STRONG + SEXY
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Clear-Skin Breakthroughs That Really Work

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based. "The little particles create micro-tears in the skin, causing blotchy discoloration," Dr. Gohara says.

**TREAT THEM**

Ditch harsh exfoliators, which only do more damage to the skin. In the morning, wash with a foaming cleanser, like Simple Foaming Facial Cleanser ($7, drugstores), and then smooth on an antioxidant-rich serum. We like Mario Badescu Vitamin C Serum ($45, mariobadescu.com). The best way to prevent spots—SPF—is also crucial for treating them. Reapplication is key. Dr. Gohara recommends keeping an easy-to-use mineral formula, like Colorescience SunForgettable Mineral Sunscreen Brush SPF 30 ($52, colorescience.com for locations), with you so that you can apply it on the go. In the p.m., take off your makeup with Aveeno Positively Radiant Makeup Removing Wipes ($7, drugstores), which contain a soy complex to help fade spots. Wash with your cleanser, then use an effective lightening combo of retinol—try Vichy LiftActiv Retinol HA Concentrate ($55, vichyusa.com) and hydroquinone—we like Peter Thomas Roth De-Spot Plus ($78, Sephora stores). For a natural alternative to hydroquinone, look for products with licorice root, coffee berry or daisy extracts. One we love: Burt’s Bees Brightening Dark Spot Corrector ($20, drugstores). Dr. Gohara suggests a two-month-on, two-month-off rotation when using hydroquinone, but says to continue using retinol.

**Break Free From Breakouts**

"Acne is caused by a combination of several factors, including bacteria, inflammation and hormones," says Emmy Graber, M.D., an assistant professor of dermatology at Boston University School of Medicine. "Adult acne is usually hormonal." These blemishes are often along the jawline, around the mouth and chin, and on the upper part of the neck. Also, "sweat and bacteria left on the skin after a workout can be a breeding ground for breakouts," says Dendy Engelman, M.D., a dermatologist in New York City.

**PREVENT THEM**

Stress may contribute to acne, so activities that help you chill out—like your favorite cardio workout or yoga—can help ward off zits. But even the few minutes it takes you to get home and wash your face afterward can put you at risk for a breakout. Keep a pack of salicylic acid face wipes, like Yes to Tomatoes Blemish Clearing Facial Towelettes ($6, drugstores), in your gym bag and do a quick pass over your skin post-sweat session. Later, wash your face with a cleanser that also contains salicylic acid. "It’s an exfoliant, so it stops the pores from becoming clogged," Dr. Graber explains. Clearasil Daily Cleanser Hydra-Blast Oil-Free Face Wash ($5, drugstores) does the job without drying out your skin.

The protein drink you sip after your workout might also lead to pimples if it contains whey or casein, says Whitney P. Bowe, M.D., a dermatologist in Briarcliff Manor, New York. Common culprits: skim milk, which is higher in these two ingredients than full-fat dairy is, and protein shakes made with whey or casein supplements. Dr. Bowe suggests drinking almond milk instead. "Skim and whole milk have been associated with breakouts, but almond milk hasn’t," she says.

**TREAT THEM**

If you get acne, don’t slather on products. "That can make blemishes more noticeable and harder to conceal," Dr. Graber says. As tempting as it is, never pick or pop a pimple. Instead, after washing with a salicylic acid or benzoyl peroxide cleanser, apply a 1 percent hydrocortisone cream, like Aveeno 1% Hydrocortisone Cream ($6, drugstores), to reduce redness and irritation. Don’t forget sun protection—UV rays can make the marks left by acne linger longer. One that protects without clogging pores: Neutrogena Clear Face Sunscreen SPF 30 ($11, drugstores). Before bed, use a salicylic acid spot treatment. Try Clinique Acne Solutions Clinical Clearing Gel ($17, clinique.com) or opt for one with acne-fighting lactic acid, like Orgo Lactic Acid Blemish Spot Treatment ($32, beautycirque.com). •