



# **An Introduction To Natural Skincare**

**By**

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## WHAT IS NATURAL SKINCARE?

The fear of toxins has led to a return to simple plant based products and organic pesticide free ingredients which work in harmony with the skin without placing an unnecessary load on our bodies and environment. The best products and treatments are those that are made fresh, but compromises on naturalness will have to be made in some areas to create products that are both sophisticated and effective.



## WHAT IS NATURAL SKINCARE?

For example you cannot make a moisturising lotion without an emulsifier or preservative and you cannot cover greying hair with a totally botanical colourant but you can minimise those ingredients that may have harmful long term effects. In this context "Natural Skincare" is about using products that are as natural and high quality as they can possibly be whilst maintaining a great performance.



# WHY MAKE YOUR OWN PRODUCTS

- Lower Cost
- Simplicity
- Control Over Ingredients
- To unleash your creativity
- Because it's fun!



# TYPES OF SKINCARE PRODUCT

- ANHYDROUS
  - Products with no water added such as oils and balms
- EMULSIONS
  - Water/Oil based products such as creams and lotions
- DETERGENTS
  - Foaming rinse off products such as shower gels and face washes
- SIMPLE MASKS & SCRUBS



# TYPES OF INGREDIENTS

- FOR ANHYDROUS PRODUCTS
  - Emollients
    - Plant Oils
  - Occlusives
    - Heavier Oils and Butters
    - Waxes
  - Humectants
    - Water attracting
    - Glycerine/Glycerols & Honey
  - Antioxidants
    - Vitamin E



# EMOLLIENTS

## What Are They?

Emollients can range from the very light and easily absorbed oils such as Thistle Oil to the richer, heavier butters such as Coconut, Mango and Shea. Some oils such as Borage and Hemp are rich in essential fatty acids and vitamins but are not particularly emollient and will feel quite dry on their own. For this reason it is good to include a couple of different oils such as almond or Jojoba in a blend as this will improve the performance and skin feel.



# OCCLUSIVES

What Are They?

They reduce TEWL (trans epidermal water loss) by creating a waterproof barrier over the skin and work best when applied to slightly dampened skin. Some emollients such as cocoa butter have occlusive properties along with waxes such as beeswax which make them great for barrier products protecting skin from the elements. Some occlusives, however are quite comedogenic and should be avoided on those skin types or areas prone to spots or acne.





# HUMECTANTS

## What Are They?

Humectants are also moisturisers but work in a slightly different way and in combination with emollients and occlusives. Humectants such as glycerine, honey and hyaluronic acid are what is known as hygroscopic meaning they attract water to the skin in order to keep the cells plump and hydrated. Although humectants attract water to the skin you will need extra ingredients such as emollients and occlusives to keep it there.



# ANTIOXIDANTS

What Are They?

Products based on oils and waxes are not prone to microbial contamination and so will only need an antioxidant such as Vitamin E rather than a preservative. There are many publications on and offline that quite wrongly call ingredients such as vitamin e and rosemary seed extract preservatives – they are not.



# ANTIOXIDANTS

Oxidation occurs when the product comes into contact with the air and starts to break down or go rancid. A bit like an apple going brown if the skin has been cut or the end of a cucumber going crinkly – its a natural process of decay. No outside factors or contaminants need be involved, its just something that happens naturally as the molecules react with the oxygen in air. Keeping products in airless packaging and using antioxidants such as vitamin e and rosemary seed will slow down this process.



# TYPES OF INGREDIENTS

- › FOR EMULSION BASED PRODUCTS
  - › All of the above PLUS:
  - › Water
    - › Flower Waters or Infusions
  - › Emulsifiers & Thickeners
    - › To hold the oil and water together
  - › Preservatives
    - › Not optional!
  - › Special additives
    - › Vitamins & pentapeptides etc.



# EMULSIFIERS

## What Are They?

In simplistic terms the role of an emulsifier is to make the oil soluble ingredients stick to the water soluble ingredients in the same way you would add egg yolk to the oil and vinegar when making mayonnaise. This works because egg yolk contains lecithin which has emulsifying properties. Emulsifiers are very similar in principle to detergents, except that they are non foaming.



# EMULSIFIERS

## Why Are They Used?

For most skin types, simple balms, butters and oils are much too heavy and greasy. Modern creams and lotions will need to contain a degree of water and water soluble ingredients in order to hydrate and moisturise the skin without clogging the pores or feeling oily. In order to get the oil and water to mix you need an emulsifier. An emulsifier can also be added to a non foaming cleansing product such as a balm in order to make it easier to rinse off.



# EMULSIFIERS

How Natural Is Natural?

Look for products with emulsifiers derived from plants rather than petrochemicals. Like detergents, emulsifiers will have gone through a degree of chemical processes to produce them.



# ACTIVE INGREDIENTS

What Are They?

They are the things that add the skin soothing, anti ageing or healing properties to a product. In commercial skincare they will be the things such as collagen, liposomes and pentapeptides. In natural skincare they will be from essential oils and plant extracts and include things like vitamins and essential fatty acids as well as soothing ingredients such as Aloe vera.





# ACTIVE INGREDIENTS

## How Natural Is Natural?

Botanical ingredients in commercial products tend to be standardised extracts. You won't find manufacturers using fresh honey or aloe vera in a product as it will go off very quickly and the high levels of preservative needed would be very risky. Herbal extracts can be in tincture form (an alcohol base) but these can be quite drying on the skin in large amounts. They can also often be found as macerated oils (such as Calendula) and as glycerine extracts (which are water soluble and also act as a humectant).



# ACTIVE INGREDIENTS

Essential oils are usually steam distilled extracts from the flowers and leaves of the plant but absolutes are solvent extracted so are not often produced organically. Essential oils are very concentrated and should be used at the correct dilution for both the skin type and the part of the body they are being used on.



# PRESERVATIVES

## What Are They?

Preservatives kill bacteria and prevent the growth of yeast and mould in your products. Every time we dip our fingers into a jar of cream we introduce more contaminants, so any product that contains water must be adequately preserved, however oils and balms just need an antioxidant to prevent them going rancid. Airless pumps help minimise preservatives needed.



# PRESERVATIVES

## Potential Hazards

Preservatives by their very nature are hazardous in high enough dosages and can also cause skin irritation. They are designed to kill micro organisms so it stands to reason that they are not going to be good for us. However, the risks to health from spoiled products or water borne bacteria (which can cause blindness) can be far greater than that of the preservatives themselves. We just have to make sure the ones we are using are the least harmful and at the lowest concentration possible in order to minimise risk.



# PRESERVATIVES

How Natural Is Natural?

Unfortunately there are as yet no natural preservatives, however many forward thinking skincare ranges are creating products that are “self preserving”. This means finding a combination of ingredients and production methods that create a balance within the product . Combined with a short shelf life and use by date means a reduction in the levels of traditional preservatives needed and in some cases dispenses with them all together.



# TYPES OF INGREDIENTS

- › FOR DETERGENT BASED PRODUCTS
  - › Water
    - › Flower Waters or Infusions
  - › Detergents
    - › To cleanse & foam
  - › Preservatives
    - › Not optional!



# DETERGENTS

What Are They?

A detergent or surfactant is a substance that affects the surface tension of water (a surface active agent). It consists of molecules with hydrophilic (water loving) heads and hydrophobic (water hating) or lipophilic (oil loving) tails. In basic terms and in the context of a shower gel the dirt and oils from the skin stick to the lipophilic end and are lifted away down the drain by the hydrophilic end.



# DETERGENTS

## Why Are They Used?

The role of a detergent is simply to remove oil and dirt from either the hair (in a shampoo) or skin (in a shower gel or cleansing foam). They are also used for boosting the amount of foam in a product to allow it to spread through the hair or over the skin quickly giving the impression of effectiveness. General consumer perception is that the more a product foams the more effective it is.





# DETERGENTS

## Potential Hazards

Detergents can be harsh and strip the skin of its natural oils leading to dryness and irritation, therefore most products are formulated with a combination of detergents to help prevent this. A primary detergent would be used to do most of the cleaning and foaming and a secondary one to make the first one milder and improve the skin feel. The other main issue with detergents is an ecological one as the products we use are washed down the drain, ending up in rivers and the sea. A good detergent should be both biodegradable and not harmful to fish or plant life.



# DETERGENTS

How Natural Is Natural?

Some detergents are produced from crude oil by the petrochemical industry, although this could be considered as naturally derived it is a non renewable resource and so not considered sustainable or ecologically friendly. Due to the popularity of organic ingredients and the companies that have pioneered them in recent years a lot of pressure has been put on large chemical companies to produce more gentle and sustainable detergents that are derived from corn, coconut and sugar.



# TYPES OF INGREDIENTS

- FOR SIMPLE MASKS & SCRUBS
  - Emmollients
    - Plant Oils
  - Water
    - Flower Waters or Infusions
  - Humectants
    - Water attracting
    - Glycerine/Glycerols & Honey
  - Preservatives
    - If you add Water
  - Cleansing and Exfoliating Materials
    - Clay, Ground Rice etc!



## HONEY & CLAY SCRUB

14g White Clay  
20ml Honey  
43g Ground rice  
10ml Glycerine  
15ml Almond oil  
15ml Orange Flower water  
20 (1ml) drops Preservative 12

Mix all ingredients thoroughly