

Skin Care Fundamentals: Toners

by Emma Hobson

Many think it's not important to use a toner and consider it a waste, when in fact it is a valuable step of any skin care routine. This misconception is due to the traditional function of an old fashioned toner.

Toners originally were developed to "remove" Mineral Oil-based cleansers. Since Mineral Oil cannot be washed off the skin, and traditional cleansers were lathered off, a toner had to contain SD Alcohol to remove the cleanser and Mineral Oil. But an issue arose: many people found the SD Alcohol irritating and drying to their skin, so they avoided using a toner.

Spritz toners then started to emerge, which were designed with skin function in mind:

- To boost the moisture content of the skin, reducing dehydration.
- To calm and freshen the skin with plant botanicals.
- To even out the skin's surface porosity to balance out dry patches.
- To introduce water soluble active ingredients into the skin.
- To reduce the amount of moisturizer required.

Spray toners are usually the easiest and most effective way to tone. Spritzing with a hydrating toner adds essential moisture to the skin and helps your other products to absorb evenly. After you've toned and you're ready to apply your moisturizer, you should only need a small, pea sized amount. If you skip the toner you'll find you need to add more moisturizer to get the same result.

The added benefit of a spray toner is that you can keep a travel size in your bag and freshen and hydrate your skin throughout the day (yes you can spritz over make-up!).

Choosing the Ideal Toner

There is an array of toners now available, and choosing the correct one can be confusing. As a quick guide, look for toners that:

- Spray on. They are much easier to apply and you get full use of the product.
- Contain Hyaluronic Acid. This is a mega performing ingredient that holds a 1,000 times its own weight in water and is dynamic for hydrating the skin.
- Contain active ingredients that work with the condition of your skin.
- Contain antioxidants to help protect the skin against oxidative injury.
- Contain anti-inflammatory and soothing ingredients to help soothe and calm skin.
- Are artificial fragrance and SD Alcohol free.

Do Water Spritzers Act as Toners?

Not really. Simply spraying a fine mist of water on the skin is not sufficient to hydrate it. In fact, water evaporates off the skin's surface (as it doesn't contain moisture binding humectants), which can actually result in dehydration.

So the next time you question whether "to tone or not to tone," The answer is simply a resounding YES!