

My Fair Lady

Fair porcelain smooth skin is desired by many Asian women. However, personally I feel that every skin color has its own beauty, and it will be extremely boring if everyone has the same skin color. Therefore, I would encourage women to work with the skin color Nature has blessed them with and enjoy her own unique beauty. The goal here then is really not to whiten one's skin until it fits the so-called ideal of fairness, but rather to reveal your skin's beautiful natural colour. For example, if your natural skin colour is brown and you have dark patches of pigmentation on your cheeks due to years of accumulated sun exposure, what you may like to do is to lighten the dark patches so that the natural golden hue of your skin can shine through. Ultimately, the goal is really to go back to the skin you are born with: smooth, radiant, with perfect, even color tone.

Tips for Beautiful, Even Skin Color

1. Always apply sun block during the day.

This applies even if you are indoors, as UVA, the UV ray that causes skin darkening and aging, can penetrate glass windows. Most sun block provides UVB protection but may be lacking in UVA protection. To see if the sun block you are using contains UVA protection, make sure that either titanium dioxide, zinc oxide, or avobenzone is listed as the active ingredients. Pigmentation is usually a result of accumulative sun exposure over the years. Therefore, sun protection should start as early as possible in life.

2. Avoid using products that contain harsh ingredients on your skin

Irritation of the skin can lead to the release of pro-inflammatory factors that stimulate melanin production. Some synthetic fragrances and natural citrus oils, for example, are known to irritate the skin and increase the skin's sensitivity to sunlight, thus causing the skin to be more susceptible to discoloration and development of pigmentation.

3. Eat lots of fresh fruits and vegetables

Fresh fruits and vegetables are rich sources of antioxidants like vitamin C, which protect skin cells from free radicals and inflammation-induced skin darkening.

4. Keep your skin well-moisturized.

For some people it seems that pigmentation and skin dryness are interrelated. In fact, studies have indicated that people with dry skin tend to be more prone to brown spots, freckles, and pigmentation. Although research is still ongoing and nothing is conclusive at this point, it appears that the cause of pigmentation in dry skin may be due to the higher rate of skin irritation and inflammation, which leads to the production of a pro-inflammatory factor known as endothelin-1. After endothelin-1 is released, it stimulates the production of melanin. Incidentally, sun exposure, which is one of the causes of skin dryness, also leads to the production of endothelin-1 in our skin.

Almond and Oatmeal Mask

This mask has natural bleaching and whitening properties, which is ideal for people seeking a fairer complexion. In addition, it has soothing and smoothening effects on the skin.

Ground almond meal	1 heaped tablespoon
Ground oatmeal	1 heaped tablespoon
Honey	1 teaspoon
Warmed fresh milk	Sufficient to form a thick paste

Preparation:

1. Mix almond meal and ground oatmeal thoroughly in a clean bowl.
2. Add warm milk and mix well until you obtain a smooth, thick but spreadable paste.

How to use:

1. After cleansing, apply evenly onto your face. Avoid getting the mask into your eyes.
2. Relax and allow the mask to work on your skin for 20 to 30 minutes.
3. Wipe off with a clean tissue and rinse well.