

An essential part of skin care is to find out your skin type and provide care for your skin according to its needs.

Skin care routine has certain necessary steps. The first is cleansing, followed by toning, moisturizing, nourishing and finally, protection.

An astringent plays the role of toning the skin and refining the pores of the skin. It helps to reduce the oiliness of the skin, while closing and tightening the pores. As a result, it is particularly useful for oily skin, especially during summer.

Oily skin can lead to enlarged pores which in turn gives a coarse look to the skin. This happens due to excessive oil on the skin's surface. Astringent helps remove the oil and also tighten the pores, as it improves the texture of the skin. In skin care, a skin toner plays the part of astringent. Normal to dry skin needs toning too, the difference is that the skin toners for dry skin contain very mild astringents.

NATURAL ASTRINGENTS

Some natural ingredients have an astringent effect.

- ◆ Cucumber is a natural astringent. You can apply cucumber juice by itself on the face and wash it off with plain water after 15 minutes. You can also mix cucumber juice with a little rose water. This would be a good astringent toner.
- ◆ Lemon juice also has an astringent effect, but it should not be applied by itself on the face. It is useful for oily skin. Mix rose water and lemon juice in equal quantities and apply on the face after cleansing. Wash off with plain water after 10 minutes.
- ◆ Grate apples and apply on the face. It has an excellent toning effect. Wash off after 20 minutes.
- ◆ Green tea also works as an astringent toner. You can soak green tea leaves in hot water for half an hour. Cool, strain and use the liquid to tone the skin.
- ◆ Mashed banana or apricot pulp are natural astringents. They close the pores and tighten the skin. They suit all skin types.
- ◆ Tomato juice can also be applied on oily skin as an astringent. It also helps to lighten skin color.
- ◆ Collect orange and lemon peels and dry them in the Sun. Powder and add to face masks. They also work as astringents by closing and tightening the pores.

Cleansing of the skin should be followed by toning of the skin. In a way, it helps to complete the cleansing process by removing the last traces of dirt. Apart from closing the pores, an astringent toner improves blood circulation on the surface of the skin. This helps to add a glow to the skin and is very useful if the skin is dull, oily and congested. The toner also helps restore the normal acid-alkaline balance to the skin, which can get disrupted with the use of harsh soaps, chlorinated water and air pollutants.

You can buy a skin tonic which has a flower

septic effect. It is also said to tighten the skin and reduce puffiness.

FOR NORMAL TO DRY SKIN

Mix together three-fourth cup rosewater with one-fourth cup witch-hazel.

FOR OILY SKIN

Mix rosewater and witch-hazel in equal quantities.

FOR VERY DRY SKIN

Mix together three-fourth cup rosewater, one-fourth cup witch-hazel and half-teaspoon pure glycerin OR one teaspoon pure honey.

Natural Ingredients to Nurture Your Skin



base. Rose or lavender based skin tonics are good as they have refreshing and soothing properties. For oily skin, a mild astringent can serve as a skin tonic. Some astringents can be really harsh on the skin, as they are alcohol based. If it burns or stings the skin for more than a minute, you should not use it. Instead, mix it with rose water in equal quantities and then use it on the skin.

Rosewater is one of the best known skin tonics and is easily available. Keep some rosewater in a bowl, in your refrigerator. When it is cold, it is not only very refreshing but is also very effective in improving blood circulation to the surface of the skin.

You can make your own skin tonic with rosewater and witch-hazel. You should be able to find witch-hazel at your local pharmacy. This combination tones the skin and also has an anti-

HOW TO USE AN ASTRINGENT TONER

Ensure that the cotton swabs you use are closed securely and are always clean. After cleansing the skin, soak the cotton wool pad with skin tonic and then wipe and pat the skin with it. This reduces oil, closes the pores and stimulates blood circulation. Then, stroke the skin gently with it, using outward and upward movement on the cheeks. Each movement should end at the temples. Apply gentle pressure at the temples. On the forehead, start from the center and go outwards on each side, again ending at the temples. For the chin, use circular movements. Tone the neck too, going downwards from the chin. Tone around the eyes, using a very light touch.

Toning the skin after a hard day's work helps get rid of fatigue. You will feel refreshed and ready for an evening out.