



WHAT IS AN ESSENCE?

Essence has been heralded as the latest must-have in skin care. Does it deliver—and should you be adding this extra step to your daily routine? *By Toni Negas*

Revolutionary in its formulation, a category of product called essence is emerging on the market in various forms, for many budgets. All the hype makes us wonder if it's worth the investment, in order to boost a dull complexion. Upon first glance, we have to shout a resounding, "Yes!" While the moniker "essence" seems to be the brainchild of an inspired marketing guru, this serum walks the talk, delivering radiance while targeting dark spots, wrinkles, and fine lines.

Essence is often referred to as a serum or toner, yet it is actually neither. "The biggest difference is the specific purpose of what each formulation is designed to do," notes Clyde Ross, the founder and creator of AspireLIFE Anti-Aging Skin Care. "A serum is designed to do one thing, such as moisturize, prevent wrinkles, or remove age spots. Typically, a serum, as with an essence, contains active ingredients for deep penetration," explains Ross. "However, a serum must be used with

other products to achieve total skin care, such as moisturizer, which goes on post-serum. AspireLIFE's Essential Essence, however, includes six different moisturizers and doesn't require the use of any other product for complete skin care."

This power-packed, water-like formula is applied after cleansing and toning the skin, and may be used in place of a moisturizer before applying makeup. Its watery consistency can be deceiving: This is a highly concentrated formula delivering a high level of impact that penetrates the skin quickly. Its active ingredients, meanwhile, treat skin at the cellular level. It's an ultra-lightweight beauty option that bestows hydration upon those of us who don't like slathering on thick lotions, especially in warm weather.

With all its benefits, essence is your latest, greatest essential—and that's poised to revolutionize your skin-care routine. 

AN ESSENCE FOR YOU

SK-II Facial Treatment Essence

More than 90 percent Pitera is included as the main ingredient in this cult favorite. Pitera, derived from yeast created during the fermentation process of sake, was first discovered after researchers noticed that Japanese sake producers' hands are extremely soft. This essence moisturizes, improves texture and clarity, and contributes to a glowing complexion (\$165 for 5 oz. sephora.com).

AspireLIFE Brightening Essence

Reduce dark spots and uneven skin tone with this high-quality formulation that delivers vitamin C and over 15 marine, floral, and natural ingredients. While vitamin C can require up to six hours for maximum penetration into the skin, the oxysomes in this formula allow penetration within the first hour and increase the bioavailability by 85 percent to prevent and repair hyperpigmentation (\$50. aspirelife.com).

DHC Beauty Lift Essence

This turbocharged, silky-soft serum hydrates and readies your skin for moisturizer. This essence provides vital hydration to promote a more lifted-looking

complexion. Diminish the look of lines with this advanced formula of botanical oat kernel extract and peptides for a complexion that appears smoother, firmer, and more lifted (\$49. dhccare.com).

MIYU Hydrate Mi Beauty Essence Mini

Part-serum, part-mist, MIYU essences are formulated with wild pansies, proven to boost hydration by 20 percent in 28 days. Powerful Asian botanicals and five essential minerals soothe stressed complexions and target lifestyle concerns such as dehydration or stress. Meanwhile, the travel-friendly size makes it even easier to take your favorite essence with you wherever you go (\$15. miyubeauty.com).

Estée Lauder Micro Essence Skin Activating Lotion

The groundbreaking science behind this essence-in-lotion strengthens skin's foundation to reveal a youthful glow. In two weeks, skin is hydrated, smooth, and supple. In four weeks, 94 percent of women said their skin looked healthier and more beautiful. A concentration of micro-nutrients activate multiple natural, pro-youth abilities to replenish skin (\$95. nordstrom.com).

