

ACID HOUSE!

THEY MAY SOUND SCARY, BUT ACID-BASED FORMULAS ACTUALLY GENTLY EXFOLIATE, HYDRATE AND REFINE YOUR SKIN'S TEXTURE

WORDS NATALIE LUKAITIS

BEST FOR... BRIGHTENING

Aka vitamin C. While there are many beneficial forms of this vitamin, ascorbic acid is the superstar because it's pure, whereas other forms, such as ascorbyl tetra-isopalmitoyl, are derivatives and therefore less powerful. 'Not only is ascorbic acid a great antioxidant capable of neutralising free radical damage caused by pollution and UV, it's also essential for the synthesis of collagen, which gives your skin its bounce,' says Lorraine Scrivener of Eden Skin Clinics. Add to that vitamin C's ability to brighten your skin and improve hydration by boosting collagen production – which in turn helps cell turnover – and you have a savvy ingredient on your hands (or face). **APPLY:** Opt for a serum that targets skin's deeper layers. Apply in the morning, post-cleansing and pre-SPF, to safeguard against environmental aggressors.

TRY: Kiehl's Powerful-Strength Line-Reducing Concentrate, £49.50 [1]. **Exuviance** AF Vitamin C20 Serum Capsules, £59 [2].

BEST FOR... EXFOLIATION

Glycolic (sugar cane), lactic (milk) and citric (fruit) acids are all alpha hydroxy acids (AHAs). Their structure allows for gentle

exfoliation when applied to skin's surface. 'AHAs are similar to salicylic acid [more of which later] but, as they're water-soluble, they can't break down oil, so work on the surface of your skin, not in your pores,' explains Lorraine. This makes them a better choice for people with normal to dry skin, rather than those prone to acne.

APPLY: The most effective AHAs are non-rinse formulas, such as serums, lotions and masks, but their potency can cause mild irritation. Sensitive skins should test the waters with an AHA-based cleanser first.

TRY: Elemis Dynamic Resurfacing Facial Pads, £39 [3]. **Lancer** Retexturizing Cream, £70 [4].

BEST FOR... REGENERATION

Found in the cell walls of plants, this acid plays a key role in protection, helping skin defend itself against free radicals. It works like ascorbic acid, while also assisting in skin's regenerative process. 'Ferulic acid has the ability to stabilise other highly oxidative agents, like vitamins C and E, so is great as

large to penetrate deep into your dermis if applied via a cream, so can only provide instant hydration rather than long-term results, which require a diet rich in veg, vitamins and minerals, as well as applying creams based on ascorbic and retinoic acid to trigger your natural HA production.

APPLY: In the morning, evening, or both. A solution that's 1% HA is the safest and most effective. If it's a serum, apply before moisturiser, to seal it in. If it's a cream or gel, apply it as you would your daily moisturiser.

TRY: Neutrogena Hydro Boost Body Gel Cream, £4.99 [8]. **Boots** Smoothing Concentrate, £12.99 [9]. **La Roche-Posay** HyaluB5 Hyaluronic Acid Serum, £37 [10].

BEST FOR... PIGMENTATION

Also known as Retin-A, this powerful, prescription-only form of vitamin A is proven to stimulate cell renewal, making it a great solution for pigmentation problems, improving skin texture and combating acne. 'Often prescribed by dermatologists, this agent is one of the most beneficial in the "acid house",' reveals Lorraine. 'But, due to its ability to increase cell turnover, your skin may become sensitive and you may experience some shedding when you first use it.' Much like gentler over-the-counter retinol (which converts into retinoic acid once in contact with specific enzymes in the

skin), it should be used overnight (when your skin is in repair mode) and always followed with an SPF of at least 30 the next day to avoid damaging new skin cells.

APPLY: After your evening cleanse, use a pea-sized amount on dry skin. If it's an over-the-counter retinol, wait at least 10 minutes to allow those enzymes to convert effectively. Then follow with a hydrating moisturiser to help control any dryness.

TRY: Zelens Power A Treatment Drops, £115 [11]. **Tata Harper** Retinoic Face Oil, £109 [12]. **Murad** Retinol Youth Renewal Serum, £70 [13].

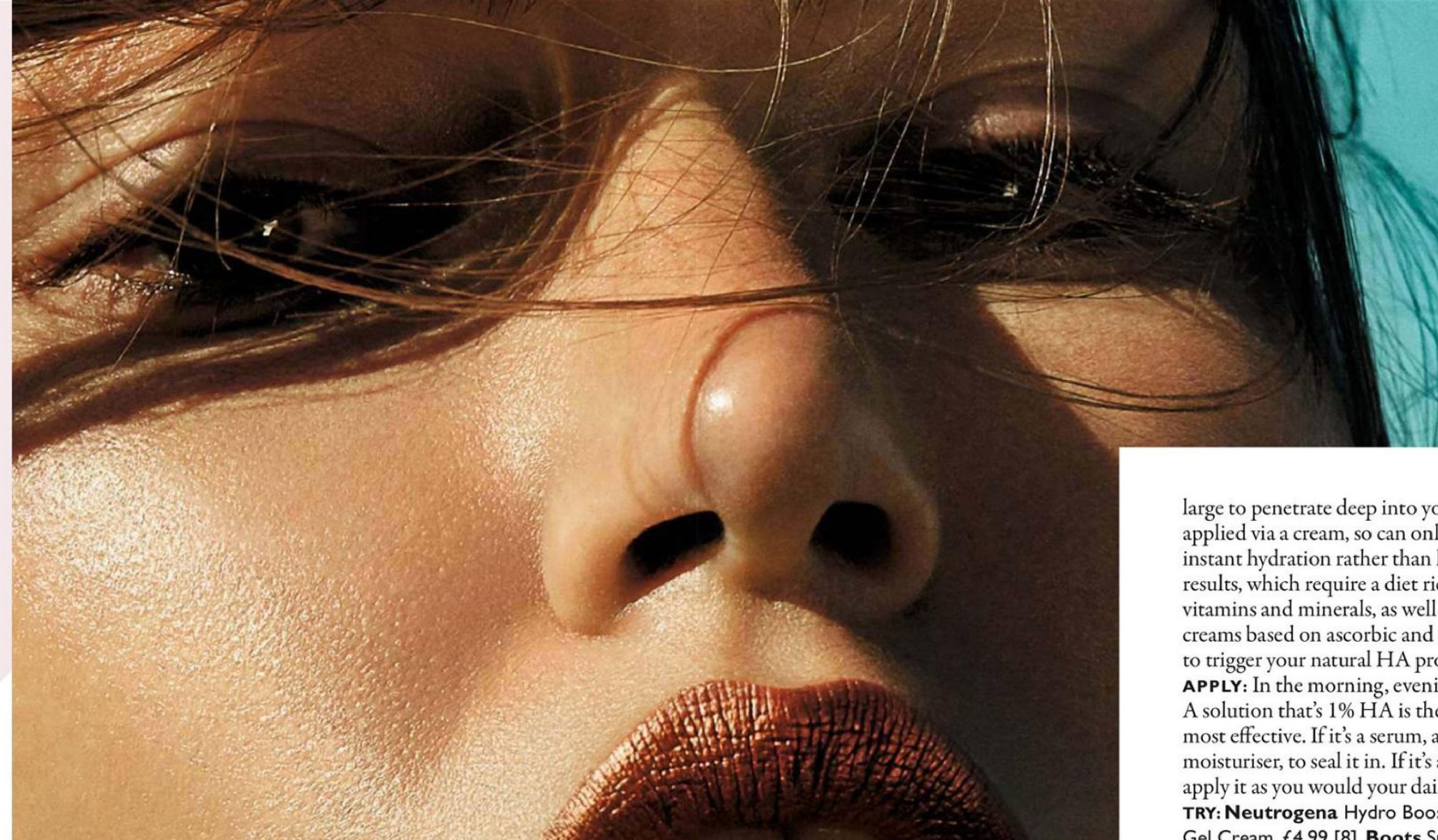
BEST FOR... DEEPER CLEANING

This is acne's enemy, thanks to its exfoliating nature and structure, which allows it to get deeper into the skin to encourage clogged up pores to self-clean. 'Salicylic acid is more oil-soluble so it can penetrate pores and dissolve the "glue" that holds dead skin cells together,' explains Lorraine. 'It can also help reduce excess sebum production (a common cause of breakouts) and it is also anti-inflammatory, which helps calm angry spots.'

APPLY: Start with a face wash containing 2% salicylic acid. Or, if you're breakout-prone, choose a targeted spot treatment.

TRY: Malin + Goetz Salicylic Gel, £18 [14]. **Clinique** Blackhead Solutions 7 Day Deep Pore Cleanse & Scrub, £19.50 [15]. **Mario Badescu** Anti-Acne Serum, £19 [16].

BEAUTY



a combination in serums,' adds Lorraine. **APPLY:** In the morning with vitamins C and E so it can protect against free radicals. **TRY:** Skinceuticals C E Ferulic, £135 [5]. The Ordinary Resveratrol 3% + Ferulic Acid 3%, £5.50 [6]. Dr Dennis Gross Ferulic + Retinol Eye Cream, £68 [7].

BEST FOR... HYDRATION

Is your skin as parched as you are after too many martinis? This hydrating powerhouse can hold 1,000 times its own weight in water. 'Hyaluronic acid (HA) is naturally found in skin cells and increases skin's elasticity by boosting collagen production and maintaining water,' says Lorraine. Sadly, as we age, HA production declines. 'This is when topical forms of HA come into play, acting like a sponge to draw water to your cells, rehydrating and plumping them while improving texture and the appearance of fine lines.' That said, HA molecules are too

