CourseMints

GUIDE

Skin Health Protocol

Clear Skin Through Nutrition and Routines

SELF-PACED PDF COURSE

COURSEMINTS.COM

CourseMints

Skin Health Protocol

Clear Skin Through Nutrition and Routines

COPYRIGHT

© 2026 CourseMints. Published by Morvex Corporation Limited, Studio No. 28, 2 Old Brompton Road, London, England, SW7 3DQ. Registry Nr: 17034959. info@coursemints.com

All rights reserved. No part of this guide may be reproduced, stored or transmitted in any form without written permission from the publisher, except as allowed by the license below.

YOUR LICENSE

This guide is licensed to the buyer for personal use. You may download it, read it on any of your devices and print as many copies as you need for yourself. Please do not resell, share, upload or redistribute it, in whole or in part.

DISCLAIMER

This guide is for educational purposes only and is not medical advice. It does not diagnose, treat or replace care from a qualified health professional. Talk to your doctor before you change any treatment, medication or care plan, and get help promptly for any symptom that worries you.

INSIDE THIS GUIDE

Contents

	How to Use This Guide	4
CHAPTER 1	How Your Skin Works	7
CHAPTER 2	Find Your Starting Point	11
CHAPTER 3	The Minimalist Routine	16
CHAPTER 4	Sunscreen, Every Day	21
CHAPTER 5	Adding Actives Without Wrecking Your Barrier	26
CHAPTER 6	Reading Labels and Choosing Products	32
CHAPTER 7	Nutrition and Your Skin: What the Evidence Says	35
CHAPTER 8	Sleep, Stress and Your Skin's Daily Rhythm	40
CHAPTER 9	A Practical Map of Common Concerns	45
CHAPTER 10	Your 8-Week Protocol	49
CHAPTER 11	When to See a Dermatologist	53
	Appendix: Quick Reference	57

How to Use This Guide

Most people with frustrated skin are not doing too little. They are doing too much: a foaming cleanser, a toner, two serums, an exfoliating pad, a mask on Sundays, a new product every few weeks, and no sunscreen on cloudy days. The skin never gets a stable routine long enough to show what works, and the barrier that keeps it calm is under constant attack.

This guide takes the opposite route. You strip your routine back to a few gentle basics, protect your skin from the sun every day, add active ingredients one at a time with a clear reason for each, and look honestly at the lifestyle factors that matter: sleep, stress, habits and food. Then you track what happens for eight weeks, so your decisions come from your own skin's evidence rather than from advertising.

How the protocol works

The core of the guide is an 8-week protocol in three phases:

Weeks	Phase	What you do
1 and 2	Reset	Pause unnecessary products, switch to a minimal routine, take baseline photos, start your skin journal
3 and 4	Protect and support	Lock in daily sunscreen, tidy up sleep, stress and skin-touching habits, shift your meals, patch test your first active
5 to 8	Target	Introduce one active ingredient for your main concern, track it, then review and decide what stays

The chapters before the protocol teach each piece, from how skin works to sunscreen, actives, labels, food, sleep and stress. "Your 8-Week Protocol" then puts it all into a week-by-week plan.

Each chapter follows the same pattern: why it matters in plain language, numbered steps, common mistakes, a short example, an exercise with space to write, and key takeaways. The people in the examples are fictional composites written to show the method; they are not real customers or testimonials.

How evidence is graded in this guide

Skin care is full of confident claims and thin evidence. Throughout this guide, claims carry one of four labels:

Label	What it means
Strong	Consistent results from good clinical trials, and part of mainstream dermatology advice
Moderate	Some decent trials or consistent findings, with gaps. Reasonable to try
Weak	Small, short or early studies, lab findings, or results that vary a lot between people. Fine to experiment with, but do not expect much
Not supported	Marketing or folklore without good evidence, or with evidence against it

These labels are our honest summary of the research at the time of writing, not a formal grading system. Where experts disagree, the guide says so.

What to expect

Skin changes slowly. The outer layer renews itself over several weeks, and most active ingredients need 6 to 12 weeks of steady use before you can judge them. That is why the protocol runs for eight weeks and why the journal matters: memory is a poor judge of gradual change, and photos taken in the same light are a good one.

Expect irritation from an over-busy routine to calm within a week or two of simplifying. Expect breakouts to keep coming and going during the first month, because a spot that appears today began forming weeks ago. Expect a new acne or anti-aging active to cause some dryness at first. None of these means the plan has failed.

CHAPTER 1

How Your Skin Works

01

You do not need to know dermatology to care for your skin well, but a few facts change your decisions. Most routine mistakes, such as scrubbing harder when skin is oily or adding more products when it stings, come from misunderstanding what skin is trying to do.

Three layers, one job

Your skin's main job is to keep water in and irritants, allergens and microbes out.

- **The epidermis** is the thin outer layer. New cells form at its base and travel up over several weeks, flattening and filling with tough protein as they go, until they reach the surface and shed. Cells called melanocytes make melanin, the pigment that gives skin its color and absorbs some ultraviolet (UV) light.
- **The dermis** sits underneath. It contains collagen and elastin, the proteins that keep skin firm and springy, along with blood vessels, nerves, hair follicles and oil glands. Sun damage to the dermis drives most of what people call skin aging: fine lines, loss of firmness, uneven tone.
- **The subcutaneous layer** is fat and connective tissue that cushions and insulates.

Topical products work mainly in the epidermis. A few ingredients, such as retinoids, influence the dermis over months of use. No cream "detoxes" anything or meaningfully changes the hormones circulating in your body.

The barrier: bricks and mortar

The outermost part of the epidermis, the stratum corneum, is thinner than a sheet of paper, and it does most of the protecting. Picture a brick wall: the bricks are flattened dead skin cells, and the mortar is a mix of fats (lipids), mainly ceramides, cholesterol and free fatty acids. When the mortar is intact, water stays in and irritants stay out.

When the barrier is damaged, water escapes faster (dermatologists call this transepidermal water loss), and substances that normally sit on the surface get in and trigger irritation. Signs of a struggling barrier:

- Products that used to feel fine now sting or burn
- Tightness after cleansing, even if the skin looks oily later in the day
- Redness, flaking or rough patches
- Skin that feels dry and congested at the same time
- A tight, shiny look across the cheeks or forehead

Common causes are harsh or frequent cleansing, hot water, scrubs, too many exfoliating acids or retinoids at once, fragrance and essential oils, cold dry air, and some skin conditions, especially eczema.

THE SCIENCE

The acid mantle and the microbiome

Healthy skin surface is mildly acidic, roughly pH 4.5 to 5.5. That acidity helps the enzymes that build barrier lipids work properly and favors the skin's normal community of microbes. Traditional bar soaps are alkaline, which is one reason they can leave skin feeling tight. The skin microbiome is an active research area, and products marketed as "microbiome friendly" are mostly ahead of the evidence. The practical lesson is simple and well supported: cleanse gently and do not strip the skin.

Oil, pores and spots

Oil glands (sebaceous glands) open into hair follicles, the openings we call pores. Their oil, sebum, helps keep skin supple. How much you make depends mostly on genetics, age and hormones, particularly androgens, the hormones that rise at puberty in everyone. You cannot

wash oil production away. Stripping the surface tends to leave skin irritated without reducing oil for long.

Acne develops when four things combine inside a follicle:

1. **Extra oil.**
2. **Sticky cell shedding.** Cells lining the follicle clump instead of shedding normally and form a plug. A tiny early plug, a microcomedone, is invisible.
3. **Bacteria.** *Cutibacterium acnes*, a normal skin bacterium, thrives in the blocked, oily follicle.
4. **Inflammation.** The immune response turns a plug into a red, swollen spot.

Two practical consequences follow. First, a spot you see today began forming weeks ago, so any change you make takes weeks to show. Second, effective acne treatments target these four steps: benzoyl peroxide reduces bacteria, retinoids normalize shedding, and some prescription treatments reduce oil or inflammation. Scrubbing targets none of them.

Pore size is mostly genetic, and pores become more visible with sun damage and age. Clear pores can look smaller, but no product permanently shrinks them.

Inflammation: useful, then harmful

Inflammation is the body's repair response. A short burst after a cut is helpful. Ongoing low-level irritation from an aggressive routine, sun exposure or picking keeps skin red, slows healing and, in medium to darker skin tones especially, leaves dark marks after spots heal (post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation). Many "anti-inflammatory" claims on labels are vague, but the core idea is sound: remove the sources of irritation, and skin calms down.

What healthy skin really looks like

Healthy skin has visible pores, some texture, lines that come and go with expression, and the occasional spot, especially around stress or hormonal change. Filters and edited images have shifted what people expect. A realistic goal is skin that feels comfortable, breaks out less, heals well and is protected from the sun.

CourseMints

PLANNER

Routine Cards and Skin Journal

Morning and Evening Cards, Product Audit and Your 8-Week Journal

COMPANION TO SKIN HEALTH PROTOCOL

INSIDE THIS PLANNER

Contents

	How to Use These Pages	4
PART 1	**Set Up**	6
PART 2	**Your 8-Week Skin Journal**	11
	Appendix: Dermatologist Visit Sheet	17

PART 1

Set Up

1

Fill these pages in during week 1, except the Patch Test Log, which starts in week 4.

Baseline Snapshot

Start date: _____ **Main concern:** _____

Skin type (oily, dry, combination, normal; sensitive?): _____

- ☐ Photos: same window and time of day, no flash, clean skin 15 minutes after washing
- ☐ Front, left, right, plus close-ups of my main problem area, saved in an album labeled “Baseline”

Baseline scores (past week)	Score
New spots	
Irritation 0 to 3, most days	
Comfort 1 to 5	
Main concern 1 to 10	