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Do-It-Yourself Beauty

Skip the expense of spa visits with these beauty treatments you can do at home.

by Sara Reistad-Long Posted: Thu., Nov. 1, 2007, 5:32 pm EDT

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Salon facial treatments are going way beyond masks and extractions. Today's treatments work directly on cells, making it possible to mend scars, even skin tone, shrink pores and minimize wrinkles. But since results depend on a series of visits — each costing upward of \$100 — the process isn't cheap. Lucky for us, most major nonsurgical office treatments have a slew of take-home counterparts. "It's absolutely possible to get professional-quality results," says David Colbert, MD, a New York dermatologist who's currently translating his most popular service into a home kit. "These products are buffered to make them safe for self-administration, so you'll have to apply them much more often."

Skin Peeling

What it is: Chemicals or enzymes slough away the skin's top layers, revealing a younger, healthier appearance. Helps with hyperpigmentation, acne, pore size, wrinkles and scars.

What to try:

Clinique's Turnaround 15-Minute Facial (\$34.50) combines an enzyme peel with salicylic acid and anti-irritant caffeine and bamboo derivatives — all in one cooling, high-grade face mask. For maximum benefit, use with enzyme-activating Turnaround Concentrate Visible Skin Renewer, a brightening day-and-night cream (\$36.50).



Fresh's three-step Appleseed Resurfacing Kit (\$145) combines a glycolic-acid peel with apple-derived vitamin C and sugars to immediately brighten and soften every complexion. Plus, it's gentle enough to use any time of day.

Neutrogena's Advanced Solution Facial Peel (\$24.99) is clinically proven to deliver results similar to an in-office 20-percent glycolic-acid peel (the maximum percentage available to the mass market is 10 percent). It also produces less redness, since it relies on enzymes rather than chemicals.

How you're saving: Standard treatment at a salon or doctor's office is a series of six peels, two to three weeks apart. The cost is generally \$100 to \$200 per session but can be more, depending on the type of peel.

Microdermabrasion

What it is: This treatment resurfaces your complexion by rubbing tiny aluminum-oxide crystals on your face, typically using a sandblaster-like device. It removes dead skin, fine lines and acne scars. It also reduces pore size and boosts cell production to get skin glowing.

What to try:

Neutrogena's Advanced Solutions At Home Microdermabrasion System (\$39.99) consists of a two-speed handheld device, plus micro-oxide crystallized cream. Eleven uses over four weeks are clinically proven to give results comparable to two in-office visits.

L'Oreal's award-winning ReFinish Microdermabrasion Kit (\$25.09) can be applied by hand, takes two minutes and includes a soothing post-treatment lotion.



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Olay's **Regenerist Microdermabrasion and Peel System** (\$24.99) follows up microdermabrasion with a light lactic-acid peel. Since the two work differently to get similar results, some dermatologists suggest this technique for maximum effect.

How you're saving: Most doctors recommend six to 10 professional treatments, each two weeks apart. Typical cost is between \$100 and \$200 per visit.

Nonsurgical Lifts and Collagen-Building Procedures

What it is: Heat or currents (often delivered by lasers in office treatments) tighten and stimulate skin cells to produce collagen, the structural protein that makes complexions look smooth, healthy, taut and wrinkle-free.

What to try:

Olay **Regenerist Thermal Contour and Lift At Home Treatment** (\$24.99) is a two-step program that relies on a self-heating recontouring scrub followed — while face is still warm and absorptive — by a deep-penetrating, skin-tightening moisturizer that promises to enhance collagen.



Estée Lauder's award-winning **Perfectionist Power Correcting Patch for Deeper Eye Lines/Wrinkles** (\$50 for three pairs, \$100 for eight) delivers you-can-actually-feel-them micro-currents intended to stimulate collagen production and fill out fine lines. A clinical study showed an 88-percent reduction in wrinkles directly after use.

Lancôme's **High Résolution Serum** with Collaser-48 (\$62) is designed to mimic the effects of specialty lasers. Tests show new collagen is generated within 48 hours.

The **Beurer Softlaser Healer** (\$219) is an actual mini-laser intended to heal blemishes and even out pigment, smooth texture, minimize fine lines and enhance collagen-boosting cellular activity.

How you're saving: Although the results from using heat and currents can last for years, the procedure is extremely pricey: upward of \$500 — sometimes close to \$2,000 — per appointment.

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