

# Eczema and the Medical Herbalist's Perspective

Since I was a little girl, I have used herbs, fruits, vegetables, seeds and the gifts that mother nature had to offer.

I was trained since very young by the indigenous people I grew up with, and my mother's teachings to resource and be an alchemist, is a passion and my way of life.

When I connected with Tami my gut feeling immediately told me that she was the ideal match for us and after communicating with her my feelings were confirmed. She is a nature being that knows her work very well and I wish to introduce you to her and her gifts, with much gratitude for the opportunity to do so.

Isabel Harkins

[Tami Bronstein, BSc Phyt \(Hons\), MNIMH, AHG](#)



**Just Scratching the Surface:  
Eczema and the Medical Herbalist's  
Perspective**

**By Tami Bronstein, BSc Phyt (Hons),  
MNIMH, AHG**

# Relief;

something we desperately seek when suffering. Skin, as the largest

organ of the body, can be an all-consuming suffering when Eczema is in the

picture. As adults, we learn to distract ourselves from discomforts to some

degree; children don't understand, they simply succumb to the overwhelming and all-consuming frustration of not feeling well.

That said, regardless of age, Eczema is deeply troubling for anyone who

experiences it.

At its worst, Eczema causes skin to chronically inflame, weep, crack and

bleed to the point of secondary widespread bacterial and fungal infection.

The skin is our barrier to resist opportunistic infective microbes of our

environment, and its integrity is compromised when chronically inflamed.

It goes deep.

Why the vicious cycle? Why won't topical preparations work long-term?

The answer is deep. The answers are internal. The answers are complex

and unique to the Individual, and not simply solved with remedies found on

health food store/pharmacy shelves or in a conventional prescription tube.

These conventional topical preparations often contain petrochemical

ingredients, toxic preservatives, and related to a litany of potential and

common side-effects –of which cancer is included.

Plant-based crèmes and homeopathic preparations may ease the flare-ups

temporarily, but patches of Eczema stubbornly linger or return in shortorder.



So, what are we to do?

Certainly as we can observe, topical remedies ease and soothe the

symptoms of this condition, but they fall-short of getting to the causative

factors.

When I see an Individual for Eczema, I like to establish a foundation in

understanding the skin as an organ of the body and its basic physiology

(its functioning), on its own and as a part of the entire body. From the

basic concepts, I find it useful to explain the various factors that can

contribute to the condition.

The first take-away: Skin conditions such as Eczema are a symptom of

something more systemic, rather than simply a superficial dysfunction of

the skin itself.

That is to say, it indicates some other internal disruption that the skin is

reflecting, reacting or responding to. So, you can repeatedly apply any

crème or ointment you wish to manage the inflammation, itchiness, and

other unpleasant symptoms, but it will return until you

address what is

going on at a deeper level of the brain and body.

The Organism and Neuro-Endocrine connection

Even if it seems like a foreign language and impossible for the Individual to

remember the details, I find that a general sense of the bigger picture

empowers a person with insight and more efficient management of

recurring flare-ups, should they occur along the way.

First we begin by seeing skin as a functioning organ, our physical barrier to

the external world, and one of the largest channels of waste elimination. It

is amongst other waste-management organ systems including:

- digestive (bowels)
- respiratory (lungs and sinuses)
- urinary (kidneys)
- lymphatic
- skin

Skin acts to help regulate body temperature, excrete waste products of

metabolism/environmental exposure, and functions as a metabolically active

envelope to contain/protect muscles, bones, organs and

connective

tissues within our bodies as a functionally-integrated organism.

To help Individuals understand the role of skin as part of the integrated

picture, it is important to discuss the core collaboration between physical

function (physiology) and its nuances that regulate the entire body. We

look to the ultimate brain-body connection:

- Central Nervous system (brain) and
- Endocrine system (hormones/neurotransmitters)

This core collaboration coordinates the function of every cell in the body,

and fluctuates in response to being at-rest versus responding to the

demands of life. There is a feedback loop of information returning from the

body to the Central Nervous system to complete the circuit between brain

and body.

Let's touch upon a few key realms we must explore in getting to the cause

of the Eczema in order to resolve the condition, keep the tendency at-bay

and/or manage what does surface.

Channel an inner Sherlock Holmes

Okay, I will admit to a personal fascination with the current television

series on Masterpiece Mystery of "Sherlock", featuring Benedict

Cumberbatch. I also enjoyed the series "House, MD", featuring Hugh Laurie

(which mirrored the Sherlock Holmes storyline, in its own clever way).

Getting to the cause of a dysfunction requires quite a bit of medical

detective work, and perhaps why these shows are compelling to me. This is

what makes my work uncommon, methinks; the conventional world dwells

upon symptoms, separating care of organ systems rather than seeing their

integration, and limiting insight to the bubbling source of the recurring

condition. Just like Sherlock, it is my job to be the detective and examine

every subtle (some seemingly insignificant) nuance that leads to the

Nemesis.

If any two individuals who suffer from Eczema were to stand side-by-side,

the causative picture for each is different. Each Individual's



experiences

are the result of a unique mosaic -a woven tapestry- of factors discovered

when I am exploring a thorough medical history. Some exploration delves

back into their history by decades!

I thought to review a few of these clues that I sleuth in solving an

individual's unique mystery.

This is evident as -if you have tried everything your friends, family, online

blogs or health food store clerks have recommended to no avail- I have

seen results.

The Nemesis is typically a composite of factors, rather than one source. So,

let's have a look at a few common areas that I must explore when

managing Eczema in an individual:

## The Clues

- Environmental Allergies : Airborne mold spores and general seasonal allergies are a common trigger alongside other factors of

allergic eczema, and individuals often benefit from air

filtration in

the home. Air filters on the central heating/air-conditioning units

can be found with HEPA qualification down to 3 microns, and must

be changed regularly, every few months. Additional stand-alone air

purifiers can be of use, as well. Frequent saline nasal flushing can

reduce allergens that affect mucous membranes of respiratory

system via allergic reaction, which compromises one of the 5 major

channels of elimination (lungs/sinus) and triggers skin dysfunction.

- Food Allergies and Leaky Gut Syndrome : Food allergies often compromise lower bowel function; As one of the 5 major channels of

waste elimination having reduced efficiency, skin can react to bowel

inflammation and disruption.

Have your physician test for the major food allergy culprits, such as:

gluten, dairy, wheat, soy/legumes, citrus, shellfish, nuts, MSG

derivatives, etc (to begin with). Allergy testing can get fairly

overzealous at times with some practitioners, overwhelming an

Individual with limitations. Starting just with the most common

allergens reveals enough to make a difference and get a handle on

primary irritants. The best approach: eliminate the primary

irritating food allergens indicated via testing and vary daily food

choices, as much as possible; Eating the same foods day after day

can be problematic over time.

Leaky Gut Syndrome is often a result of chronic bowel inflammation

from concerns such as food sensitivities, repeated antibiotic use and

yeast overgrowth; once the bowel membrane lining is inflamed and

weepy, large protein molecules cross bowel walls into the

bloodstream, tipping-off a hyper-immune response. Reviewing bowel

function is a significant review point when I am going over the

medical history.

(NOTE: To those gluten-intolerant, watch nutritional supplements as

the excipients [base ingredients] may contain fillers possibly

contaminated with gluten, such as some sources of xanthan gum;

some Individuals react to corn sugars in a similar way to gluten

sensitivity.)

- Chronic Constipation: Chronically sluggish bowel motility can trigger

skin issues as well, because the bowels can re-absorb toxins back

into the system while bowel movements await evacuation. This can

be most commonly due to poor dietary habits, lack of activity, antibiotic use, Candida (yeast) overgrowth, excessive dairy intake,

unmanaged stress, and dehydration. Repopulating the bowels with a

refrigerated, enteric-coated Probiotic is helpful, even with a significant gap of time since taking the antibiotics.

Candida (yeast) overgrowth from repeated use of antibiotics and

diets high in sugars can be a relatively silent contributor to the

picture, and must be considered.

[Note: non-organic foods contain pesticides like glyphosate, which

can disrupt the natural bacterial flora of the lower bowels,

contributing to digestive disorders; probiotics are useful in diets high

in non-organic foods]

- Chemicals and Heat : Unlike simple Contact Dermatitis reactivity to

irritating chemicals in laundry or body care detergents, many typically benign body care ingredients that are synthetic can be

activated to irritate by the addition of heat and friction (exerciserelated

or in warmer seasons). Eczema tends to flare in skin folds

when the body heats up, so using commercial products with

synthetic ingredients and fragrances can set-up a perfect

environment for an extraordinarily troubling flare-up where the

body's heat is concentrated. This includes the scalp, inside/behind

ears, eye folds, inside elbows, backs of knees, and underarms.

Carefully selected plant-based, chemical-free & hypoallergenic hair,

skin and body products keep potential irritants out of the picture.

Rule of thumb: Keep product use simple.

- Acid/Alkaline balance: Diets high in acidic or acid-forming foods

favors general inflammation in the body, which feeds inflammatory

skin conditions. I advise keeping a more neutral diet by

increasing

alkaline foods, reducing all sugars (including fruit sugars), minimizing dairy, reducing animal meats, avoiding processed meats

(such as smoked or cured) and eating more vegetables, whole grains

and raw or dry roasted nuts/seeds (as tolerated). Proper hydration

supports acid/alkaline balance, improves bowel function, and sustains skin moisture.

- Chronic inflammation: By-products of inflammation add to general

metabolic wastes that the lymphatic system must work to drain for

excretion out of the body. Extended, repeated periods of

inflammation place an ongoing load on the lymph glands to drain the

tissues bogged-down with waste products, and must be supported in

expediting the healing of Eczema flare-ups.

The lymphatic system is not only part of waste removal, but also a

primary immune system contributor. Lymph glands produce

immune cells to fight infection, and when inflammation of the skin

compromises its integrity as a barrier to germs, lymph glands

activate to mount an immune response toward invading viruses, bacterium and fungus. Chronic environmental and food allergies are

in-fact excessive or hyper-immune responses to allergens, and so

demands on the lymphatic system are consistently elevated during

Eczema flare-up. Immune support becomes a focus, but rather than

stimulating an already over-stimulated immune system, we look to

modulate immune activity. This is a largely misunderstood but

critical variation between stimulating and modulating immune

functions when working with chronic or autoimmune conditions.

- Adrenal fatigue : Chronic stress, lack of restful sleep, excessive

scheduling of activities, corticosteroid use, excessive sugar/caffeine

intake, and additional factors play-into adrenal gland depletion. A

constant state of “fight or flight” and excessive activity drains the

adrenals of its hormonal output. This affects all inflammatory conditions, as adrenal cortisol manages inflammation.

When we consistently withdraw from the resource “bank” of the adrenals without putting those funds “back in the bank”, we

are

unable to properly respond to new stresses and demands for activity.

It is important that children are not over-scheduled with physical

activities such as sports, and to watch sugar & caffeine intake as all

of these deplete tiny bodies with already-rapid metabolisms.

- Anxiety : Anxiety contributes as an ongoing source of adrenal

depletion via increased demand for “fight or flight” output.

Sometimes an individual can experience more anxiety when

adrenals are depleted; Equally, anxiety can exist and be a primary

source of adrenal fatigue.

Ideally, we sort the cause and manage situations as they happen;

however, those with generalized anxiety disorders may require

some minor ongoing support, to avoid affecting endocrine balance or

managing endocrine balance to avoid worsening anxiety.

With any mood disorder, we must seek to reduce chemical load of

food flavor enhancers (such as monosodium glutamate and its

derivatives), chemicals, preservatives, synthetic fillers,



coloring,

artificial flavorings, neuro-excitotoxins as aspartame (Nutrasweet)

and pancreatic disruptors such as corn syrup.

Anxiety must be managed, as it alters pH (acid levels increase) in

the digestive system, favoring inflammation and constipation;

Irritated, frazzled nerves as a result of Chronic Anxiety on quality of

sleep feeds Eczema flare-ups.

- Puberty and Menopause: Permanent hormonal transitions at certain stages of life can trigger Eczema, as the Neuro-Endocrine balance is challenged to find a new norm. We can work to minimize the effects of these transitions.

The detective deduces...

I see many people who fill their cupboards with various pricey supplements that are randomly or partially used. It is an experimentation process much like throwing spaghetti against a wall and seeing which noodles stick. There is a more direct and methodical road to recovery. While it may take a bit more time than popping a corticosteroid pill, with attention to subtle

influences,

Individual compliance, consistency of dosage and reformulation of

herbal medicines as the body evolves, we can use whole plants to

give the body what it needs to normalize itself.

The role of the Medical Herbalist is to explore all subtle and overt

influences of the condition, taking great time and care to listen and

mind even the smallest details that truly do matter to healing and

recovery. Following a full medical history review, herbal medicine

formulations (fluid extracts, syrups, teas, powders) are typically

compounded by-hand (although some practitioners do send the

formula out to a compounding dispensary elsewhere), and follow-ups

are booked to monitor progress. Changes in the formula(s) are made

as the body evolves along the way until resolution. Some individuals

require ongoing support depending upon medical history details, but

ultimately we seek the cause to resolve symptoms.

Meanwhile, if you have found some plant-based topical

preparations

that give you temporary soothing relief, keep up with it.  
Internal

therapy with Herbal Medicines take some time, as we work  
together

to peel back the layers of contributing factors; it is helpful  
to know

there is something on-hand to soothe the steadily retreating  
symptoms as we go.

I enjoy donning my proverbial Sherlock Holmes hat and getting  
to

the bottom of solving a well-care mystery.

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London, England (UK). Her ongoing post-graduate work with  
doctors

from Paris, France focuses on plant remediation following the  
evaluation of neuro-endocrine (hormonal) sources of disease  
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# How does the Spleen work for losing weight?



## The Role of the Spleen in Traditional Chinese Medicine

**The Spleen dominates digestion and helps with bowel movements**  
Spleen is responsible for the transportation of the food and the water we digest. If the Spleen is weak or dysfunction occurs, it will affect certain areas of the digestive system including the Stomach, Small Intestines and Large Intestines. This can cause the following symptoms: bloating especially after eating or drinking, constipation, sluggish bowel movements, diarrhoea, irritable bowel syndrome, fatty or sticky stools.



## **The Spleen dominates water metabolism and assists with weight loss**

Spleen helps to transport fluids throughout our bodies and assists with excreting excessive fluids.

If Spleen is weaker or in disorder, our body will retain more fluids and the following symptoms can occur: Oedema, especially on the arms, legs and abdominal area and puffy face. Gaining weight easily or difficulty in losing weight. cellulite, sagging, Feeling of heaviness in the body.

## **The Spleen dominates certain circulation issues and assists with quality and circulation of the blood**

It is common to see many people with circulation issues resulting from Spleen Qi and Spleen Yang Deficiency. This affects the quality of the blood, and lack of circulation. The following symptoms may occur: Iron deficiency, low blood pressure, scanty periods, pale face, lips issues, cold hands and feet, lack of energy, pale nail beds, craving sweets.





Foods that support the

# Spleen

in Chinese Medicine

nourish / yellow / sweet

- Amaranth
- Apricot
- Barley
- Cabbage
- Carrot
- Cherry
- Garbanzo Bean
- Lightly Cooked Foods
- Millet
- Molasses
- Oats
- Parsnip
- Pea
- Porridge
- Potato
- Pumpkin
- Some Animal Products
- Spelt
- Sweet Potato
- Sweet Rice
- Winter Squash
- Yam



# **What diet or lifestyle choices assist with Spleen function? What should you avoid to protect your Spleen?**

## **Food and drinks: the Spleen doesn't like "cold"**

Cold temperature food or drinks affect Spleen function. Avoid consuming large amounts of cold fluids or fruit, and salads, especially in the Winter months – this overloads the Spleen which causes bloating and sluggish bowel movements. We encourage clients to drink warm foods and drinks especially in the winter months or cold days. Examples of warming drinks include ginger tea or pu er tea (Chinese tea).

## **Environmental factors: the Spleen doesn't like cold and dampness**

Coldness and dampness affect the Spleen function (affects Spleen Yang and Qi), certain symptoms we have discussed can be helped by choosing suitable environments for living – ie sunshine, warm and dry conditions. Ensure you make time each day to exercise in the sunshine, avoiding exercise in the rain or damp conditions and in water (swimming may not be suitable).

## **The Spleen doesn't like over-thinking**

When we mentally over-think this will damage the Spleen Qi. Spleen Qi will slow down and this affects our bodies by feeling tiredness, bloating, heaviness. I recommend regular breaks from sitting at a desk and concentrating to encourage physical movement (ie 10-15 minutes every 1-2 hours). Acupuncture is a great source to restore spleen Qi.



To induce weight loss, Chinese medicine aims for a balanced Spleen and Stomach. By strengthening the Spleen and Stomach, the body is able to break down and extract nutrients while sending the waste products to the intestines for proper elimination. The speed of metabolism is increased, allowing the body to process and utilize nutrients with greater efficiency while providing energy and vitality. Water transformation is made more efficient; helping the body rid excessive water and harmful toxic accumulations, whilst the regulation of bowel movements creates a balance of consumption against elimination.

Eating a balanced diet in accordance with the principles of Chinese medicine will rebalance the Spleen and Stomach naturally. There are three general groups of foods within Chinese medicine; carbohydrates, proteins and fruits and vegetables. Each group has a specific nutritional value and energetic activity. Generally, carbohydrates are sweet and

warm, strengthen the Spleen and build Qi (energy). Proteins nourish Qi, Blood, Yin (Water) and Jing (Essence) and tend to be warmer than carbohydrates. Fruits and vegetables tend to be cooling, clearing and mobilizing in nature, thus providing a balance to the other groups. By varying the proportions, a holistic balance can be achieved, leading to greater water and fat metabolism.



## **Salads and Juices**

In the developed world, a balanced diet has been associated with the European Naturopathic movement's beliefs in a diet high in raw foods, such as salads and juices. According to Chinese Medicine, too much raw food weakens the Spleen, eventually leading to weight gain. Eating foods that are already at body temperature or higher protects the Spleen and Stomach Qi. Digestive enzymes (Spleen and Stomach Qi) only work at physiological temperatures. The act of cooking actually contributes to the breakdown of foodstuff, thus

aiding digestion. This does not mean that all raw food is bad. In hot weather, some raw foods are good at cooling the body down.

## **The ideal source of raw**



**Arugula**



# Watercress



# Spinach

## Quality of Ingredients

All produce should be of the best quality available. Food should appeal to the senses, being vibrant in color and aroma, bursting with vitality and Qi. It is important to buy fresh produce frequently, from locally grown areas in the correct season.

## Timing of Eating

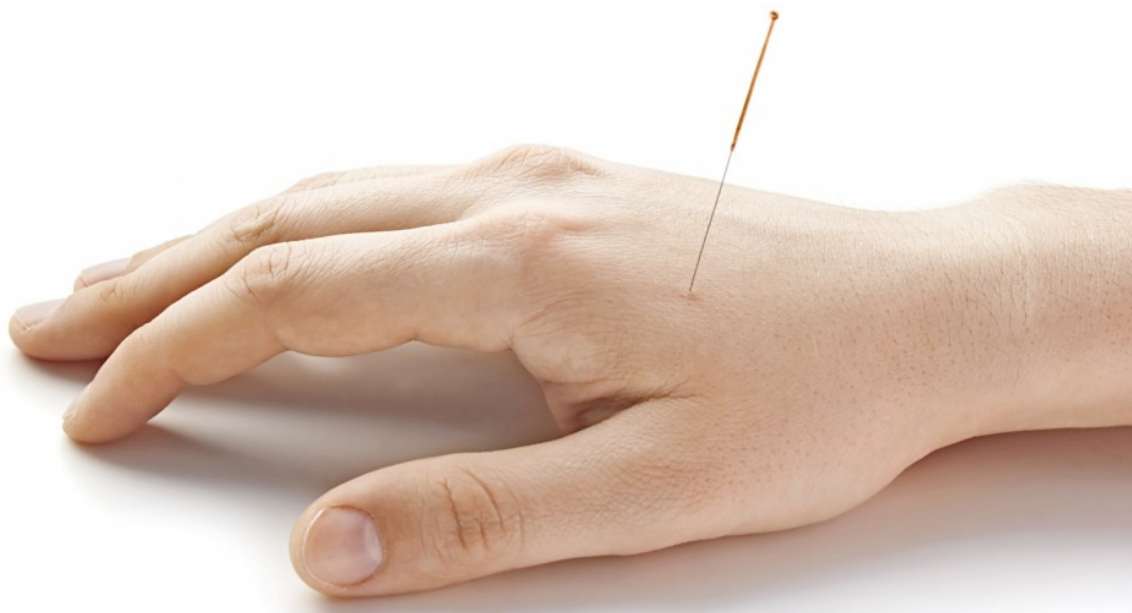
The Spleen and Stomach have their own internal cycle and prepare to receive food at specific times of the day. If food is not consumed at these intervals, internal disruption results, causing weight gain. Generally, carbohydrate rich meals should be consumed early in the day between 7am and 11am. Smaller meals are recommended towards the end of the day as the body slows down, preparing for sleep. It is not advised to eat anything after 9pm.

## Eating in a Relaxed State

Energy intensive activities, such as working breakfasts, working through lunch and eating on the run, have a significant negative impact on the function and efficiency of the Spleen, resulting in weight gain.

### **Overeating – Under Eating**

In the developed world we tend to eat too much or too little. Both these imbalances damage the Spleen. It is important to stop eating when you feel you could eat a little bit more, whilst skipping meals or restricting calorie intake can damage the Spleen, leading to weight gain once this practice is stopped.

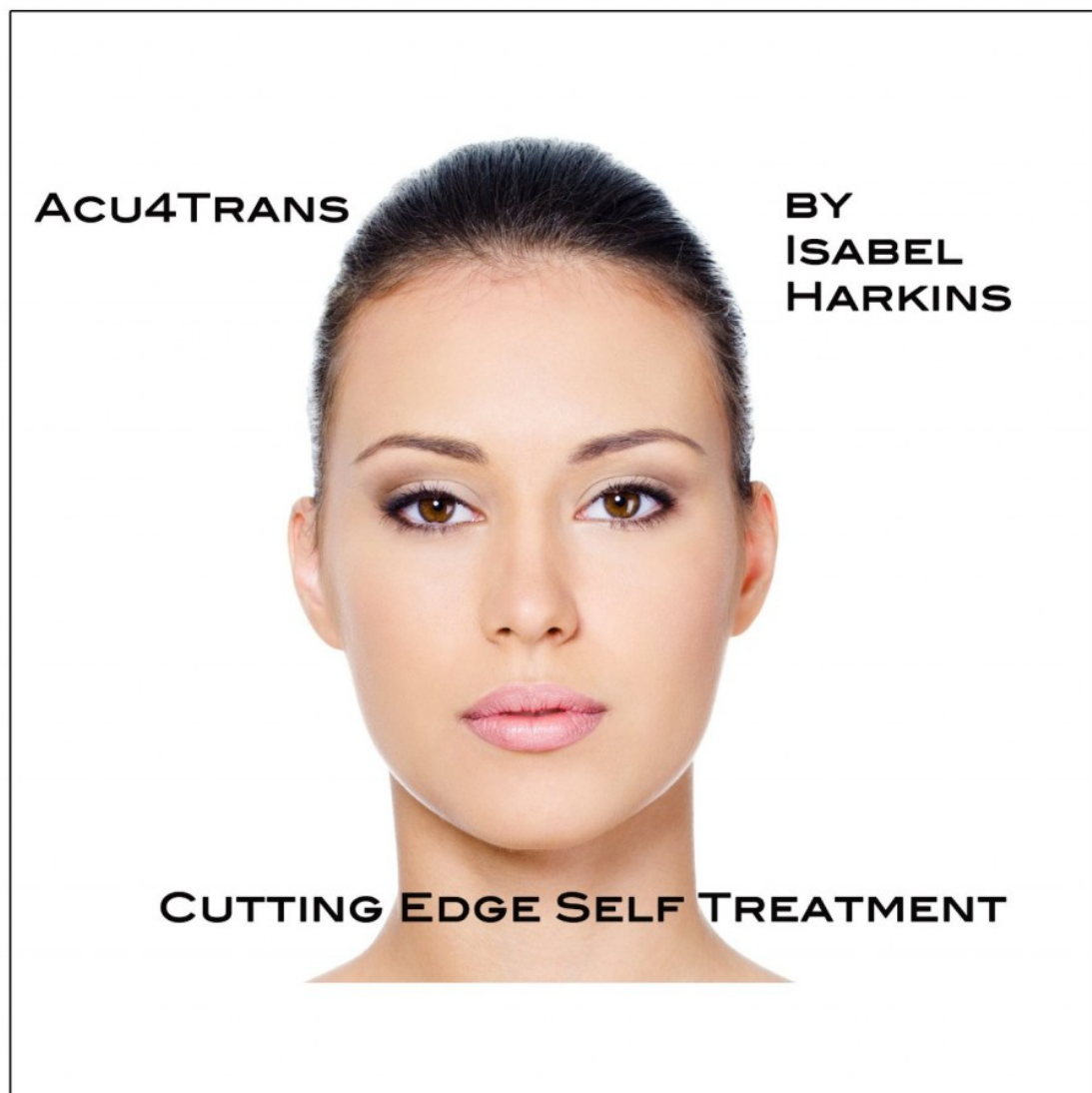


### **Acupuncture**

More recently, acupuncture has been used to aid weight loss by strengthening the Spleen and Stomach, regulating the endocrine function, reducing appetite, increasing defecation and increasing overall energy and vitality. Following acupuncture, the concentrations of blood sodium and aldosterone decrease

whilst the concentration of blood potassium increases, thus improving water and salt metabolism. Further studies have also shown that acupuncture reduces the sense of hunger and slows down absorption in the small intestine whilst inhibiting the hyperactive digestion of the stomach.

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mind restoration.**



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**Isabel's Beauty Blog 9 Steps  
To Well Balanced Make-up**





## **Steps to well balanced make-up**

Start with clean, bare skin

1. Use a moisturizer with SPF on the face, neck, chest and hands.
2. I like to use an eye moisturizer to hydrate the eye area, again less is more to prevent creasing of the eye color.
3. Apply a primer, if it is your preference, keep in mind the more layers the less natural the finish gets.

4. If you are going for a dramatic eye look, apply your eye make-up before you do your face, it helps with unnecessary cleanups. I still apply foundation to the lid.

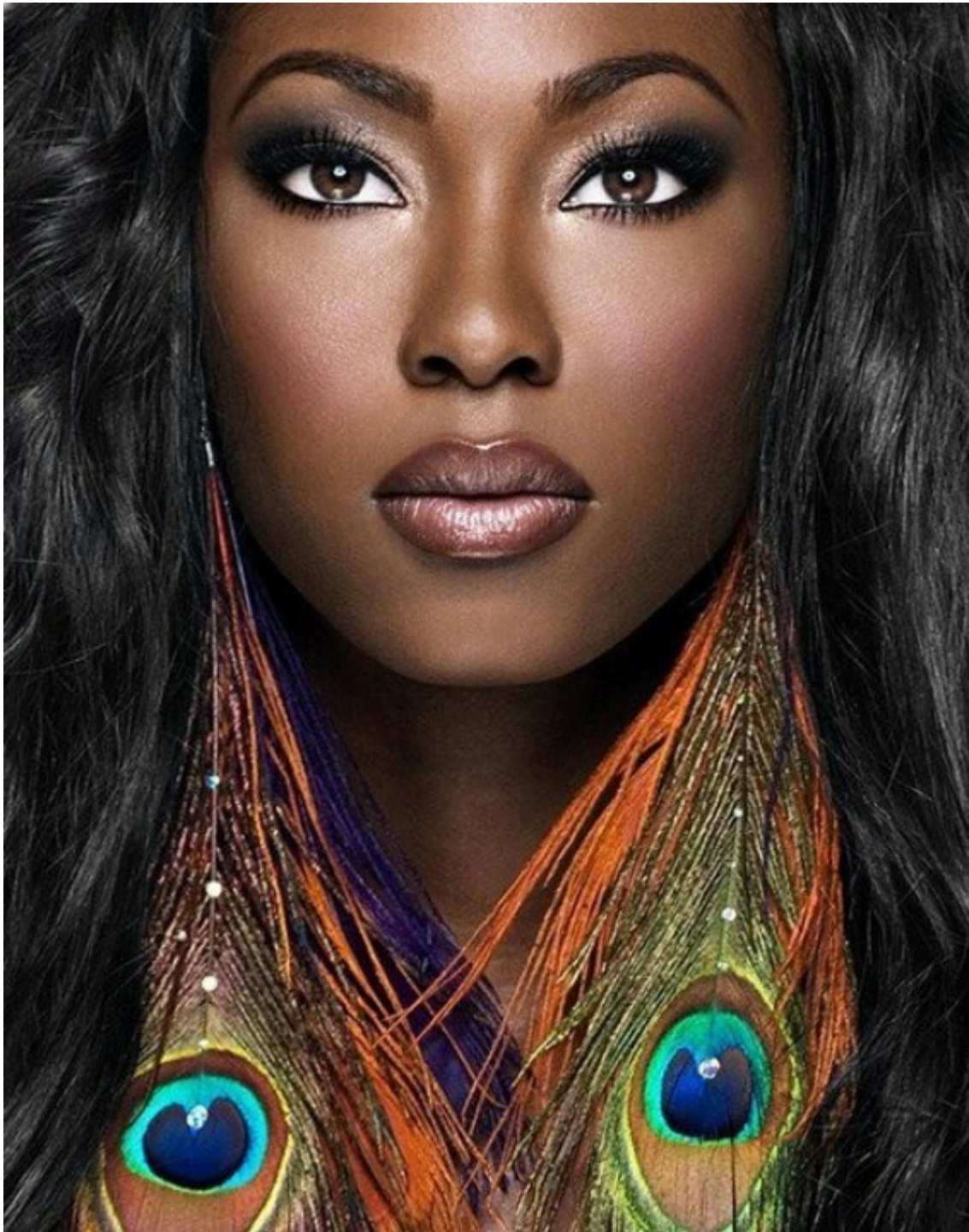
5. Use concealer where needed, an example under the eyes, around the nostrils, and on any blemishes, discolorations or high pigmentation spots. Personally I use a few different shades as I need it.

6. Apply foundation where and as desired, blending it well toward the hairline and jawbone, neck and towards the ears.

7. I like to either apply a veil of foundation over it or a light very fine noncolor powder to give the illusion of the blush being the natural cheek color.

8. Apply a light sheer noncolor powder to set the foundation and remove the shine, use blotting papers or even a tissue. If you prefer powder blush, apply it now.

9. I like to do lips last so do what you prefer for your design. Use a touch of make-up remover on a cotton swab to correct mistakes. ( preferably not an oil, I use a bit of a light moisturizer )



## **Creating balance**

One of the most valued principles of make-up artistry is that most make-up looks are based on a few eye/lip combinations. This will help you create balance. Trial and error will tell you which combination is the most suited for your individual features.



\*Light eyes/light lips: The nude “no make-up” look, is great for every day and is all about creating and displaying radiant healthy skin with eyes and lips softly defined in a gentle neutral palette.



\*Light eyes/dark lips: that is the staple of the vintage look and works well if you consider your mouth to be your best feature of attention. Keeping the eyes neutral and bringing all the focus to the mouth with perhaps a luscious red, pink or brown lipstick, you should always consider the overall look like skin tone, what you are wearing and the occasion.

**TIP:**

Make sure you are confident of the look not just because it is "IN", not all looks are for every body



\*Dark eyes/light lips: A long time classic, sexy, and sophisticated nighttime look,( and sometimes for some people is their staple look),with striking defined eyes in smoky colors paired with understated lips or nude lips.



\*Dark eyes/dark lips: This is a full-fledged look and spells serious high-maintenance glamour – perfect for a special occasion. I don't recommend it for everybody especially if the person doesn't have the confidence behind it that can pull it off. I am not referring to confidence as a human being, the statement refers to people like me that likes a more subtle look that suits my personality.

**Smokey Greys – Prom / Special  
Occasion Makeup**

**Kate Moss – Cover Makeup Look  
– with Guest Artist Charlotte  
Tilbury**

**Smokey Asian Eye (Hooded Eye)  
by Robert Jones**

**Natural Makeup Look with  
Neutral Colors with Robert  
Jones**

**Dramatic Lips Makeup Tutorial**



# Video with Robert Jones

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## The 9 Effects Of Stress On Your Skin By Isabel's Beauty Blog



It has been said that stress can manifest itself on one's appearance in many ways, but primarily by making the skin more sensitive and more reactive.

For example, stress maybe linked to psoriasis or rosacea, result in acne lesions that are more inflamed and more persistent, brittle nails and ridging of the nails, hair loss, hives, and excessive perspiration.

Stress also is a known trigger or can be a worsening factor for fever blisters, psoriasis, seborrheic dermatitis and has

even been shown to impair skin barrier function and dehydrate the skin – allowing more irritants, allergens, and infectious agents to penetrate the skin and cause problems.

Beyond the direct physiological effects of stress, people under stress also tend to neglect or abuse their skin. For example, they often lack the energy and motivation to adhere to their skin care regimens, and there also might be signs of stress-related habits – such as scratching, pulling or rubbing – that can exacerbate issues.

On a microscopic level, stress reduction can decrease the release of pro-inflammatory stress hormones and chemicals. For example, release of neuropeptides (or stress chemicals released from the nerve endings) can be reduced with stress management techniques. This often results in skin that looks and functions better.

Stress does a lot more than make us feel awful – it can wreak havoc on your skin. We're getting some expert insight into just what it does to your complexion and how to reverse the effects.



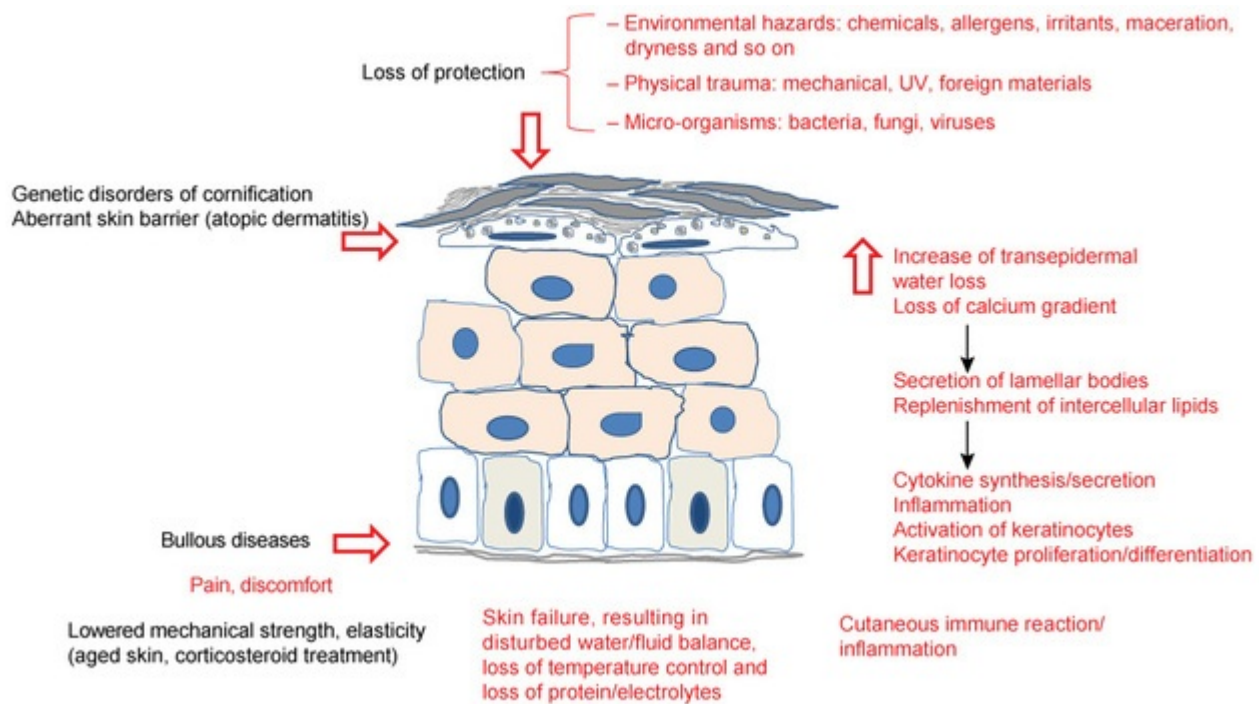
## Acne breakouts

Acne breakouts are stressful enough – especially when they happen the day before a date or other big event, but it turns out stress itself could be causing those pesky blemishes. “Overproduction of the stress hormone cortisol sets the stage for acne flare-ups by promoting oily skin and interfering with your body’s ability to regulate inflammation.” So what’s a girl to do? To calm your complexion, she suggests using an organic skin cream that contains natural anti-inflammatories such as green tea and chamomile, as well as the natural mineral sun block zinc oxide, which reduces oiliness.

## Dehydration

Dry skin? All those long (stressful) days at the office could be to blame. “Stress interferes with the ability of the skin to retain moisture.” If you’ve been dealing with more stress than you’d like – and it shows, switch to a rich cream that

contains plant-derived moisturizers such as aloe vera, hyaluronic acid, shea butter and avocado oil. “These will help hydrate and lubricate the skin, improving not only the appearance of the skin, but also its ability to function as a natural shield against bacteria, irritants and toxins.”



## Reduced collagen production

Stress can also be the enemy of youthful-looking skin, so if you want to turn back the clock, you’ll need to find a way to minimize stress. “Increased levels of another stress hormone, epinephrine, constricts blood vessels, reducing the flow of oxygen and nutrients that skin needs to manufacture collagen.” If you want to combat the effect of stress on your skin, move your face, she advises. “One of the best ways to restore healthy circulation is a program of facial exercises that incorporates aerobic techniques.”

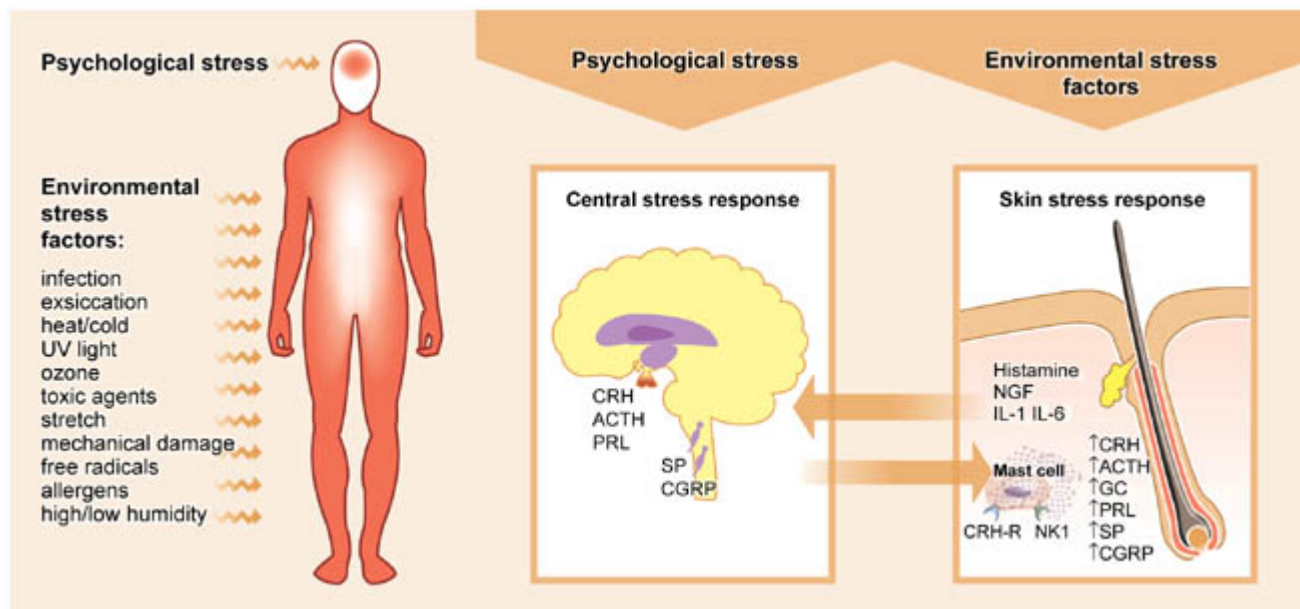
## Tips on Managing Stress

- Positive Attitude
- Support System
- Exercise
- Laughing
- Taking Time for You
- Meditation



## Neglect and abuse of skin

If you're overloaded with frustrating demands and a never-ending to-do list, you may find yourself going to bed with your makeup on, not bothering to moisturize and even indulging in bad habits like picking at your skin. To get your skin back on track, treat yourself to a professional facial. "Make sure the salon you choose provides a soothing atmosphere and plenty of TLC. With a little pampering to reduce your stress level and a revitalized complexion, you'll feel motivated to resume a disciplined skin care routine."



## Dull and troubled skin

What is happening with your digestion can have a big impact on what is going on with your skin. When stressed, the body's digestive system can go a bit haywire because the blood is directed away from the digestive system and everything becomes unbalanced. Unbalanced digestion has been found to lead to problem skin such as dryness, oiliness, blemishes and dullness, or sometimes a combination of all of these issues. Problems such as eczema and dermatitis can occur, too.

### Solution:

Boost your circulation with at least three sessions of cardiovascular exercise a week. This will also help you cope better with the stress itself. Include plenty of alkalising foods in your diet, such as apple cider vinegar, which makes a great salad dressing, green leafy vegetables and non-animal protein sources. Remember to chew your food well as this helps to alkalise it further before you ingest it. You can also consider taking probiotics, which can help balance the environment in your gut.

## Lines and wrinkles

No one likes to talk about wrinkles, let alone face them in the mirror. Ensure your skin stays smoother, longer by minimizing stress. "Cortisol also causes blood sugar levels to spike. The excess sugar molecules in your bloodstream can bond to the proteins in your skin's collagen fibers causing them to harden and crack and resulting in loose skin and deep wrinkles." To maintain proper blood sugar levels and keep skin looking youthful, Isabel recommends avoiding refined carbohydrates (e.g. white bread, junk food) and eating more vegetables, whole grains and beans.

There are two ways stress contributes here. Firstly, as previously mentioned, stress can cause dry and problem skin, and dryness and dehydration are the leading causes of fine lines and wrinkles. Secondly, the facial expressions that typically come with stress can cause deep, dynamic lines that last far beyond the stressful period. We're talking frown lines, crow's feet from squinting at your computer screen and deep lines that run from the nose to the mouth and the chin.

### **Solution:**

Practice mindfulness and meditation. Be aware of the moment you are in. If you feel yourself frowning, or your mouth is turned down, step away from the source of your stress, be it your computer screen, the phone or simply the in-tray on your desk. If possible, take 10 minutes to give yourself a facial massage. Press your fingertips into the middle of your eyebrows and work them all the way around your orbital bones to help relax the muscles that cause the expressions. Relax your mouth by saying your vowels in an overly accentuated manner up to 10 times. This will also help relax your jaw and prevent you from clenching and grinding your teeth. Even if you don't feel like smiling, force yourself to do it. Research suggests the very act of smiling, even if it's fake, can improve mood and induce relaxation.



## **Lack of sleep**

Stress causes sleepless nights. This will directly impact on the appearance of your skin. Just one night of tossing and turning will draw the freshness from your face, and if it becomes an ongoing problem, it can affect your skin's regeneration functions, resulting in dullness, fatigue, under-eye circles and bags and bloodshot eyes. It will also make you feel less like exercising, which can cause weight gain.

### **Solution:**

Put good sleep practices in place. Save vigorous exercise for earlier in the day, rather than just before bed. Before bed, take 15 to 20 minutes to do some gentle stretches and deep breathing to ease the tension of the day. Make sure you have clean sheets made from natural fabrics, allow fresh air to circulate through your bedroom and remove all devices such as smartphones or tablets. Don't have a TV in your room – it will stimulate your brain and make sleeping soundly even harder. Avoid caffeine after 2pm. You can also consider playing meditation CDs to relax you.

## **Bad habits**

Stress can trigger the onset of unhealthy habits such as excessive alcohol consumption, smoking and comfort eating. Again, this can make you less determined to exercise and can create an unhealthy cycle, where you rely on these things to help you relieve stress. This can lead to bad skin and weight gain, as well as other health problems.

### **Solution:**

Before you reach for a bottle of wine, cigarette or chocolate, take a walk and get some fresh air. Swap alcohol for a juice made of green, leafy veggies. Practice meditation and keep



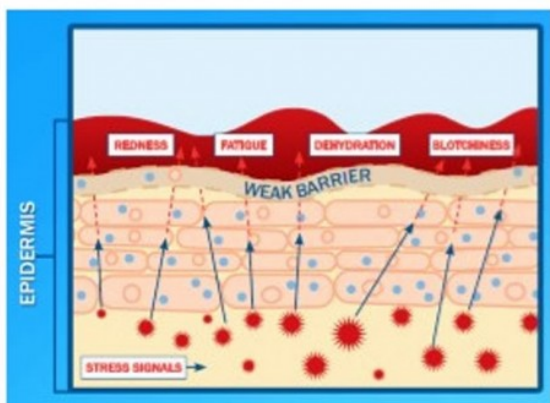
positive and uplifting affirmations on your office wall or the fridge to deter you from bad habits.

## Heavy jaw

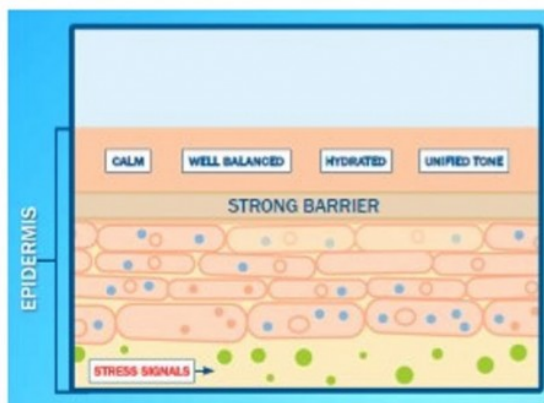
Grinding teeth and clenching of the jaw are common symptoms of stress. Unfortunately, these habits can cause the jaw muscles to work overtime. This can result not only in damaged teeth, but also a heavier than usual jawline, as the muscles become larger with the grinding action.

### Solution:

Speak to your dentist about wearing a special mouth guard if you grind your teeth in your sleep. A reputable cosmetic or plastic surgeon can also inject a muscle-relaxing product into the muscles to prevent you grinding your teeth. You can also try alternative practices such as kinesiology to help ease the tension. Acupuncture is what I use and it works miracles. Chiropractor work is another choice I usually resource to for relaxing, Yoga and Gi Gong one of my favorites.



- STRESSED SKIN**
- When stress signals are released from inside the body, it causes an inflammatory skin response resulting in visible signs of stress
  - Continued stress responses can make skin more vulnerable and can lead to premature skin aging



- STRESSED SKIN WITH SKIN RESCUER**
- With ingredients that limit the number of stress signals that attack skin along with protecting the skin barrier, this formula is better able to minimize the visible signs of stress.
  - Over time, skin becomes less vulnerable to daily stress.

# Detoxifying Your Life: Stress-Detox Secrets By Dr Perricone

Stress is probably the greatest age-accelerating precipitator there is. As a dermatologist, I can also unequivocally state that stress is also the precipitator of a great many skin problems; in fact, these problems often have their very roots in the psyche.

This can include everything from acne to eczema, rosacea to psoriasis and worse. Unfortunately normal day-to-day interactions with our partners and children can be stressful – no matter how much we love them. Of all of the physical conditions we experience, stress is also the most deadly.

Many circumstances create stress in our daily lives. Arguing with family, friends or colleagues, not getting enough sleep, worrying, working too hard, or even playing too hard can all create stress. Weekend warriors, who try to make up for a week of inactivity by spending hours engaged in strenuous physical sports, raise their stress levels to an unhealthy degree. Any activity that is practiced without moderation can lead to a stress response.

To help reduce the negative effects of stress, I recommend following the anti-inflammatory diet and taking targeted anti-inflammatory nutritional supplements. I also suggest implementing these simple strategies:

Make sure that you get enough sleep

Try to minimize situations that create stress in your life

Don't drink coffee. Coffee contains many organic acids which can elevate our cortisol levels. It's important to avoid spiking these levels, as it can be toxic when large amounts of cortisol are circulating in our system for prolonged periods of time. It is not specifically because of the caffeine because you can drink a cup of decaffeinated coffee at 8 AM and your cortisol levels will still be measurable at 10 PM

–the same effects as a cup of regular coffee.

Set aside fifteen or twenty minutes a day for meditation or prayer. It is a well-established fact that people who do this have significantly lower cortisol levels. Long term benefits include keeping our skin clear, maintaining a healthy immune system and preventing age-related diseases, such as diabetes, cancer or cardiovascular disease.

Consider learning some simple Yoga exercises. Yoga is an outstanding stress reducing discipline and can lower cortisol levels.

Substitute green tea for coffee.

Get out in nature—fresh air, trees, blue skies, all contribute to our physical and mental well-being.

## RELAXATION MUSIC FOR STRESS RELIEF

## GUIDED SLEEP TALKDOWN — GENTLE RAIN

## Meditation to De-Stress ("Brain Acupuncture")

## Calming Stress Relief

**Acupressure Points**

**How to Relieve Worry,  
Anxiety, Depression, and More**

**Chews-4-Health: Foods that  
Fight Stress!**