

LIFE-PROOF your skin

Complexion feeling lacklustre? Noticing new wrinkles? Here are the top four super-agers wrecking havoc on your face every day... and the experts' hacks for tackling them

LACK OF SLEEP

Why is it a baddie? 'Beauty sleep' isn't just a turn of phrase. Studies found that poor sleepers had significantly more fine lines and pigmentation, as well as reduced skin firmness. 'Skin cells regenerate while you sleep, so a lack of it will result in dryness and a less glowy, youthful look,' says consultant dermatologist Dr Justine Hextall of The Harley Medical Group.

The weapons

The quality of your kip is important, too. **This Works Sleep Plus+ Pillow Spray, £26**, is clinically proven to help, with 89 per cent of users noting they had a deeper sleep after using it. 'As your skin is in repair mode, it's the best time to absorb powerful anti-ageing ingredients such as resurfacing retinol,' says Sally Penford of the International Dermal Institute. Soup up snooze time with **Indeed Labs Retinol Reface, £19.99**.



BLUE LIGHT

Why is it a baddie? Scrolling through your ex's Instagram snaps isn't just bad for your psyche. 'There's emerging evidence to show that light from our smartphones and computer screens [known as HEV or blue light] can penetrate into the deeper layers of the skin. It can cause free radical damage [similar to that caused by the sun and pollution, see right], which can lead to the break-down of skin-firming collagen and elastin,' comments Dr Hextall.

The weapons

Many experts reckon we shouldn't be too worried about the effects of blue light yet, but there are still some forward-thinking products that promise to filter it, including **Soap & Glory Make Yourself Youthful Sunshield Superfluid SPF50+, £15**. An antioxidant serum – the same kind used to tackle pollution (right) – is a smart move, too.



POLLUTION

Why is it a baddie? Skin boffins have discovered women living in the city can age up to 10 per cent faster than those in rural areas. 'Pollution particles are up to 20 times smaller than our pore size, so it's super-easy for them to get trapped deep down in the skin layers. This results in dehydration, inflammation [worsening conditions such as acne and eczema] and a loss of elasticity and firmness,' reveals Dr Hextall.

The weapons

You might have heard of 'free radicals' that are triggered by the sun and lead to ageing. The very same thing occurs from pollution, too. The best shield?

Antioxidants. Start the fight by using a serum packed with them - vitamin C is ideal. Just make sure it's in opaque, air-tight packaging (no jars) as antioxidants deteriorate when exposed to light and air. **Avène A-Oxitive Antioxidant Defense Serum**, £19.50, fits the bill.

'At night, be sure to remove any leftover grime particles using an ultra-gentle cleanser such as **DermaQuest Essential Daily Cleanser**, £30.50, since pollution can make skin drier and more irritated. Then, follow with your antioxidant serum again,' advises Dr Hextall. Once a week, amp up the deep clean with **Neutrogena Purifying Boost The Detoxifier Hydrogel Recovery Mask**, £3.50, which uses seaweed extract to draw out impurities.



POOR DIET

Why is it a baddie? 'Ready meals and fast food tend to contain seriously high levels of sugar, which damages youth-boosting collagen,' explains Dr Hextall. 'And it's not just the type of food we're eating that causes issues, but those we're skipping, too, like fruit and veg. If you're not getting enough of the right nutrients, your body won't be able to make healthy new skin cells or properly protect itself from damage.'

The weapons



While altering your diet will have the biggest impact, the right skincare can help. **Trilogy Age-Proof CoQ10 Booster Oil**, £31.50, is specially designed to target 'glycation' - an ageing process that results from consuming too much sugar. Our tester said her skin was brighter and more supple after just a few drops.

'STUDIES SHOW THAT EXTERNAL FACTORS CAN BE MORE INFLUENTIAL THAN GENETICS WHEN IT COMES TO SKIN AGEING. SUN EXPOSURE, SMOKING, EXCESSIVE ALCOHOL, POLLUTION AND CHRONIC STRESS - ESPECIALLY WHEN COMBINED WITH A LACK OF SLEEP - HAVE THE MOST DRAMATIC IMPACT,' DERMATOLOGIST DR JUSTINE HEXTALL TELLS US.