver.



SKIN'S PH

HIS SKIN The outermost layer, aka the skin barrier, is made up of sebum (its natural oils), plus lactic and amino acids. These create the skin's pH, which should hover between 4 and 6 - anything higher and it becomes drier than the surface of a lasagne; lower, and it's greasy and spotty. Men have greater instances of acne because their pH is lower. On the plus side, their skin barrier is stronger and better at locking in moisture. 'Up until the age of 50, men's transepidermal water loss [ie. the amount of water that evaporates via the skin] is significantly lower than a woman's of the same age,' says Dr Stefanie Williams, medical director at the Eudelo skin clinic in London. It's possible for skin to be both oily *and* dehydrated, so don't ditch moisturiser out of fear of making it greasier. Choose a product that's both oil-free and mattifying. The Body Shop Green Tea & Lemon Mattifying Moisturiser For Men, £12 (5), does the job perfectly.

YOUR SKIN 'Women have a higher surface pH than men, which may explain why we have a greater tendency for dry skin,' says Williams. Our sebum levels also drop off a cliff with age (these remain stable in men) - meaning skin is without the lipids it needs to retain moisture and build a strong barrier. They may not be particularly sexy, but ingredients such as ceramides - the 'glue' that holds skin cells together - and fatty acids are pretty much guaranteed to prevent moisture loss. Try a layer of Drunk Elephant Lala Retro Whipped Cream, £60 (6), over the top of B-Hydra Intensive Hydration Serum, £52 (7). ▶