

Skin Care for Men: The Path to Mutual Success

Men's skin care: It's all about high performance. Insightful integration of an effective daily regimen is vital to improving the health of men's skin just as it is to women's, but getting most men to do this is difficult unless you have a good understanding of masculine psychology.

Understand what moves a man to commit to daily practices that will improve the quality of his skin, and you create a win-win relationship via rituals that will last a lifetime. The core of your strategy is to leverage his other goals--professional, social, and personal--to skin care. And to make that strategy successful you'll need to back it with general working knowledge of men's skin and how it differs from women's skin, and information about your male client's lifestyle and habits in particular.

Masculine Motivators: Results-Driven Psychology

Most men understand the importance of self-maintenance and value self-discipline in the attainment of their goals. Starting at an early age, often through their training in sports or working with their dads on projects at home--or in many cases also through hard academic work in competitive school environments--men learn to be diligent, decisive, and committed to the actions that will get them the results they desire. These fundamental character qualities shaped in youth will serve as the sturdy foundation for your joint success. Getting a man hooked on skincare may seem like a reach, because men in general (certain obvious categories excepted) don't tend to spend as much time or money on their appearance as women do. However, a man's motivation for an improved physical appearance will heighten when he has linked up enough evidence that says: I get more of what I want when I am on the top of my game and put my best face forward.

Let's get specific. Internal statements such as: "When I take care of myself I get the girl," "The lines around my eyes show that I smile often, but my pores look like they could be leased out for pool parties," or "My face is aging faster than the rest of me, and I'm worried I'll look too old for the job at the interview," are all powerful realizations that can motivate your male client to action. Educating a man on how best to care for his skin is much easier if you can do two things:

- relate skin care to an activity that that he is already familiar with and understands well,
- and

--help him to link the results of your skincare products and services to something he REALLY wants--the new job, the promotion, the girl, the sale. Together, these two lessons will accelerate your client's learning skin-care competency, which in turn will help bring him the rewards he's motivated by. Uncovering his goals for an improved appearance will allow you to develop a solution that refocuses his priorities. By nature, most men are focused, goal-oriented, loyal and consistent; once they perceive something to be of value to them, these traits become really apparent.

Goals and Habits: What You'll Need to Know (And He'll Need to Understand)

As his skin-care coach, you have four primary areas to focus on: his personal/professional goals, his daily habits, his skincare goals, and his unique results plan.

First, before you begin to influence your male client to alter his skin-care habits, you'll need to uncover some basic details about his lifestyle so that you can create a custom results regimen. Ask him straightforward questions, such as: "What do you currently do in the way of facial skin care?" "How do you feel about the quality of your skin?" "What would you most like to improve about your skin?" "What might improving the look of your skin help you achieve?" "How do you most like to exercise?" "How often do you do that?" With answers to questions like these, you'll acquire not only key motivators but also an understanding of the points in his lifestyle where you can help him insert the elements of an appropriate skin-care routine--and stick to that routine. The routine must be simple enough to integrate into his daily life, while simultaneously delivering visible improvements.

Understanding your client's lifestyle habits and daily rituals will help you develop a plan for his achieving optimal skin performance--let's call it a "skinterval" workout plan. After all, most men (at least the ones likely to consult you as a skin-care professional) are familiar with diet and fitness, and therefore linking optimal skin health to physical fitness will make your points easier to comprehend. But unless he understands the importance of being consistent with his skin care regimen, he is unlikely to place any value on performing any specific skin care action at all. A related example that you can provide to help your client understand the importance of consistent

skin-care habits is to remind him of the consistent, repeated effort it takes to build muscle. Likening muscle building to improved skin health will remind him that he has to be dedicated and deliberate about following the skincare results ritual you create for him.

Another way to explain the need for consistency is external vehicle maintenance: washing, buffing, and applying a protective coating to a car's paint-job helps it look good longer. The analogy with skin care is obvious: cleansing (washing), exfoliating (buffing), moisturizing and suncreening (protective coating) protect the skin, like the car's exterior finish, from environmental stressors. In this way his skin, like his car, can retain its best appearance (and highest value) for the longest time possible. Once your client gets it about consistency and value, you can coach him to integrate at least part of his needed skin-care regimen into something he's already doing. He will implement it. Now it's time to create his custom skin-care plan in detail.

Physiological Profile + Key Ingredients = Custom Skin-Care Regimen

A man's skin is distinctly different from that of a woman. His skin is as a rule naturally more hydrated, requiring less occlusive moisturization to combat dryness, dehydration, and transepidermal water loss. His skin also contains more sebum, and the production rate stays stable throughout life, whereas a female's sebum production decreases with age. As a result, a man's skin shows visible signs of aging at a reduced rate, at least until he reaches about fifty, when the rate of transepidermal water loss speeds up, narrowing the gap between the rate at which he loses hydration and the more rapid rate at which a woman typically does.

When you take all these factors into account, is it any wonder that men are naturally less interested in applying skin moisturizers? They simply do not require the frequent applications of lotions or cremes to keep a hydrated skin as much as women do. Another very common male practice that lends to increased hydration and smoothness of the facial skin is *shaving*--a practice men begin in their teenage years. While they typically have a limited knowledge of skin care, men do understand the importance of both pre-shave lubrication to prevent ingrown hairs and razor irritation, and post-shave hydration. You can leverage this knowledge and create a results-oriented skincare regimen around their shaves for a more comprehensive and corrective beard care ritual. Men can also more easily learn to incorporate the topical application of skin care

products during and after showers, as well as after physical activity like working out or playing sports. This works much better than asking him to follow the morning and evening regimen so commonly recommended to women.

Your client will also need to know though, if he doesn't already, that even the best and most consistent self-care can't eliminate the need for regular professional attention. Sometimes comedons or ingrown hairs just happen, for one thing--and for another, a professional looking closely at a client's face can spot trouble starting before the client can and can pre-empt its getting worse with prompt and appropriate treatment.

As we've discussed, men are consistent and loyal creatures when they find value in something. So, when designing treatments for your male clients, they should really pack a one-two punch. Treatments that calm his senses while making the skin visibly brighter and smoother are likely to be a big hit. Keep in mind that when you marry the restorative benefits of a spa treatment to more results oriented procedures, it really ups the perception of value. You leave him feeling pampered and relaxed--and with results that he can see and feel. This best-of-both-worlds blend, results-driven effectiveness and relaxation, is likely to keep your male client coming back consistently.

Skin peels that leave the skin raw and flaking for days are unlikely to be the perfect match for your male client because most men don't tolerate the process of post-op recovery well. So even though a skin peel might be just what he needs to polish the surface of his face, if his lifestyle won't permit even three days of downtime to get through the healing process, you will have to offer an alternative option. Get him to consider more frequent maintenance treatments administered once or twice a month, utilizing products containing ingredients like fruit enzymes, and lower-percentage alpha and beta hydroxy acids to gently exfoliate the skin without leaving it red and flaky.

For more demanding skin conditions, though, assertive treatments may offer the only effective solution. In that case, prepare your client for the experience. Manage his expectations with clear descriptions of the daily changes he will witness as he recovers. For example; "After your skin

peel, on day one and day two you'll feel a sensation of heat in your face. You'll look as if you have a mild sunburn." That way you provide your male client with a way to shrug off the comments of peers over those two days, if he should feel the need to offer an explanation for his noticeable change in appearance. Next, provide him with the product he'll need to use post operatively to prevent complications and accelerate the recovery time. An easy solution for this purpose would be to provide him with each product he will need at each step of his recovery to function as a kit, included in the package price rather than sold a la carte. If you own a salon, consider implementing men's skin treatments at the shampoo bowl, complete with a warm steam towel scented with cedar, sandalwood, or another soothing but masculine-friendly aroma. The key to helping a man care for his skin lies in his perception of value in the services you deliver. To sum up, then, the most important tools you'll need to deliver exceptional improvements in male skin health are your understanding of masculine psychology, male physiological skin characteristics, and your ability to leverage your client's goals to achieve mutual success. Results that make an impression, deliver value, and align with his lifestyle will create unparalleled loyalty, from which you and he will both benefit.