



### SIMPLE STEPS

A minimalist makeup routine for freshly massaged skin.



**TATA HARPER**  
**Water-Lock Moisturizer**  
A hydrating salve with a lightweight texture that works well under makeup or alone. \$68; [tataharperskincare.com](http://tataharperskincare.com)



**ARMANI**  
**Luminous Silk Concealer**  
A moisturizing concealer for camouflaging dark circles and puffiness. \$38; [giorgioarmani.beauty-usa.com](http://giorgioarmani.beauty-usa.com)



**AVEDA**  
**Brow Definer**  
A long-wearing botanical wax pencil with mineral-derived color that can fill and shape unruly brows. \$24; [aveda.com](http://aveda.com)



**SAIE**  
**Dew Balm**  
A hyaluronic acid and marshmallow root-based highlighter for illuminating cheekbones, brows and eyelids. \$18; [saiehellow.com](http://saiehellow.com)

## THE BEAUTY OF EVERYDAY RITUALS

Facial massage and other touch-based practices performed regularly at home help reduce stress and offer a sense of calm.

**L**IKE ANY ritualistic practice, daily beauty routines can have a distinctly grounding effect. “Routines are really important as they give us a sense of control over our day and our life,” says Dr. Amy Wechsler, who is board-certified in both dermatology and psychiatry. “And they’re often the first things to go out the window during periods of stress.” She counsels her patients to keep up their routines—especially in terms of skin care—as much as possible. “Right now we all feel completely out of control,” says Wechsler. “There’s a lot of uncertainty and so many people telling us what we can and can’t do. Anything we can do to regain a bit of control is important.”

When these beauty rituals are rooted in self-massage, such as methodically working in a cleanser, the slow and steady application of a night cream or an intentional pre-bedtime rubdown with a soothing face oil, the benefits increase. “Massage generates blood flow, and simply releasing your tension gives you tighter, brighter, healthier skin,” says L.A. facialist Joomee Song, whose massage-forward treatments are characterized by what’s not included: She employs no tools and very few products. The one machine she uses sends a micro-current through her bare hands. Song encourages her clients to develop a self-massage practice at home, which, she insists, is more impactful than any \$500 face cream: “Feeling your face every day, massaging it and releasing tension, is the most beneficial way to change the skin.”

“Being busy, being stressed, being overworked, being too sensitive, being overreactive, being run-

down, being fatigued, all of these things show up on our complexion,” says Anastasia Achilleos, the London-based facialist and Gwyneth Paltrow favorite who’s also known for her massage-based practice. “Massage has the power to change that.”

And the impact of regular massage is more than skin deep. It feels relaxing because it is, on a physiological level, lowering blood pressure and heart rate. “Physical touch stimulates, enhances and promotes wellness, affecting the muscular, sensory, nervous, lymphatic and circulatory systems,” says Achilleos.

The benefits of massage have been the subject of many studies at the Touch Research Institute at the University of Miami’s Miller School of Medicine, says the institute’s director, Tiffany Field. According to Field, massage activates pressure receptors under the skin, sending a message to the vagus nerve in the brain, which has branches throughout the body. “When you stimulate the suppressor receptors, the vagal activity increases and it shuts down the release of stress hormones, the number one culprit being cortisol,” says Field. “When you shut down cortisol you save natural killer cells, which are the front line of the immune system, killing viral, bacterial and cancer cells. So face massage happens to be a very good idea for these times.” And, Field adds, those routines have a protective factor.

In *The Blind Assassin*, Margaret Atwood writes: “Touch comes before sight, before speech. It is the first language and the last, and it always tells the truth.” In a time when we are required to be more physically out of touch, it may be the most powerful language we have. —*Fiorella Valdesolo*