

# 12 Things You Should Never, Ever Do to Your Skin, According to Dermatologists

You probably know better than scour your face like a bathtub, but some of the skin care no-nos are more subtle. Here's what to avoid at all costs.

BY [JORDI LIPPE-MCGRAW](#) 08/22/2017



## Never pop a pimple

When a pimple is big and red and gross and you want it gone ASAP, popping it can seem like a good idea. "It is so tempting to do," says **Boca Raton dermatologist Jeffrey Fromowitz, MD**. "But whenever you create a disruption in the skin, it increases the chance of infection, worsening inflammation and even scarring." Instead, if you have a really prominent pimple you want to pop, go see your dermatologist.



## Never leave home without applying sunscreen

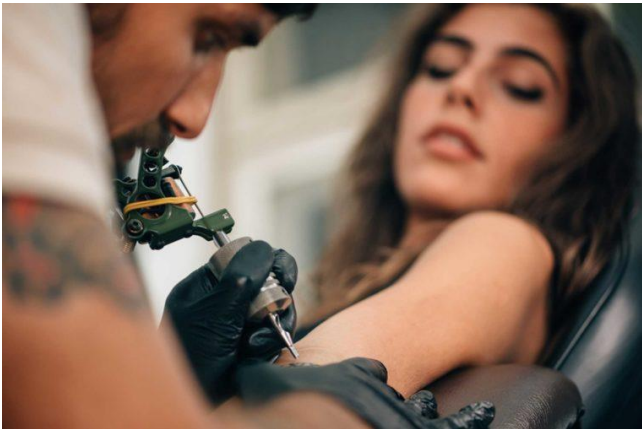
You might be diligent about slathering on sunscreen while lying on the beach, but it's just as important to put it on even if you're heading to the office. "Make sunscreen a part of your daily routine," says **Dr. Fromowitz**. "Exposing your skin to sun without sunscreen increases your risk of skin cancer and damages the collagen in the skin leading to lines and wrinkles as well as sun spots." And if you plan to be out in the sun extensively, take extra protective measures. "Wear sun protective clothing and avoid the middle of the day," suggests Jeremy Brauer, MD, Clinical Assistant Professor, Ronald O. Perelman, Department of

Dermatology. "And schedule outdoor activities in the early morning or late afternoon, when the sun isn't as strong."



## Never get lemon or lime on your skin while in the sun

A common home remedy for acne is lime juice, the rationale being that it has antioxidants and antibiotic properties while promoting skin renewal and improving elasticity. But it could cause problems. "You will get a 'phototoxic' reaction, which can be a blister or just pigmentation that can last for months," says dermatologist Alejandra Vivas, MD, of Minars Dermatology. "A common scenario is for someone drinking a beer with lime at the beach to get some lime juice on their hand."



## Never get a tattoo with white ink

We all know tattoos are permanent—unless you get laser treatments. But there's no erasing mistakes that involve white ink! "White ink is often impossible to laser off," says Todd Minars, MD, of Minars Dermatology. "Sometimes the white ink will even turn black when lasered." Other difficult color inks to laser off are flesh-color, yellow, and green. "Stick with black or dark blue if you must tattoo!"



## Never use miracle products that tout secret ingredients

Your skin is precious, delicate, and easily irritated, and there are no such things as miracle creams or skin lotions. "Never use products that do not list out their ingredients," says **Dr. Fromowitz**. "You must know what you are putting on your skin. When in doubt," she adds, "discuss the product or your skin need with your dermatologist who can guide you toward safe and effective product choices, specifically tailored for your skin type and problem."



## Never DIY high-level treatments

The Internet has created access to nearly every imaginable product, including many that should be available only by prescription or only to physicians. While it is tempting to buy a professional strength peel to do at home to save money, resist the temptation. "These are powerful products with significant risk if not done properly," says **Dr. Fromowitz**. "Trust your skin to an expert. Get your treatments with a board-certified dermatologist."



## Never pick at your skin

We've all done it at some point—spending an hour in front of a magnification mirror going over every inch of our skin. But that's a big no no. "Repetitively picking/scratching at acne, blackheads, bug bites, or other skin lesions could lead to not only infection but scarring and possibly permanent change in pigment," says Dr. Brauer. "That could all be avoided if left alone and treated properly in the first place."



## Never ignore a new or changing mole

If you have what you believe to be a pimple, sore, or other skin blemish that won't heal, it may not be a pimple after all. "That's the common tale that often leads to a skin cancer diagnosis," says Dr. Brauer. Familiarize yourself with your ABCDEs of melanoma, don't wait, and get regular total body skin exams with a board-certified dermatologist



## Never squeeze deep cysts

You may be looking for instant relief when you have painful cystic acne, but avoid popping it at all costs. "Frequently patients try to squeeze the contents of epidermal cysts through their characteristically small opening," says Dr. Vivas. "This pressure can actually rupture the cyst inside, creating a severe inflammatory reaction and possible infection that will likely require drainage and taking oral antibiotics." Instead, see a doctor who might be able to help with a cortisone injection.



## Never use too much soap

When it comes to getting clean, more soap is not better. "Your skin is your body's protection from the outside world, and healthy, intact skin forms an impressive barrier," says Dr. Brauer. "When we strip down the natural components of this barrier, which we can do using too much soap and of course aggressively scrubbing, you increase the risk of infections and skin disease and flares in general."



## Never used expired products

There's a reason for those expiration dates on your skin care potions. When you use expired products, even if they seem fine, there's a chance that its active ingredients have begun to degrade or may no longer be active at all and could lead to an irritation, according to Dr. Brauer. When you first buy a product, look at the date to make sure it hasn't been sitting on the shelf for too long already; then keep an eye or set a calendar reminder once you start using the product. If you're looking for a fail-safe way to ensure you have up-to-date products, consider signing up for an automatic renewal program.



## Never stick sharp objects into your skin

We're all looking for that quick fix when it comes to getting rid of a pimple, but there are certain tools that should be left to the experts. "Never stick needles into a blemish," says Dr. Berson. "It will only increase inflammation and the potential for pigmentation, infection, and scarring. So, rather than getting rid of it, it will only last longer and leave a scar."

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