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How to Repair Summertime Sun Damage

By Shannon Esau, CEO & National Educator

By now, we're all well aware of the sun's damaging effects and you've likely had the "importance of sun protection" talk with your clients more than a few times.

Despite best efforts and the pervasiveness of statistics on skin cancer, many still seek the sun's rays to achieve that bronzed, glowing skin and inadvertently fail to adequately protect their skin. When a client has clearly spent too much time in the sun, how do you bring their skin back to optimum health? What treatments and ingredients work for sun damaged skin?

Diagnosing and repairing sun-damaged skin requires an adept eye, ingredient knowledge and a customized approach. Fortunately, there are a number of tools at our disposal to educate and help clients achieve healthy skin.

Understanding the consequences of sun exposure

First, a note about spending time in the sun: it's a good thing as long as it's done in moderation with plans to protect the skin. The sun provides warmth, invigorates the soul and delivers a dose of vitamin D, which the body needs to support healthy liver function. Limiting your direct skin exposure to 10-15 minutes daily is ideal and non-threatening. It is too much sun that brings danger to skin cells.

Start by educating your clients about the different types of rays that can actively harm their skin. UVB rays are shorter and are the rays that burn, while UVA rays have longer wavelengths, penetrating deeper into the layers of the skin and can reach the dermis. These UVA rays cause photo-aging. Overall, UV rays are responsible for 90 percent of the skin's aging, as well as the leading cause of skin cancer.

Most clients do recognize that too much sun exposure is dangerous and damaging to the skin. It depletes the tissue of hydration and can also cause sensitivity and uneven skin tone. What they may not realize is when the sun penetrates the dermis, it causes cellular damage that

sets off a domino effect of photo aging, damage, and even DNA mutations, which in turn cause cancerous cells. Not only does it cause collagen production and skin regeneration to slow, it can also disrupt collagen fibers, stimulate the formation of abnormal amounts of elastin, and increase metalloproteinases production. Over time, the skin's ability to regenerate is compromised, dead cells build up, the production of new cells decrease, and the discoloration becomes more apparent. The skin now has a dullness, deeper wrinkles, uneven skin tone and is at risk of skin cancer.

Prevention is key, so continue to stress an increase in antioxidant intake and topical application. Always use broad spectrum natural SPF (think zinc oxide and titanium dioxide), re-apply frequently, and use a natural mineral make-up with SPF to further support the skin during summer months. Even with all prevention tools followed to the letter, most skins will have some signs of summer damage as they move into the fall months. There are a number of ingredients and treatments that can be used to correct the visible signs of sun-induced aging and discoloration and begin to restore the skin to optimum health.

Ingredients that repair sun damage

The sun is a primary contributor to excessive melanin production, and as the end of summer nears, it's common to see clients with mild to severe skin discoloration. However, many skins will have underlying damage that will not become visible for years. In either case, ingredients like bellis perennis flower (daisy flower), L-arbutin, kojic acid, mandelic acid, azelaic acid, L-ascorbic acid, magnesium ascorbyl phosphate and many beautiful extracted stem cells will inhibit melanogenesis, brighten, repair and strengthen the skin. In the treatment room, the key is to combine corrective brightening and skin-building ingredients, with a goal of correcting and replenishing the skin. Corrective facials and peels will make a significant impact on this skin. For corrective facials use strategic formulas at critical stages of the treatment:

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Enzymes: with lotus flower extract, salicylic acid, and azelaic acid like RA Skin Brightening Enzyme

Building & Strengthening: L-ascorbic acid, mandelic acid, retinaldehyde and gardenia extract along with other vitamins and nutrients like RA SynErgy A Serum.

Finishing Steps: masks with hibiscus, plantain leaf, mullien flower and honeysuckle flower like the RA LumiStem Gel Mask. Serums with epidermal growth factor, daisy flower extract and zinc oxide.

Additionally, peels can be an excellent tool

They will give the skin a brighter, softer look while stimulating new cells and regenerating the skin. It is important to avoid over exfoliating the skin and to remember the most critical component is the healing of the skin with appropriate post care ingredients that will rebuild and strengthen the skin during the peeling process. Look for peel formulations that offer lightening and cellular support:

- Peel formulas with mandelic acid, sake extract, hibiscus extract, azelaic and encapsulated retinol like RA TCA Sake Peel.
- Post care formulas with aloe, omegas, arnica and epidermal growth factor like RA Growth Factor Serum.

For home care, a brightening cleanser, scrub and pigmentation control serum containing daisy flower, like the RA Naturalè Mega Brightening Serum will heal, brighten and lighten. Epidermal growth factor and serums with vitamin C and peptides like the C-Peptide Complex will further strengthen and support brightening efforts.

For skin that is dehydrated and displaying the visible signs of aging, antioxidants are essential. Antioxidants are the first line of defense against the damaging UV rays. These antioxidants keep the melanocyte cell quiet, which will reduce the damage and pigmentation issues. Because the sun is an oxidative stressor with the ability to penetrate skin cells, break down collagen and impact the DNA structure of the cell, antioxidants inhibit this process from happening. This can be achieved through diet, as well as topical ingredients.

Topicals rich in antioxidants will help firm, tone, tighten, refine lines, and give skin an overall glow. Active corrective ingredients like glutathione, super oxide dismutase, ascorbic acid, tocopherols, retinoids, and resveratrol will also help stimulate the regeneration process. RA Antioxidant Complex Serum is ideal!

Continue the care at home with epidermal growth factors, omega-6 essential fatty acids, and vitamins E and C. A cucumber-infused heavy water throughout the day will also provide the necessary hydration the skin needs during the hot summer months.

Finally, sun protection is still vital year round. Recommend formulas with titanium dioxide and zinc oxide that also provide your clients with hydrating, soothing and healing support. RA Daytime Defense SPF30 is a great option!

Prevention is always the best defense for skin damage, but since we don't have the ability to travel back in time, we can make a difference in those cells for long-term health by repairing the skin in the present and take measures to stop the damage from degrading further in the future.

For more information about effective end-of-summer treatments, visit RhondaAllison.com/summer.



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