

the fading game

Take on everything from acne scars to sunspots with these expert-approved tips for diminishing (and concealing!) imperfections.

By Karen Robock

ACNE MARKS

Severe and persistent breakouts can create scarring, particularly if pimples were scratched, poked or popped. “Picking is the main thing that causes scarring,” says Robin Billick, a dermatologist at Jewish General Hospital in Montreal. If you have facial scarring due to past, or even ongoing breakouts, there is help for your troubled complexion.

CORRECT Serums containing vitamin E can help improve skin hydration and assist with healing new acne scars. To reduce the signs of past blemishes, you’ll need to slough off the dull surface skin to reveal the new tissue underneath. A daily facial peel containing glycolic acid can assist with minor imperfections, but extensive scarring may require the expertise of a dermatologist who can perform in-office procedures to reduce their appearance.

CONCEAL Creating the illusion of a smooth complexion is the key to covering up deep acne scars, says Toronto-based makeup artist Angie Di Battista. Prep your skin for makeup by gently buffing away flakes from recently healed spots with an exfoliating cleanser. Next, apply a tone-repairing serum that contains vitamin C to help reduce redness, followed by a thin layer of full-coverage foundation all over your face using a wedge sponge. Dab on additional thin layers of foundation to cover widespread scarring, and use concealer – applied with a concealer brush – to mask smaller patches of scarring or an isolated breakout. Finish by pressing a setting powder all over, using a puff.

TRY *Revlon Colorstay Makeup, \$x.xx; St. Ives Even & Bright Scrub, \$x.xx for 150 mL; Clean & Clear Advantage Mark Treatment, \$x.xx for 14 mL; Neutrogena Rapid Tone Repair, \$x.xx for 29 mL; Almay Clear Complexion Concealer, \$x.xx. Equate Professional Make-up Wedges, \$x.xx for 30.*

for a natural-looking finish, apply foundation with a sponge using a gentle dabbing motion



toss or thoroughly wash and dry your makeup sponges between uses to avoid spreading bacteria

SCARS

Whether it's due to a recent sports injury or a childhood mishap, even a minor facial scar can seem unsightly. The good news is, you can reduce the appearance of bothersome imperfections with a few simple tricks.

CORRECT "The first thing is to ensure a new scrape or cut is cleaned and treated," says Benjamin Barankin, dermatologist and medical director of Toronto Dermatology Centre. This will reduce the chance of major scarring. To make old wounds less visible, hydrate damaged skin with an intensive moisturizer and a serum containing vitamin A to stimulate collagen production. A cream containing hydroquinone can help to fade a dark scar, but the best bet for raised, red scars is likely to be a series of in-office laser treatments from a dermatologist.

TRY *Polysporin Vitamin E Enriched Ointment*, \$x.xx for 30 g; *L'Oréal Paris Magic Perfecting Base*, \$x.xx for xx g; *Bio-Oil*, \$x.xx for 60 mL.

applying primer before foundation helps makeup adhere better to scar tissue



CONCEAL Once your complexion is cleansed and moisturized, apply a primer. "Dabbing primer all over your face first will help makeup adhere better, especially on uneven scar tissue," says Di Battista. Next, use a makeup brush or sponge to apply a thin and even layer of foundation, blending well into your neck and hairline. If it's a new scar that's still a bit red, you may benefit from a color correcting concealer. On the back of your hand, mix a small dab of a green corrector concealer with foundation and apply over the scar with a brush or sponge. If necessary, follow with another thin coat of foundation all over. Finish with a dusting of setting powder: "Apply it using a puff instead of a brush, which can disrupt the makeup you've just applied," advises Di Battista.

DARK SPOTS

Discoloured patches, called hyperpigmentation, are a result of sun exposure, hormones and genetics. Most women start seeing dark spots on their face by the time they turn 40 – though many have them much younger. Dark spots are most noticeable during the winter months when all-over summer colour fades, but the evidence of sun damage remains.

CORRECT Over-the-counter treatments containing vitamin C or licorice extract can help to prevent pigmented spots that have already formed under the skin from surfacing. Treatments containing retinol will help to fade new or not-so-stubborn spots, but ones that have been around a while or that are very dark, may require a prescription-strength hydroquinone cream to get results, says Dr. Billick. "Even then, you're unlikely to completely get rid of hyperpigmentation," he adds. To prevent the appearance of more dark spots, wear SPF 30 daily (applied after your moisturizer or by using a lotion containing sunscreen) to prevent future sun damage.

Your best defense against dark spots: SPF. Wear it daily – even in the winter.

vitamin C treatments prevent spots under the skin from surfacing



CONCEAL Make spots disappear by following the same techniques used to cover a scar (see previous page), but opt for a full-coverage foundation containing SPF to provide another layer of sun protection. To cover up brown spots on your neckline, apply a thin layer of foundation and buff it into your skin using a sponge or domed brush – use a circular motion to get the most natural-looking results.

TRY *Aveeno Positively Radiant Targeted Tone Corrector*, \$x.xx for 32 mL; *Olay Regenerist Luminous*, \$x.xx for 50 mL; *Garnier Skin Renew Dark Spot Treatment Mask*, \$x.xx for 6 masks.