

The Sequence of a Facial

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I have great respect for the masters in this industry and the knowledge that they share with us in lectures, print and videos. Understandably they are representing their products performance, attributes and benefits. However, being of scientific mind I enjoy putting the pieces together myself. I enjoy learning, studying and perfecting my craft. I want to offer my clients a results oriented facial based on chemistry and biology, to separate myself from the norm and create something magnificent. I want to think through my facials.

My love for the human body has spanned 40 years. I respect it. I am in awe of it. I see the miracle of its many systems working synergistically. If I can understand the skin as a living breathing tissue exposed to the many environmental influences I can heal and replenish it. One piece of the puzzle that I feel is not addressed is how differing climates affect the needs of this tissue. Yes, there are many wonderful products out there; however, can one single product line treat the needs of, for example, my Florida clients. My answer to that question is “no”. Concentrated serums, essential oil elixirs, herbal supplements and fluid products are what I use in hot, sunny climates. Let’s discuss why.

When I first moved to Florida I noticed a trend with my client’s skin. When doing the skin analysis I felt many bumps underneath the epidermis. They were everywhere. Small compactions superficially located underneath. I also felt a “film” on the epidermis. Upon closer observation using the magnifier I saw the pores embedded with “stuff”. Whether it was make-up, creams or whatever, the sebaceous glands were definitely not allowed to breathe nor drain. It was as if a plastic wrap was enveloping the skin. Something heavy was smothering it. I became intrigued and determined to correct the problem. I had come from Seattle and done my CIDESCO training in BC, Canada. This new climate was in direct contrast to the cold and rainy Pacific Northwest.

As aestheticians we develop a keen sense of touch. We touch enough skin and intuitively know what is missing. Dry skin needs hydration. Thick skin needs hydration. Even oily skin needs hydration. One thing skin in hot, sunny conditions does not need is more oil. Skin in any warm climate needs the hydrating effects of water. Why is that? Because the skin’s metabolic activity is

increased with heat. The sebaceous glands secrete more oil. The sudoriferous glands secrete more sudor (sweat). These secretions need to drain onto the epidermis and create the acid mantle that will naturally protect the skin from evaporation and cool the skin from the heat. These are protective mechanisms the body has created and we must respect it. Not doing so will create a backup in the drainpipe so to speak and lead to bumps in the plumbing.

Skin can become dry from a variety of reasons. Even oily skin can become dry and rough. The major causes are thick cleansers, thick creams, too much oil present, over cleansing and not exfoliating the dead corneocytes. You may ask how too much oil will make the skin dry. The reason is that dead flaky skin will bind with the oil creating a thickness to the epidermis and occluding the pores. This is the “orange peel” affect. How can the skin drain if it is “crimped shut”? Tight pores with bumps first need lots of steaming to relax the nerves, open the follicles and soften the corneocytes. Next, one can proceed with anaphoresis to dissolve the oil then apply ingredients to regulate the sebaceous glands. Maybe try using propolis, seaweed, glycerin, aloe vera, etc. during steaming.

[Skin exposed to the elements need nourishment and replenishment from what is lost during the day.](#) The product needs to be easily absorbed into the many layers of the epidermis and possibly dermis. Fluid products, liposomes and essential oils do that. Products with smaller molecular structure and products that are compatible with the cellular membrane give the best results. A good analogy for this is to visualize a dry sponge. The reason is that under a microscope the corneocytes look just like that. In fact, the top layer of the skin looks like “dry oatmeal”. If a heavy cream is applied to the top of the dry sponge it just stays there...a heavy mass that suffocates the pores. However, if a liquid product is applied to the sponge, that product seeps in between the layers and “bathes” the cells. This is what an aesthetician should want out of their products. Products that penetrate into the skin where they are needed most. This is where the “younger” plumper epithelial cells are. Aestheticians also want the “cement” around the flattened corneocytes to hold more moisture so that the skin will have a glow.

Serums give more power to the punch. They offer a higher percentage of active ingredients and, therefore, a more beneficial treatment. The market has a variety of serums. Because they target a specific condition it is good to have several available for the client. Baby boomers need serums. Dehydrated skins need serums. Sun damaged skin needs serums. Skin that is exposed to hot climates needs serums. Serums that are appropriate for a specific skin condition do not interfere with the normal metabolic activity of the skin. A glycolic can be applied to the skin before

applying the serum and dissolve any debris that is blocking the follicle. Serums can also be applied to the skin during the massage. If the skin is dehydrated it will keep absorbing what you put on it. Just keep adding these fluid products until you feel the texture of the skin has become smooth and firm. The goal is to nourish the skin and replenish it until the next facial. It's a "booster" for the skin. The clients cannot do this at home nor do they have all the products and knowledge of how to get products through the waterproof layer of the skin.

It can be a good idea to treat all skin in hot climates as if it were oily. For these conditions, products that have a gel consistency where water is the base are ideal. A mild, light gel cleanser is recommended not a heavy lathering one that may be too alkaline for the skin. The reason is that a gel will remove oil, pollution, make-up, sweat, irritating enzymes, etc. better than a cream or lotion. It will not leave a film on the skin. A lot of enzymes are working on the skin during the day and some leave irritating by-products that need to be removed before clients apply the night treatments. At first it may be difficult for your clients to understand why the bottle says "for oily skin" when their skin is dry on top, however, the result will be great skin that is easy to maintain.

Analyze the response of the client's skin during a 20 minutes massage. If the products are correct the skin will feel smooth, soft, moist and calm. Massage also relaxes the facial nerves. This slows down the nerve impulses at the neuromuscular junction of the capillary walls so they can dilate and become more permeable. This allows the blood to diffuse and cause erythema (redness) in the tissue which will bring oxygen to the mitochondria, increasing cellular metabolism. This process gets a sluggish circulation moving so that toxins can be eliminated through the lymphatic system. The products will create a glowing skin, regulation of the sebaceous glands and improvement in texture, all due to the increase of fluid in the intracellular cement! Tell that to your clients and they will want an hour massage! For these reasons, facial massage is a good prevention to aging. Blood is the carrier of nourishment to every cell of the body. Remember that if nothing else. When you see gray, sallow skin it needs to be stimulated so that the above metabolic events can occur. Steam, seaweed, heat, compression and high frequency are some of the ways to do this.

Not always is a facial massage so easy. It can often create little "pin heads" to appear. Also be wary of clients with rosacea. Often times contact can cause irritation to this condition. Texture of the product is what is important here. It has to be of a certain consistency to protect these pin heads from friction whether from the environment or touch. Work more on strengthening the capillary walls with nourishing compresses when these conditions are present. The fewer products applied the less chance of skin sensitivity. Chinese Green Tea and Aloe Vera are two

healing ingredients for this skin condition. Remember that rosacea skin is sensitive to heat. If your clients have problems with sunscreens and breaking out suggest they switch to a sun block. It may be the key.

Another skin texture that you need to be aware of as you are doing the facial massage is thick skin. You may think you should change from an oil-based elixir to a water based serum, but, be patient and keep massaging. Really focus on what changes are happening under your fingertips and palms. The skin could be so tightly crimped that the heat of the massage will open up the pores and let the essential oils soften the skin surface. Do a deep effleurage draping your whole hand over the face and feel if the products are being absorbed. If you feel any improvement keep massaging. What you really are trying to do is figure out which products you need to recommend to the client for home care. The texture of the skin is what you are healing first and this skin has been compromised for a long time. It may be that you have to put her under the steamer A little longer or apply an enzyme peel so that you can get past the buildup of corneocytes on the epidermis. Touch is the key to skin care. A client can be dry on top and oily underneath or oily on top and dry underneath. When you feel that you have achieved balance between top and bottom you have the correct analysis.

The skin is one continuous layer of squamous cells “zipped up” over every inch of our muscles. It needs to be “zipped up” so that bacteria cannot gain entry into the body system. Your main objective with every skin analysis is to evaluate how strong the “zipper” is. Depending upon what is seen determines how to proceed with the facial. You want to clean, peel (exfoliate), steam (hydrate), extract (clean-up), nourish, massage.... and then close up the “zipper” with a mask. The sequence of the steps is important to get results. One has to precede the other in order to get past the waterproof layer of the acid mantle. There are many products that can be used.

When a client looks forward all week to her facial, when she looks forward all day to her facial, make it worthwhile. Bring respect and professionalism to our trade. Ask the masters what they suggest. Read the literature that is available. Watch the videos that are made. Ask for samples when available. Check for results from products. If they don't work for your clients in your climate change and get ones that do. Pick and choose what you want to carry so that you will be ready for any skin condition that is presented to you. Go to the shows and listen to the lectures. The reward for you is touching the skin after the facial and saying, “Yes”.

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