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# Your Complete Oily & Congested Skin Ritual

*A step-by-step guide to balancing sebum production,  
refining pores, and achieving a clear, radiant complexion.*

*Timeless Beauty, Refined*

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If you have ever blotted your face before noon, watched foundation dissolve by lunchtime, or wonder why your skin seems to have a life of their own, you are not alone. Oily and congested skin is one of the most common and most misunderstood skin types, and the conventional wisdom surrounding it — strip the oil, dry it out, skip moisturizer — is not only outdated but actively counterproductive.

The truth is far more nuanced, and far more empowering. When you understand the science of sebum production and pore congestion, you gain the ability to work *with* your skin rather than against it. The goal is skin that is balanced, refined, and genuinely luminous — not matte to the point of lifelessness, but radiating a healthy glow that signals vitality from within.

This guide is your comprehensive roadmap. Whether you are navigating oily skin for the first time or a regimen that has never quite worked, you will find everything you need here: the science, the rituals, the ingredient adjustments that will help you reveal your most luminous complexion.



## Understanding Your Skin: The Science of Oil and Congestion

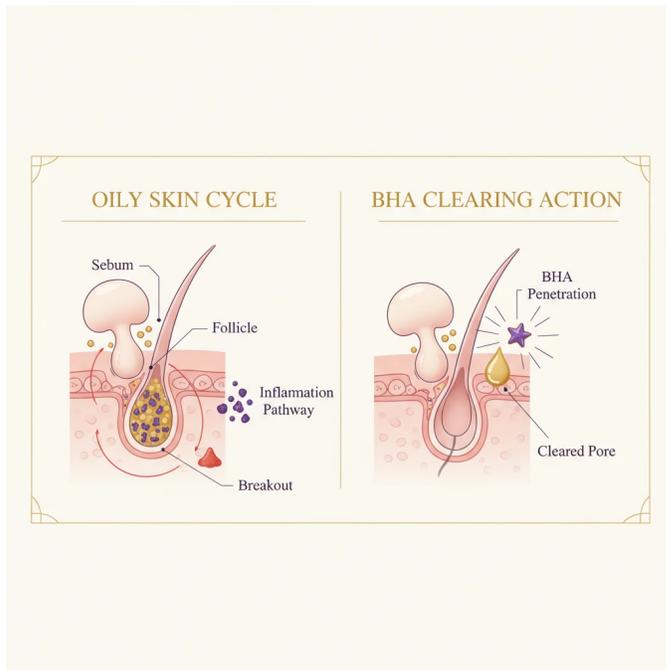
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### Oily Skin vs. Congested Skin: A Critical Distinction

Before we build your ritual, it is essential to understand that **oily skin** and **congested skin** are related — and many people experience both simultaneously.

**Oily skin** is characterized by overactive sebaceous glands. You notice a visible sheen across the T-zone, frequent cleansing, enlarged pores, and a persistent film of oil. This is primarily a function of genetics, hormones,

**Congested skin** is defined by clogged pores, textural irregularities, and a dull or bumpy appearance



## At the Cellular Level: Why Your Skin Produces Excess Oil

Your sebaceous glands produce sebum — a complex lipid mixture of triglycerides, wax esters, squalene — that waterproofs the skin, maintains the acid mantle, and provides antimicrobial defense. The highest concentration of these glands is on the face, scalp, and upper chest.

Sebum production is regulated primarily by **androgens**, particularly dihydrotestosterone (DHT). When the sebaceous glands are stimulated, the glands enlarge and increase output. This is why oily skin is common during puberty, the menstrual cycle, perimenopause, and periods of chronic stress (cortisol amplifies:

Here is where the critical insight lies: **dehydration triggers more oil production, not less.** When the outermost layer of the epidermis (the stratum corneum) lacks adequate water content, the skin interprets this as a barrier defect. The sebaceous glands compensate with additional sebum. This is why harsh, stripping cleansers often make oily skin worse. You remove the surface oil, the skin panics, and it produces even more to create a feedback loop that only intelligent hydration can break.

## Comedogenesis: How Pores Become Congested

Pore congestion, known clinically as **comedogenesis**, begins when keratinocytes lining the pore shed abnormally and become sticky — a process called *retention hyperkeratosis*. These cells bind together with sebum to form a **microcomedone**, the invisible precursor to every blackhead, whitehead, and inflammatory breakout. The microcomedone stretches the pore and creates an anaerobic environment ideal for *Cutibacterium acnes*, the bacteria that causes inflammatory acne.

The goal of an effective oily and congested skin ritual is threefold: regulate sebum production at the cellular level, clear congestion with targeted exfoliation, and maintain hydration without comedogenic ingredients that

- Visible shine across the forehead, nose, or chin within two to three hours of cleansing
- Enlarged or visible pores, particularly around the nose, inner cheeks, and chin
- Persistent blackheads that return even after extraction
- A rough or bumpy texture when you run your fingers across the skin, even in the absence of act
- Foundation or concealer that separates, slides, or appears patchy by midday
- Periodic breakouts concentrated in the T-zone or along the jawline
- A dull, sallow tone despite consistent cleansing

## Common Triggers to Address

Beyond genetics and hormones, several modifiable factors influence oily and congested skin:

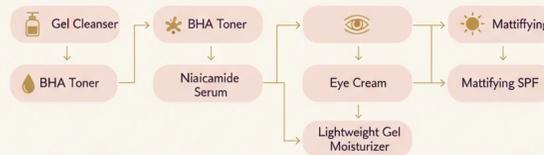
- **Over-cleansing:** Washing more than twice daily or using sulfate-heavy cleansers strips the acid reactive sebum production.
- **Heavy, occlusive creams:** Rich formulas designed for dry skin can suffocate oily skin, trapping sebum, wax or silicone.
- **Hormonal fluctuations:** Menstrual cycles, hormonal contraceptive changes, perimenopause, and stress can modulate androgen activity.
- **Stress:** Cortisol amplifies sebum output and impairs the skin barrier, compounding both oiliness and inflammation.
- **Diet:** High-glycemic foods and dairy have been associated in clinical literature with increased sebum production and comedone formation.
- **Environmental factors:** Humidity, pollution, and comedogenic sunscreen formulas can all exacerbate oily and congested skin.

# The Morning Ritual: Your AM Routine for Balanced, Refined Skin

Your morning ritual is about **protection and balance**. The goal is to gently cleanse overnight sebum for the day ahead, hydrate without heaviness, and shield the skin from UV damage and environmental stressors. Every step is intentional; none is optional.



## MORNING SKINCARE ROUTINE



## EVENING SKINCARE ROUTINE

1. Oil Cleanse
2. Gel Cleanse
3. BHA Exfoliant (3x/week)
4. Vitamin C Serum
1. Eye Cream
5. Eye Cream
6. Light Night Cream
7. Spot Treatment

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Massage onto damp skin for thirty to sixty seconds, focusing on the T-zone and congestion-prone areas. Rinse with lukewarm water — hot water stimulates the sebaceous glands.

## Step 2: Balancing Toner

A well-formulated toner rebalances the skin's pH and delivers a first layer of active ingredients. Look for **niacinamide**, **witch hazel** (alcohol-free distillate), or **centella asiatica** to calm inflammation and tighten pores. Press into the skin with clean palms or a soft cotton pad. Allow sixty seconds for absorption before the next step.

## Step 3: Niacinamide Serum

This is the cornerstone of your morning ritual. **Niacinamide at 5 to 10 percent** is one of the most well-tolerated ingredients for oily skin — clinical studies show it reduces sebum production by up to 30 percent over time, while minimizing pore appearance and strengthening the barrier.

Apply two to three drops and press gently into the skin, focusing on the T-zone and areas of visible congestion. *We recommend the [Niacinamide Brightening Serum](#) from our curated collection — formulated at a 10 percent concentration to regulate sebum while revealing a more even, luminous tone.*

## Step 4: Lightweight Eye Cream

The periorbital area has fewer sebaceous glands and requires dedicated hydration. Choose a lightweight cream with peptides or caffeine. Apply a pea-sized amount using your ring finger and pat gently along the orbital bone.

## Step 5: Oil-Free Gel Moisturizer

Even oily skin requires a moisturizer — this step is non-negotiable. Choose a **lightweight, oil-free gel moisturizer with hyaluronic acid**, which draws moisture into the skin without adding occlusive oils. Look for formulas containing glycerin, aloe vera, or squalane.

Apply a thin layer across the face and neck. The gel texture absorbs rapidly, leaving a smooth, hydrated finish. Reapply throughout the day, especially after washing your face and before applying makeup.

## Step 6: Lightweight SPF 50

For oily and congested skin, choose a **mattifying, non-comedogenic SPF 50** with a lightweight, fluid texture. Physical formulas (zinc oxide, titanium dioxide) offer natural oil-absorbing properties; chemical formulas work well, too, as long as they are non-comedogenic.

Apply generously — approximately one-quarter teaspoon for the face alone. Reapply every two hours, especially after washing your face. The right sunscreen should feel weightless, control shine, and serve as an elegant base for makeup or a natural-looking finish.

# The Evening Ritual: Your PM Routine for Deep Purification and Renewal

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Your evening ritual is about **deep cleansing, active treatment, and recovery**. This is when you remove debris of the day, deliver your most potent actives, and support the skin's natural overnight regeneration. Your evening routine is longer and more treatment-focused than the morning, and it is where the most transformation is achieved.



## Step 1: Oil Cleanse

Yes, even for oily skin. The principle is simple: **like dissolves like**. A cleansing oil formulated with light comedogenic oils (jojoba, grapeseed, or sunflower seed) dissolves sebum, sunscreen, makeup, and dirt more effectively than any water-based cleanser alone.

Apply to dry skin and massage for sixty to ninety seconds. You will feel the grit of dissolved blackheads and debris. This is precisely the point. Add a splash of water to emulsify into a milky consistency, then rinse thoroughly.

## Step 2: Gel or Foam Cleanse (Second Cleanse)

Follow immediately with your gel or foam cleanser to remove any residual oil cleanser and ensure the skin is clean. This double-cleanse method, rooted in Korean and Japanese skincare traditions, is the gold standard for congested skin. The first cleanse dissolves oil-based debris; the second cleanse addresses water-based impurities.

## Step 3: BHA Exfoliant (Three Nights Per Week)

On designated exfoliation nights (Monday, Wednesday, and Friday), apply a **salicylic acid (BHA) exfoliant**. BHA is **oil-soluble**, meaning it penetrates into the pore lining to dissolve the plugs that cause blackheads and whiteheads.

#### Step 4: Vitamin C Serum

Vitamin C (L-ascorbic acid at 10 to 20 percent) neutralizes free radical damage, inhibits melanin production, and supports collagen synthesis for a firmer texture over time.

Apply two to three drops after your exfoliant (or directly after cleansing on non-exfoliation nights). Use synergistically with niacinamide (used in the morning), creating a complementary antioxidant strategy.

*We recommend the [Vitamin C Booster Serum](#) — a stabilized, potent formula designed to brighten and soothe irritating sensitized or congested skin.*

#### Step 5: Eye Cream

Apply your lightweight eye cream, or switch to a slightly richer formula if the periorbital area tends to dry. Richer eye creams can be beneficial in the evening — introduce gradually to assess tolerance.

#### Step 6: Lightweight Night Moisturizer

Your evening moisturizer can be marginally richer than the morning formula but should still avoid heavy oils. Look for **ceramides** (barrier reinforcement), **peptides** (overnight repair), and **centella asiatica** (anti-inflammatory). A lotion or gel-cream texture is ideal.

#### Step 7: Lip Treatment

The lips lack sebaceous glands and are prone to dehydration regardless of skin type. Apply a nourishing lip balm with butter, vitamin E, or lanolin to keep the lips protected overnight.

# Weekly Treatment Schedule

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Consistency transforms routines into rituals. Use this weekly schedule to layer your treatments strategically for maximum efficacy without over-stressing the skin.

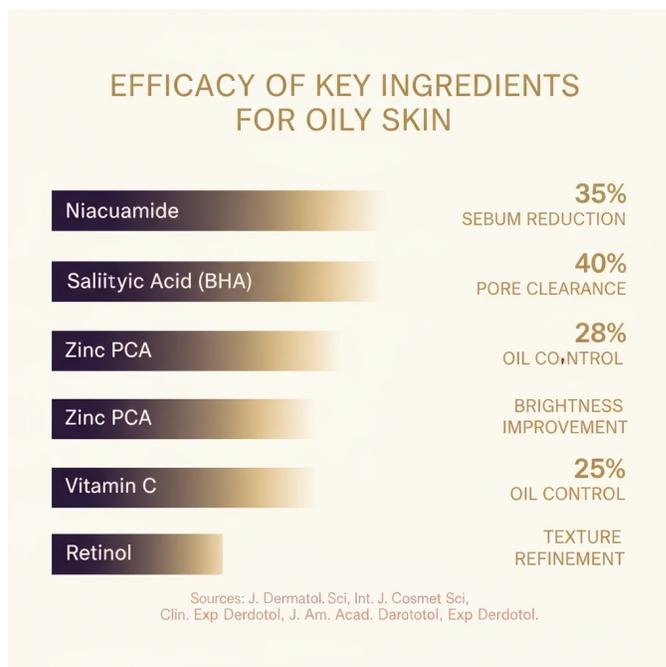
DAY	MORNING FOCUS	EVENING FOCUS	SPECIAL TREATMENT
<b>Monday</b>	Full AM ritual	Double cleanse + BHA exfoliation	Salicylic acid 2% after cleansing
<b>Tuesday</b>	Full AM ritual	Basic PM routine (no exfoliant)	Clay mask for 10 minutes before PM
<b>Wednesday</b>	Full AM ritual	Double cleanse + BHA exfoliation	Salicylic acid 2% after cleansing
<b>Thursday</b>	Full AM ritual	Basic PM routine (no exfoliant)	Rest night — focus on hydration and repair
<b>Friday</b>	Full AM ritual	Double cleanse + BHA exfoliation	BHA + pore-refining niacinamide
<b>Saturday</b>	Full AM ritual	Basic PM routine (no exfoliant)	Clay mask + extra hydrating serum
<b>Sunday</b>	Full AM ritual	Basic PM routine (no exfoliant)	Cryo globe massage (5 min) + light moisturizer

**Clay masks:** Kaolin and bentonite draw excess oil from pores. Limit to twice weekly and always follow with a hydrating serum. Apply evenly, allow eight to ten minutes (not until cracking), and rinse with lukewarm water.

**Cryo globes:** These chilled glass tools provide lymphatic massage that reduces puffiness and tempers redness. Roll in upward, outward strokes for three to five minutes as a restorative Sunday treatment.

# Ingredient Spotlight: The Science Behind Your Ritual

Understanding *why* each ingredient works empowers you to make informed choices and adapt you evolves. These five ingredients form the scientific foundation of an effective oily and congested skin i



Niacinamide (Vitamin B3)

**How to use:** Apply a 5 to 10 percent serum in the morning after toner. Pairs with virtually every other retinoids, vitamin C, and BHAs.

### Salicylic Acid (Beta Hydroxy Acid / BHA)

**What it does:** The only commonly used hydroxy acid that is **lipophilic** (oil-soluble), BHA dissolves into and exfoliates from within — while AHAs work only on the surface, BHA works *inside* the pore.

**Additional benefits:** Inherent anti-inflammatory properties (related to aspirin) and mild antibacterial activity against *Cutibacterium acnes*.

**How to use:** Apply 2 percent BHA to clean, dry skin three evenings per week. Allow five minutes for penetration once weekly if new to chemical exfoliation.

### Zinc (Zinc PCA / Zinc Gluconate)

**What it does:** Zinc is a trace mineral with powerful **anti-inflammatory and sebum-regulating** properties. Pyrrolidone carboxylic acid (PCA) has been shown in clinical studies to reduce sebum production by inhibiting 5-alpha reductase, which converts testosterone to the more potent DHT that stimulates the sebaceous glands.

**Additional benefits:** Zinc accelerates wound healing, supports the skin's innate immune defense, and has antimicrobial activity against acne-causing bacteria. It is especially valuable for oily skin that is also prone to post-inflammatory erythema.

**How to use:** Look for zinc PCA or zinc gluconate in serums, moisturizers, or targeted spot treatments with niacinamide and can be used both morning and evening.

### Green Tea Extract (Epigallocatechin Gallate / EGCG)

**What it does:** The polyphenols in green tea, particularly **EGCG**, reduce sebum production, inhibit acne, and calm inflammation. Research in the *Journal of Investigative Dermatology* found that EGCG modulates cell proliferation and lipogenesis at the cellular level.

**Additional benefits:** Broad-spectrum antioxidant protection against UV and pollution damage, redness relief, and barrier support. One of the gentlest yet most effective botanical actives for oily skin.

**How to use:** Found in toners, serums, and moisturizers. Use morning or evening. Layer with hyaluronic acid.

### Hyaluronic Acid

**What it does:** Hyaluronic acid is a naturally occurring glycosaminoglycan that holds up to **1,000 times** its weight in water. For oily skin, it provides the hydration needed to interrupt the dehydration-to-overproduction feedback loop, preventing the skin from adding oil.

**Additional benefits:** Multi-molecular-weight formulas hydrate at multiple depths. High molecular weight HA forms a breathable moisture film on the surface; low molecular weight HA penetrates deeper to plump from within.

# Seasonal Adjustments: Adapting Your Ritual Through the Year

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Your skin is a living organ that responds to environmental shifts. A ritual that works beautifully in spring refinement in the depths of winter. Here is how to adapt intelligently.

## Summer: Heat, Humidity, and UV Intensity

Warm, humid weather amplifies sebum production and increases the likelihood of sweat-related conditions. Adjust your ritual accordingly:

- **Switch to a mattifying SPF:** Choose a mineral sunscreen with oil-absorbing zinc oxide. Reapply SPF for touch-ups.
- **Carry blotting papers:** Press oil-absorbing sheets against the T-zone to remove shine without drying.
- **Lighten your layers:** A hyaluronic acid serum alone may suffice under sunscreen on particularly hot days.
- **Increase clay mask frequency:** Add a third weekly clay mask during prolonged heat.
- **Double cleanse every evening:** Sweat, sunscreen, and pollution make the double cleanse essential.

## Winter: Cold, Dry Air, and Indoor Heating

Cold weather and forced-air heating strip moisture from the skin, which can paradoxically make oily skin more sebumy as sebaceous glands overcompensate for barrier dehydration. Adjust with care:

- **Upgrade your moisturizer slightly:** Switch from a pure gel to a gel-cream with ceramides or squalene cream, just a slightly richer version of your lightweight formula.
- **Reduce exfoliation frequency:** If you notice irritation or dryness, reduce BHA from three nights to once a week.
- **Layer humectants:** Apply hyaluronic acid to damp skin and seal with moisturizer. Add a hydrating serum on dry days to counteract indoor heating.
- **Use a humidifier:** Maintain 40 to 60 percent humidity in your bedroom to reduce transepidermal water loss.
- **Maintain your SPF:** Snow reflects up to 80 percent of UV rays. Do not skip sunscreen in winter.

## Ingredients to Approach with Caution

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Not every popular ingredient suits oily and congested skin. Avoid **coconut oil** (rated 4/5 on the comedogenic scale), **denatured alcohol** (strips the barrier and triggers reactive sebum), **sodium lauryl sulfate** (over-strips the barrier), and **heavy silicone primers** (can trap debris if not double-cleansed). Fragrant essential oils like peppermint should be used sparingly, as they can inflame already-congested skin.

## A Final Word: Working With Your Skin

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Oily skin is not a flaw to be corrected. It is a skin type with distinct advantages: it tends to maintain fine lines more gracefully, and possesses a natural luminosity that drier skin types work diligently to eliminate oil — it is to **regulate** it, keep pores clear, and ensure the skin beneath is hydrated, nourished, and protected.

When you achieve this balance, shine transforms into glow, texture smooths into refinement, and the luminous vitality that has been there all along. Be patient with the process. Allow four to eight weeks before evaluating a new routine. Trust the science. Honor the ritual.

Timeless beauty, refined.

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