2008 - The 5-Step Skin Care Routine is Korean women’s biggest beauty secret to flawless skin.

Step 1: Double Cleansing

Thoroughly cleanse your skin with makeup remover and cleanser before going to sleep. Never ever go to sleep with your makeup still on! Have you heard of Cleansing Oil? It is a washable oil that is emulsified with water to quickly remove all makeup, grease and dirt.

Step 2: Massage & Mask

Facial massage is the secret to glowing skin. Apply a massage pack or cream and massage your face. You could even use a gentle scrub. It is exercise for your skin.
A facial massage improves blood circulation and is a great stress reliever! Facial massages also stimulates the flow of oxygen and nutrients to improve the elasticity of your skin. The skin temperature rises, opening pores and pushes out the dirt embedded deep within the skin. Your skin will look visibly fresher, younger and glows after a massage.
Incorporate a facial massage into your beauty regime at least 2 – 3 times a week for visible results.

A word of caution for those with acne or oily skin, massaging will agitate the oil glands and increase oil secretion. So refrain from massaging.

On the days you do not indulge in a facial massage, apply a mask on your face. There are many types of masks out there in stores, but the two that are most important are clarifying mask (deep cleanses the skin) and moisture mask.
Facial masks should be applied 1 – 2 times a week, after cleansing and preferably at night.

Step 3: Tone

Some might think that toners are useless. But toners actually remove dead skin cells and residue from cleansers. Choose a toner that is suitable for your skin type.
Step 4: Essence/serum

Essence or serums are very light, liquid concentrated treatments to correct skin problems. Essence is easier absorbed and penetrates deep into your skin, better than regular moisturizers. For best results, wait 5 minutes after applying serums before applying your moisturizer to allow maximum absorption. Because of their concentrated affects, serums are generally more expensive.

Step 5: Moisturize

Choose a moisturizer suitable for your skin and use it diligently.
2011 - The general Asian skincare routine is this:

- **Cleansing Oil (Night)**
- **Cleansing Foam (Day+Night)**
- **Massage Cream (optional)**
- **Toner/Skin (korean)/Lotion(Japanese)/Water**
- **Serum/Essence**
- **Special Treatment Products (Spotlightener, makeup base, etc)**
- **Emulsion/Lotion(korean)/Milk(Japanese)**
- **Cream (if oily skin, this step can be skipped)**
- **Eye Cream**
- **Makeup**
  - Sun care, BB Cream/Foundation, Powder Puff
Morning Protection

Step 1: Cleansing

In the morning, only a one-step cleansing is enough with a cleanser. If you have used an overnight treatment or sleeping mask the night before, just rinse your face with warm water to benefit from the effects of the sleeping masks/treatment the night before. While washing, take this opportunity to massage your face while washing.

Don’t forget to wash your ears too! They are part of your face too and contains pressure points that is connected to the ENTIRE body! Pull your earlobes downwards, sideways and upwards. This will help in blood circulation which will help improve your complexion. End it by ‘pinching’ lightly all parts of your ear.

Step 2: Toning

If possible, use the ‘3 second rule’ while applying your toner. You literally have 3 seconds to moisturize your skin IMMEDIATELY after cleansing (you have 2 seconds to dry your face after washing! Just gently pat your towel on your face. You don’t have to dry the entire face completely. To save time, before cleaning your face, un-screw your toner, therefore after drying your face, you
can apply the toner right away with your hands. While you’re washing your face, your pores open up. After 3 seconds, the moisture level drops only a few percent. But after 30 seconds, it’s 50%. And after a minute, it’s down to 41%. If you don’t get your moisturizer on within the 3 seconds, your skin dries up and the aging process kicks in.

Some brands like Sulwhasoo & DaalStory starts off the toning step with a pre-treatment serum, then continues with a normal toner. This is because these pre-treatment serum follow the Asian skincare rule: apply water based products first, then oil based. Pre-treatment essence usually consists of smaller molecules therefore they are applied first before applying products of bigger molecules. The pre-treatment essence or known also as boosters restores moisture loss during cleansing, and eases and maximizing the penetration of the following skincare products.

Toners usually acts as ‘skin softeners’ which are designed to soften the skin’s outermost layer to optimize the absorption of further moisture and treatment ingredients. In western skincare, Toners are marketed to be used to wipe off excess dirt and to tighten the pores using cotton pads or wool. In Asian Skincare, we already have a two step cleansing method therefore it is always recommended to use your hands to apply your toner, and no need to waste them on cotton pads.

However, if you want to incorporate cotton wools, you can use it using a different method! The Japanese also love to use a method called the ‘lotion mask’. It is basically using your toner on a mask (use cotton pads as the mask), and leaving it on your face for a few minutes. It is also a more efficient way of using your toner, instead of just patting it on your face. We’ll be elaborating on this on another article!

Take note that the Koreans name their toner by a few different names too such as Skin, Water, Skin Balancer, while the Japanese calls their toner by lotion (but lotion to the Koreans is an emulsion).

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Step 3: Treatment

In this step, either essence / serum / ampoules are used. They consist of high concentration of key ingredients to treat the deeper layers of the epidermis. Textures can vary: from liquid, to gel type texture, to emulsion type texture, and some even have a cream like texture. Essence is just more a liquid form of a serum. The most concentrated of the 3 items are ampoules. They are also usually more expensive than serums and essence.

Because the molecules in a serum are much smaller and more concentrated than those in a regular moisturizer, serums are able to target concerns, such as dark spots and fine lines, many layers beneath the skin's surface. By adding a serum to your daily skin care system (after toner, before moisturizer), you can more precisely and powerfully treat underlying damage.

Step 4: Moisture Lock

In this step, emulsions and/or creams are used to seal the skin and lock moisture, preventing moisture from escaping. If you have oily skin, emulsions are a better option. In Korean skincare, they are usually used together. Creams usually costs much more than emulsions as they are more emollient and concentrated and they are better in retaining moisture. Ultimately, the Koreans call their emulsion as a ‘lotion’, but in Japanese skincare, lotion is usually the toner.

**TIP**: Warm the cream with your hands before applying it on your skin as your skin will absorb warm products easily. Ultimately, after applying your cream, rub your hands until they are warm and place them on your face. The heat will deliver nutrients easily into the skin, as well as making absorption easier.

**TIP**: When applying toner, serum and emulsion – to maximize absorption use your fingers and continuously pat your skin (as if playing the piano).

Step 5: Specific Treatment

In Step 5, specific treatments like wrinkle fillers, spot treatments, etc are used to treat specific skin problems.
Step 6: Sun Protection

Here a sun care product is used to protect your skin from the harmful UV rays all year long. It depends if you want to use a sunscreen, or a makeup base as most makeup base contains UV protection these days. In Asian Skincare, we are obsessed with protecting our skin from the sun, therefore there is a large array of sun-care products: from sun creams, to sun pacts, to sun powders. Use whatever that is convenient and suits your skin type.

Step 7: Porcelain Skin

Continue on with your BB Creams / Foundations and lastly loose powder if you use them.
It is proven scientifically that most BB Creams / Foundation do not contain enough UV protection therefore it is always advised to apply sun protection before BB Creams / Foundation.
Night Therapy

The night skincare routine is to nurse your tired skin, repair damage, etc. The night skincare routine is the most important because your skin heals itself when you sleep and it is important that moisture is sealed so it doesn’t escape while you’re sleeping. A good night skincare routine will payoff when you wake-up in the morning!

**Step 1: Double Cleansing**

A double-step cleansing method is used to help remove make-up, sunscreens, powders effectively. Usually, a make-up remover that is oil based is used first. Cream cleansers (if you have dry skin) or foam cleansers are used in the second step.

**Step 2: Exfoliation**

Scrubs are used at least every 10 days or once a week depending on your skin type. The skin has a shredding cycle of 28 days, but the dead cells can remain there longer if metabolism is slow. Exfoliating helps remove the dead cells.
There are a huge variety of exfoliating products: from physical scrubs with contains grains (not recommended for those with sensitive thin skin), or chemical scrubs which are more gentle (for example: Charmzone Control Cream are great exfoliater which do not irritate the skin). You can also use 'peeling gels' which are also exfoliators and very popular in South Korea.

**Step 3: Massage Cream**

Though a very important step, many women skip this step because it is too troublesome and time consuming. Massaging in Asian Culture helps to make sure the healthy flow of ‘Qi’ – the vital energy or life energy. Facial massage gently stimulates the nervous system to increase blood circulation, reduce and prevent wrinkles, repair and balance the condition of the skin, minimize the ageing process. Most Asian Brands have their own Massage Cream. The History Of Whoo Jinyul Massage Cream even comes with a massage tool!

**Step 4: Masks**

Precondition your skin with toners before applying your mask.

Sheet masks are probably the most popular type of masks in Asian Skincare. They are used 1-2 times a week, or when you need a ‘quick fix’. You do not need to wash your face after applying the mask to benefit from concentrated essence of these masks. Carry on with the normal skincare routine.

Do not confuse this step with Sleeping Masks. They are not the same. Sleeping Masks are meant to be applied overnight. According to your skin type – use a suitable mask. Clay masks for oily skin, peel-off masks for dull lifeless skin, wash-off mask for dehydrated skin etc.,

**Note**: If you are using a peeling mask (such as the Whoo Brightening Peel-Off, or the Sulwhasoo Clarifying Mask etc.), apply the peel-off mask only after the emulsion step. This is very important to protect the skin!

**Step 5: Skincare**

Follow the normal steps as above.

You can finish off with ‘Sleeping Masks’ which are now quite a trend in Asia. They are like treatment creams which can be used daily, or 1-2 a week. **TIP:**
BEAUTY SECRETS

If you’re using a sleeping mask/treatment – just rinse your face with warm water the next day.

**TIP**: To ensure better absorption and efficiency of products – ensure to tap using fingers (as if playing a piano) and also to warm up products by rubbing it in between your hands before applying it to your face.

After that, rub your palms together until you feel some heat and place them on the cheeks (activation of Qi). Do the same for the eyes and the forehead. This step is extremely important when applying the eye cream!! The heat promotes blood circulation to your eyes and makes the cream more efficient.

This method is in fact the first step in Qi Gong. The center of the palm of your hands is there the laogong is found, where a number of meridian channels meet. When you rub your two palms together, what you are doing is activating the Qi.

Of course, sleeping early every night is also important. In Chinese/Asian medicine, the best time to sleep is from 9pm onwards and no later than 1a.m. Chou (1-3am) and yin (3-5am)

Chinese recognize 12 two-hour time units in a day the "12 earthly branches" - zi, chou, yin, mao, chen, si, wu, wei, shen, you, xu and hai.

In a day, the 12 meridians are rivers of energy that carry qi through our bodies and the organ functions best when energy is focused there. Completing the activity, such as eating, at the right time, ensures that energy flows properly and the digestive system works at its best.

Disrupted energy flow leads to health problems.

- **Chou (1-3am) and yin (3-5am)**

  People should be in deep asleep during both chou and yin. The liver meridian is on duty at chou to dispel toxins and produce fresh new blood in liver, while lung meridian is on duty at yin to distribute the energy and blood produced by the liver to the organs. Both jobs can best be accomplished while people are fast asleep.