There's A Right & A Wrong Way To Use Hyaluronic Acid

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When it comes to go-to ingredients for keeping skin hydrated, hyaluronic acid frequently gets the top spot on must-have lists. Often referred to as HA for short, the molecule is a naturally-occurring substances in the skin — a group of carbohydrates that work to help maintain its elasticity. It's what's known as a "humectant," meaning it works like a sponge to help skin retain water and leave it plump and dewy.

As we age, however, our natural levels of hyaluronic acid slowly deplete, leading to dullness, loss of "bounce" in the skin, and deepening wrinkles. That's exactly why it's become such a popular

ingredient in skin care — in fact, just a single gram can hold supposedly hold up to six liters of water, and research suggests it can help protect against environmental aggressors like pollution, too. Best of all, it works for every skin type — especially in serum form, where it can be more easily absorbed and work its skin-plumping magic at a deeper level.

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If you're already a hyaluronic acid convert, you're likely well aware of all that. But what if we were to tell you that you might be doing it wrong?

According to the experts, the hero ingredient actually needs to be applied to *damp* skin in order to work. In fact, applying it to a dry face can have the opposite effect of what is intended, and actually leave skin *more* dehydrated. "Hyaluronic acid is a moisture magnet," says Allies of Skin founder Nicolas Travis. "But if your skin is dry, it pulls any residual moisture from the deeper layers of skin to hydrate the surface. In that case, you need to apply it to *moist* skin — which is why you should mist first and then apply a hyaluronic acid treatment afterwards. Once hyaluronic acid comes into contact with water, it knows what it's doing and your skin will end up supremely hydrated and plumped."

It makes sense, when you think about it: Hyaluronic acid doesn't contain any water itself, so the more moisture you combine it with, the better it performs. Think of your regimen as a hydration "sandwich" — spritz your face with water or a facial mist, apply the hyaluronic acid treatment, then spritz again.

Using a supercharged facial mist can help take things to the next level. Dr. Roebuck's Bondi Hydrating Mist stars kakadu plum, a potent form of vitamin C, to help protect against free radicals, as well as calming aloe vera and cucumber — kept in the fridge, it's a godsend in the

hot weather. Jurlique, another Aussie favorite, is famed for its Rosewater Balancing Mist, which not only hydrates and calms but smells great, too.

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But what about the HA? If you're new to hyaluronic acid, try Indeed Labs' Hydraluron Intense Moisture Lotion — it contains the ingredient at high, medium, and low molecular weights, allowing it to penetrate at different levels. This means it hydrates not just the skin's surface but the deeper layers, too, effectively doing the job of a serum and a moisturizer in one.

If your skin is looking dull, uneven, or pigmented, try Sunday Riley's Tidal Brightening Enzyme Water Cream, which combines hyaluronic acid with resurfacing papaya enzymes for extra brightening benefits. But if you're after a serious hyaluronic hit, there's SkinCeuticals' award-winning H.A. Intensifier, which contains ultra-high concentrations and has a cult following for the way it can transform skin that's parched and peppered with fine lines, bringing it back to its former toned glory.

Otherwise, you can choose a product that's been designed for specific areas. Fillerina's Lip Plump boasts a patented blend of six hyaluronic acid molecules developed for the delicate skin on the lips, to diminish fine lines and increase volume without resorting to syringes. But whichever way you decide to get your hyaluronic acid hit, always remember the most important part: Just add water.

THIS IS THE RIGHT WAY TO APPLY HYALURONIC ACID

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