

# Street fighter

Choked with pollutants and toxins, the city streets are a minefield for our skin, which is why it's high time for a skin detox, *says Remy Rippon.*



“I have been detoxing,” boasted a friend when I compliment her on her complexion, which resembled the airbrushed quality of a Facetune filter. A juice cleanse? A vegan diet? Skin detoxing, she answers, explaining the antioxidant-rich skincare regimen that aims to counter pollution-induced skin concerns such as wrinkles, age spots and dull skin.

City living exposes your skin to a toxic cocktail that settles into pores and seriously inhibits your morning glow. While its impact isn't as profound as UV exposure (though toxins also bring out hyperpigmentation and age spots), it's recognised as a major factor in premature skin ageing. “While many of my patients are aware of damage from the sun and how to protect themselves from it, they often don't realise the effect that pollution can have on their skin,” says Dr Dendy Engelman, consulting dermatologist to Elizabeth Arden.

According to a recent report published in the *Journal of Investigative Dermatology*, people living in urban areas with high traffic levels have more brown spots and pronounced wrinkles than those living in rural areas. “Pollution creates free radicals [skin cells damaged by trauma] responsible for premature signs of ageing on the skin,” says Muriel Pujos, scientific spokesperson for Philosophy. Free radicals impair the collagen and elastin of the skin and, in turn, its natural barrier function. Philosophy's Take a Deep Breath Oil-Free Oxygenating Gel Cream contains skin-quenching barley leaf extract, which acts like an oxygen tube to the skin to keep it hydrated and better equipped to offset free radicals.

## CITY LIVING EXPOSES YOUR SKIN TO A TOXIC COCKTAIL THAT SETTLES INTO PORES

If free radicals are the enemy, antioxidants are the freedom fighters. Prevege City Smart lives up to its moniker of “skin defender” by creating an invisible shield of antioxidants and boosting the skin's natural ability to repair collagen and elastin. Dr Engelman notes the skin's barrier function is crucial, as pollution is made up of nanoparticles “up to 20 times smaller than human pores, allowing them to easily penetrate the skins surface without an adequate layer of protection”.

While city-proofing is key, sloughing away the day's grime is tantamount. “Make sure you thoroughly wash your skin at the end of each day,” says cosmetic and laser dermatologist Michelle Hunt. “Topical and oral antioxidants such as vitamins E, C and nicotinamide may help reduce oxidative stress and cell damage.” Clinique City Block Purifying Charcoal Cleansing Gel satisfyingly clings to impurities to remove build-up, while Aesop Parsley Seed Anti-Oxidant Facial Hydrating Cream is packed full of botanicals and vitamin E to protect in the am and nourish during the evening.

Inner-city-Sydney facialist Jocelyn Petroni says she particularly notices the impact of pollution on the complexions of her globetrotting clients returning to Australia after time spent overseas. She recommends regular at-home exfoliation as well as post-holiday fruit acid peels to hydrate and dissolve any unwelcome souvenirs.

To check pollution levels wherever you are, download the Plume Air Report app, which measures pollution levels by city in real time. Should you feel the need to up the ante, an on-the-go protector like REN's Flash Defence Anti-Pollution Mist creates a second-skin barrier and goes on over make-up to protect throughout the day. “Pollution levels are constantly changing, so it's important to make sure that you are protected at all times,” explains Dr Engelman. ■



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