

SPOTLIGHT

Beginner's guide to face masks

Oily skin, open pores, blackheads or acne; you name a problem, and there will be a whole army of face masks ready, from all kinds of brands, types, prices, and sometimes, even colours, to take care of it. That is how deep the world of face masks goes, and for a beginner, first steps can be a bit overwhelming. However, as you start, you shall see, there is nothing more relaxing and soothing than indulging in face masks. Face masks usually work as power cleaners or miracle healers. Whatever purpose they are serving, they will do it to the fullest, be it brightening or hydrating or cleansing. So whenever you feel like your skin could use a power clean, intense hydration or any extreme treatment, that is when you turn to face masks. Newbies, take notes.

CLEANSING AND CLEARING

Charcoal masks

Traditional charcoal has many uses, from barbecues to medical ones, this is one dirt magnet that works wonders, no matter where it is used. Charcoal masks are rather scary looking for their dark colour, but they do a wonderful job at removing impurities from your pores. As soon as the charcoal comes into contact with dirt and oil inside your skin, it gets pulled up like a magnet, and you can physically feel your skin de-clogging after a wash. This is also why charcoal masks are highly recommended for busy city dwellers, for pollution can really build up, and charcoal will be able to save the day. Brands like Bioré, L'Oreal and Freeman have great charcoal masks that are loved globally for their effectiveness, while being very affordable as well.

Clay masks

The basic job of a clay mask is to absorb oils, making it a lifesaver for those who have oily skin, or an oily t-zone. These sort of skins are more prone to breakouts, white heads and black heads, all of which can be solved by clay masks. These help to

purify your skin from deep within.

However, one common mistake with clay masks is letting them dry completely. However satisfying it may be to watch cracks form, rinse off when it is still somewhat wet. This way, you do not dry your skin out. The Aztec Secret - Indian Healing Clay is one of the most used and raved ones out there, so check it out.

Peel off masks

These masks are treatments that help to clear your pores. You apply them like any regular mask, but they soon dry to a plastic like film on the face, which you then peel off. This helps gunk and whiteheads and black heads stuck in your pores to come out along with the mask. If you want to go the extra mile for a nice Instagram photo, there are glitter peel off masks as well, which function like a regular one, but make your face look like a disco ball. Boscia, Freeman, and ELF are brands with good peel off masks.

FEEL BETTER MASKS

Jelly masks

Jelly masks get their name from its food counterpart's wobbly texture and feel. Most jelly masks are infused with fruit extracts, which will help rejuvenate your skin in multiple ways. While some come in packs, others have to be scooped out, which is a fun process by the way, and then applied on the face. This differs from your everyday masks in the way that they feel hydrating and leaves a cool sensation. The Body Shop and Lush are two brands that make jelly masks that will be fun to try out. Nature Republic also has a popular aloe gel which can be applied as an alternative.

Rubber masks

No, it is not one of those cosplay masks, but one that actually helps your skin. A staple in South Korea, the land of crazy, but good skincare inventions, this comes in powder form in small packets, designed for single uses. With the addi-

tion of water, they transform into a thick flubber like material, which you apply to your face. Small warning, it will be somewhat heavier than your average mask. Once it dries, you can peel off what comes off as a thick sheet of rubber. The tightening of the gooey substance into the rubber form tightens your skin in the process, helping it to be firm, with the result being a soft and firm skin. LINDSAY and Dr. Jart + are two Korean brands well known for their rubber masks.

EXFOLIATING MASKS

Peeling Masks

Now this does differ from your peel off mask, despite sounding similar. This helps the top layer of your skin's dead cells to peel off instead. They usually come in a thick liquid form which you apply on your face. And after some while, wash it off. Peeling masks are composed of chemical exfoliators which help to literally wipe away dead skin cells, revealing a brighter skin right after use. However, its use should be limited to once a week at maximum for its extreme exfoliating effects. The Ordinary creates a peeling solution that is very hyped and loved, named The Ordinary Aha 30% + Bha 2% Peeling Solution.

Sugar masks

Sugar masks contain sugar, along with some other medium which allows it to sit on your face. The most common mediums include, charcoal for purifying, or honey for hydrating. Sugar works as a natural physical exfoliator. By gently rubbing the sugar on your facial skin, you scrub off dead skin cell build up, which gives your face a dull outlook. It can also help scrub off whiteheads and blackheads. Freeman and Skinfood make popular sugar scrub masks you can check out.

HYDRATING MASKS

Sheet masks

By now, everyone is familiar with the sheet mask, thanks to rising Korean

skincare trends. These are sheets drenched in serums, essences and fluids of the sort. These differ from typical moisturising in the sense that the sheets are drenched in the fluid, meaning a lot of the hydration is forced into your skin at once, leaving a visible glow after use. It is important to not let the sheet dry up completely, as it will start to absorb the moisture from the skin. Instead, take it off when it is still somewhat wet, and use the residue on your neck and arms. Press the excess serum into the face and do not wash it off, trust us, you want every bit of those ingredients. Innisfree, Missha and Garnier are some of the most popular brands that make a wide range of sheet masks.

Sleeping masks

Sleeping masks are like night cream alternatives on some days, because they are usually packed with a ton of hyaluronic acid, honey and other moisturising agents that help keep the facial skin plump. You apply a thick layer and head to bed, and through the night it slowly seeps into the skin, so you literally wake up with glowing glass skin. Since this is a cream alternative, you do not have to wash it off. Famous brands for sleeping masks include COSRX, Neutrogena and LANEIGE.

SOMETHING DIFFERENT

Bubbling Masks

Some look like a face covered in shaving foam, while others look something short of a fungus, but regardless of how it looks, bubbling masks are one innovative mask trend. You apply a cream like material, which starts to fizz and forms bubbles on the face. The popping of these helps the ingredients to penetrate deep into the skin. Product wise, ELF has bubbling masks that will not break the bank.

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Photo: LS Archive/Sazzad Ibne Sayed

