

**REAL SIMPLE**

www.realsimple.com  
October 14, 2020  
UVPM: 2,479,260



## You Need Caffeine in Your Skincare Routine Just as Much as Your Daily Cup—Here's Why

Is it really worth the buzz?



If you can't start the day without your daily dose of Starbucks, we have some good news: There are other ways to get your caffeine fix (and we're not talking about tea). According to dermatologists, "But first, coffee," is a mantra you might want to apply to your skincare routine when fall weather puts your skin into limbo. "The transition between seasons is a big contributor to skin changes," says Howard Sobel, MD, board-certified dermatologist in New York City and

founder of [Sobel Skin](#). “When the temperature and humidity drops quickly, skin works harder to maintain its hydration.” This can lead to inflammation spikes, especially if you’re prone to skin conditions like [rosacea](#). Add gruesome indoor heating and tiresome back-to-school schedules, and your skin is probably crankier than a kindergartener in Zoom school.

That’s where caffeine comes in. You’ve probably heard that it can “wake up” your skin, but what does that really mean? “It’s an anti-inflammatory when used topically,” says Dr. Sobel. “It can also reduce wrinkles, brighten skin, and depuff by improving circulation in the skin.” What’s more, its antioxidant-rich, meaning it can help protect skin from UV damage, pollution stressors, and skin cancer. We asked dermatologists how to effectively use caffeine on every area of your skin—and if it really works just as well in a cream as it does in your favorite mug.

## **Caffeine for your eyes**

Your undereyes are a fickle space. Factors like a restless night, a salty dinner, or even too much sun can all cause fluid retention and hyperpigmentation below your eyes. According to Dr. Sobel, caffeine is a great topical ingredient to improve puffiness and promote circulation. Results are not long-lasting, so dermatologists agree that twice a day is the magic number for best results. Keep your eye cream in the fridge for some tingling morning magic, then pamper peepers at night after a long day of staring at the screen.

Tip: Always tap eye treatments instead of rubbing back and forth. “Dark circles are caused by loss of volume,” says Susan Bard, MD,

board-certified dermatologist at [Vive Dermatology](#) in Brooklyn, N.Y. “Rubbing creates shearing forces which can cause micro cracks in the skin. It can also lead to irritation, stimulating pigment producing cells to release its pigment.”

---

## **Caffeine for your face**

Your eyes are not the only place that puffs up. Indulging on high-sodium foods can cause fluid retention, leaving you with a swollen face come morning. According to Tsippora Shainhouse, MD, FAAD, board-certified dermatologist in Beverly Hills, Calif., caffeine is a vasoconstrictor. “Caffeine may temporarily constrict the superficial blood vessels in the skin, helping the skin to appear less red, irritated, and blotchy,” says Dr. Shainhouse. “By constricting the vessels, it may also help to prevent fluid seepage from those vessels, which may, in turn, help skin appear less puffy.”

Caffeine is also packed with antioxidants. By applying topically, you can limit the amount of free radicals (i.e., the cause of fine lines and wrinkles) that your body produces. Another anti-aging perk? Amino acids. Some types of coffee, like green coffee bean oil, are full of them and can help aid in collagen and elastin production. Don't expect to see instant results; but its soothing properties can promote these benefits when used long-term.