

allure

JOIN NOW

SIGN IN



NEWSLETTER

BEST OF BEAUTY

NEWS

SKIN

MAKEUP

HAIR

NAILS

WELLNESS

SHOPPING

ALLURE BEAUTY BOX

NEWSLETTER

SHOP
allure

SHOP BLACK FRIDAY

EARLY DEALS

K-BEAUTY EVERYTHING

GET GIFTING

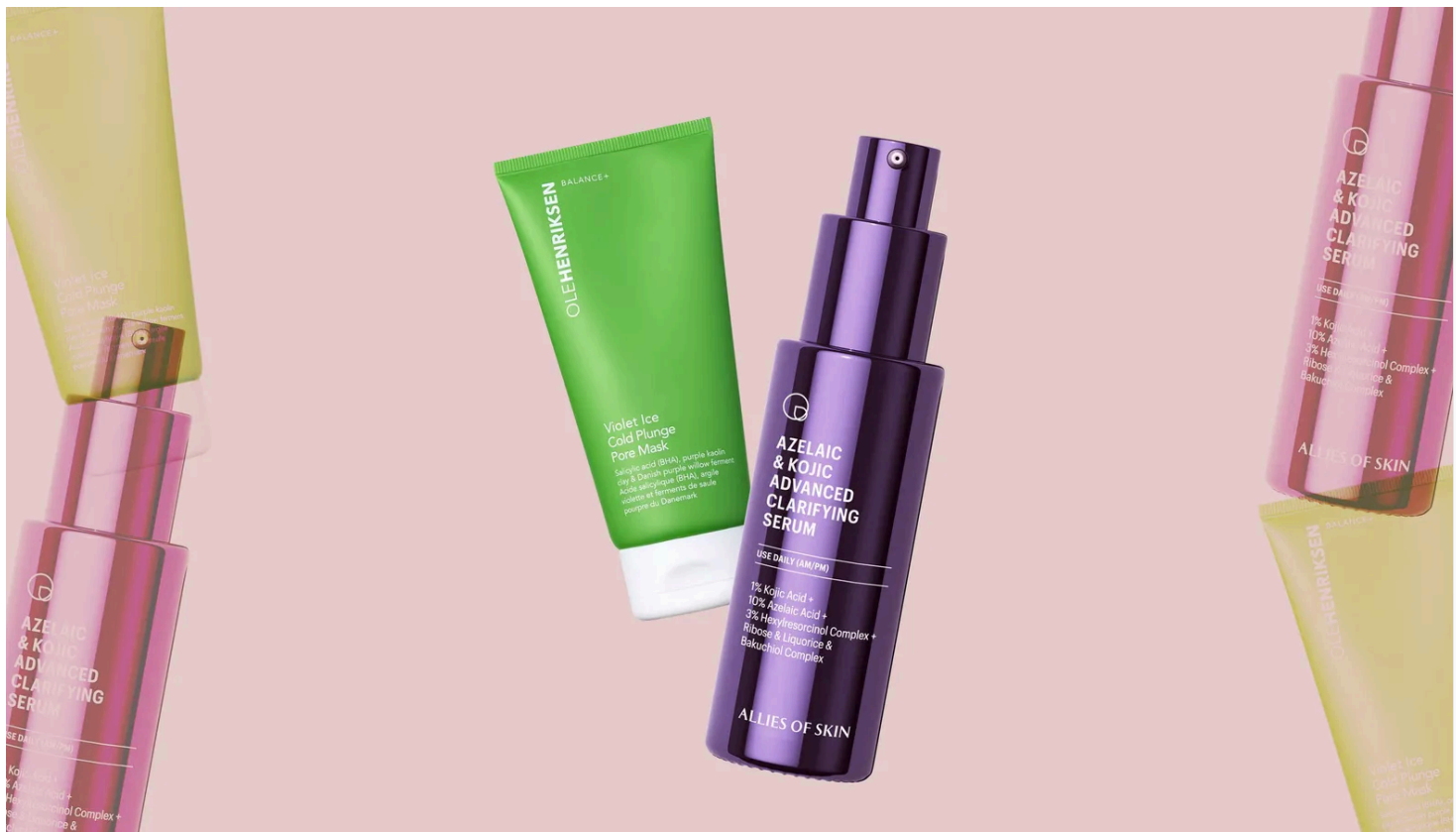
CLEAR DAYS AHEAD

10 Best Blackhead Remover Treatments to Deep-Clean Your Pores

They keep things clear, whether you're looking gentle exfoliation or a powerful solution.

BY CHRISTA JOANNA LEE

November 20, 2025



Collage: Valerie Ordonez; Source images: Courtesy of brands

 **SAVE THIS STORY**

All products featured on Allure are independently selected by our editors. However, we may receive compensation from retailers and/or from purchases of products through these links.

Oh, **blackheads**—the tiny, stubborn dots that just won't take a hint. But they're about to meet their match with the best blackhead remover treatments, which are the real deal and beloved by dermatologists. Whether they're

popping up on your nose, chin, or somewhere in between, “in essence, blackheads are clogged pores,” says **Saami Khalifian**, MD, board-certified dermatologist in San Diego, CA. “They look black because the oil and dead skin cells are trapped inside the pore and are oxidized by exposure to air, turning the plug a darker color.”



There’s an argument for letting blackheads chill. "If your blackheads aren’t inflamed or causing discomfort, it’s generally fine to leave them be," says **Adam Mamelak**, MD, a board-certified dermatologist based in Georgetown and Cedar Park, Texas. But if you have enough of them—and let them go for long enough—they can have surprisingly big consequences for your skin. For one, they can lead to pimples, including cysts beneath the skin, as well as enlarged pores. And, "as they oxidize, they may also darken and become more noticeable, potentially altering skin texture in ways that are harder to reverse later on," Dr. Mamelak says.

Get the Skin Check Newsletter

An insider's guide to all things skin care. We got you covered.



SIGN UP

By signing up, you agree to our [user agreement](#) (including [class action waiver and arbitration provisions](#)), and acknowledge our [privacy policy](#).

Top Blackhead Remover Treatments

- **Best Face Exfoliant:** [SkinMedica AHA/BHA Exfoliating Cleanser](#), \$48
- **Best Face Mask:** [Ole Henriksen Violet Ice Cold Plunge Pore Clay Mask](#), \$42
- **Best Toner:** [Paula’s Choice Skin Perfecting 2% BHA Liquid Exfoliant](#), \$37
- **Best Pore Strips:** [Bioré Oil Control Charcoal Deep Cleansing Pore Strips](#), \$16
- **Best Exfoliating Pads:** [ZO Skin Health Complexion Renewal Pads](#), \$63
- **Best for Mature Skin:** [SkinCeuticals Blemish + Age Defense](#), \$115
- **Best Tool:** [Dermaflash Dermopore+ Ultrasonic Pore Extractor + Skincare Infuser](#), \$10

The good news? From gentle exfoliating cleansers to deep-cleansing [masks for clogged pores](#), these treatments do more than just provide a quick fix. They clear out existing blackheads and stop new ones from forming, leaving your skin smoother, clearer, and less prone to congestion over time.

Frequently Asked Questions



- [What is the best thing to remove blackheads?](#)

- Which tool is best to remove blackheads?
- How do you remove a blackhead that won't come out?
- Meet the experts
- How we test and review products
- Our staff and testers

Best Face Exfoliant: SkinMedica AHA/BHA Exfoliating Cleanser



SKINMEDICA
AHA/BHA Exfoliating Cleanser

\$48 AMAZON
\$48 DERMSTORE
\$48

Allure contributing commerce editor Deanna Pai applying SkinMedica's AHA + BHA Exfoliating Cleanser Deanna Pai

Why it's worth it: If large pores and blackheads are putting a cramp in your glow, consider SkinMedica AHA/BHA Exfoliating Cleanser, which is loved by dermatologists because it blends chemical and physical exfoliants to deliver a deep clean without stripping your skin. It uses a combination of alpha-hydroxy acids (AHAs), beta-hydroxy acids (BHAs), and jojoba beads to gently polish skin, according to Dr. Mamelak. ("BHA is lipid-soluble, so it penetrates deeper into the pores for a thorough cleanse, making it ideal for oily and combination skin types," [Joyce Park](#), MD, board-certified dermatologist, [previously told Allure](#).)

And, according to Dr. Mamelak, it doesn't just clear out congestion, but also helps prevent it. "The formula works to unclog pores and stop blackheads before they form by reducing the oxidation of sebum, which makes oil less sticky and less likely to get trapped," he says.

Tester feedback from contributing commerce editor [Deanna Pai](#)



More to know



Best Face Mask: Ole Henriksen Violet Ice Cold Plunge Pore Clay Mask

**OLE HENRIKSEN**

Violet Ice Cold Plunge Pore Clay Mask

\$42
ULTA BEAUTY**\$42**
SEPHORA

Allure commerce writer Lily Wohlner applying the Ole Henriksen Cold Plunge Pore Clay Mask Lily Wohlner

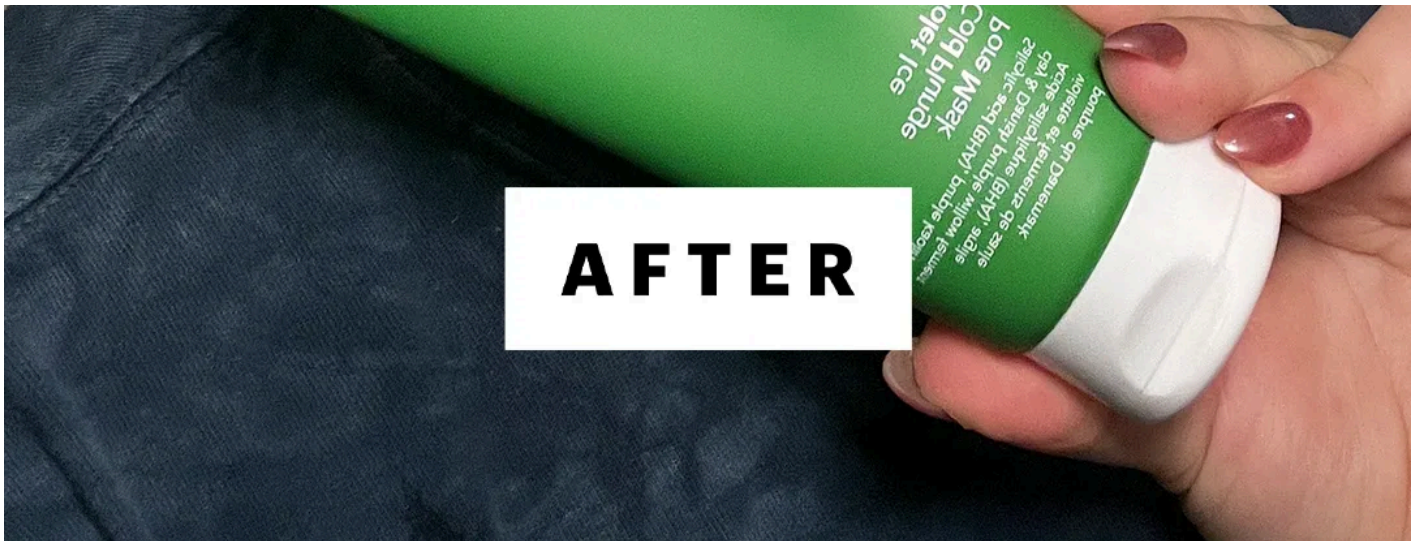
Why it's worth it: You know how splashing cold water on your face instantly wakes you up? This mask delivers that same refreshing *ahhh* moment. Ole Henriksen's Violet Ice Cold Plunge Pore Mask cools on contact as it works to clear congested skin (and the vibrant purple hue doubles as a very fun selfie moment). As it dries to a marbled finish, kaolin and purple clay soak up excess oil and debris, while salicylic acid dives deep to clear out stubborn blackheads. Purple willow ferment adds a soothing touch to calm inflammation and keep shine under control—all in just 15 minutes.





Wohlner before applying the Ole Henriksen Cold Plunge Pore Clay Mask Lily Wohlner





Wohlner after applying the Ole Henriksen Cold Plunge Pore Clay Mask Lily Wohlner

Tester feedback from commerce writer [Lily Wohlner](#)



More to know



Best Toner: Paula's Choice Skin Perfecting 2% BHA Liquid Exfoliant

**PAULA'S CHOICE**

Skin Perfecting 2% BHA Liquid Exfoliant

**\$37
AMAZON****\$37
DERMSTORE****\$37
PAULA'S CHOICE**

Pai applying the Paula's Choice Skin Perfecting 2% BHA Liquid Exfoliant Deanna Pai

Why it's worth it: We editors at *Allure* tend to give a healthy side-eye to anything that claims to “perfect” skin, but Paula’s Choice Skin Perfecting 2% BHA Liquid Exfoliant has been earning that name for decades. The 2025 **Readers' Choice Award** winner features 2% salicylic acid to smooth uneven texture and clear congested pores. “It works by penetrating and exfoliating your pores from the inside out,” says **Maryam Safaei**, MD, a board-certified dermatologist based in Los Angeles, noting that it’s lightweight, fragrance-free, and absorbs quickly without leaving any residue. It helps prevent future blackheads, too, “thanks to its ability to dissolve trapped oil and debris,” adds

Ryan Turner, MD, a board-certified dermatologist based in New York City. Green tea and methylpropanediol offer soothing, hydrating support, making this a go-to for oily, blemish-prone, and combination skin types. Sensitive skin? Start slow.





Pai before applying the Paula's Choice Skin Perfecting 2% BHA Liquid Exfoliant Deanna Pai





Pai after applying the Paula's Choice Skin Perfecting 2% BHA Liquid Exfoliant Deanna Pai

Tester feedback from contributing commerce editor **Deanna Pai**



More to know



Best Pore Strips: Bioré Oil Control Charcoal Deep Cleansing Pore Strips





BIORÉ
Oil Control Charcoal Deep Cleansing Pore Strips

~~\$16~~ \$14 (13% OFF)
AMAZON

\$15
WALMART

Why it's worth it: Bioré Pore Strips deliver that same Band-Aid-ripping satisfaction of seeing every last blackhead come off your nose—but this charcoal version takes the oddly addictive ritual to the next level. Made for oily and combination skin, the strips mold snugly to your nose and get to work in just 10 minutes. The charcoal acts like an oil-absorbing magnet, drawing out hardened sebum and surface debris so the strip can grab onto blackheads more effectively. “They use patented C-bond technology to bind onto blackheads and not the skin,” says [Debbie Palmer](#), a board-certified dermatologist based in Harrison, New York. And while they’re incredibly budget-friendly, “the exfoliation is superficial—meaning regular use is key to maintaining those satisfying results,” she says.

More to know



Best Exfoliating Pads: ZO Skin Health Complexion Renewal Pads 60 Pads



ZO SKIN HEALTH
Complexion Renewal Pads 60 Pads

\$63
ZO SKIN HEALTH

Why it's worth it: If it's been a minute since you've reached for these Complexion Renewal Pads, ZO Skin Health has replaced the old microplastic pads with 100% plant-based viscose—same tried-and-true formula, just a more earth-friendly delivery system. What really sets them apart is the exfoliating duo of glycolic acid for brightening and salicylic acid for deep pore clearing and oil control. “They’re very easy to use, and the salicylic acid reduces skin-cell ‘stickiness’ to both prevent blackheads and improve the ones you already have,” says Dr. Humphrey. If a swipe-and-go routine is your vibe, you’ll appreciate how convenient these pre-soaked pads make your daily reset.

More to know



Best Tool: Dermaflash Dermopore+ Ultrasonic Pore Extractor + Skincare Infuser



DERMAFLASH

Dermopore+ Ultrasonic Pore Extractor + Skincare Infuser

\$109 \$76 (30% OFF) AMAZON
\$109 NORDSTROM
\$109 DERMSTORE

Why it’s worth it: Have you secretly always wanted to play esthetician? Dermaflash’s Dermapore+ is a safe, at-home gadget to try. This two-in-one tool offers Extract mode to unclog pores and Infuse mode to help serums sink in more effectively. “The spatula delivers gentle vibration through ultrasonic wave technology to loosen dirt, oil, and dead skin cell accumulation in the pores,” says Dr. Palmer. With the highest ultrasonic speed (35K Hz) available in an extraction tool, it’s powerful yet pain-free and works for all skin types—just be sure to keep your skin damp (the included prep mist helps create the slip it needs to glide). “This tool stands out because it delivers instant results. My patients always comment on how much smaller their pores look with it,” she adds.

More to know ▼

Best Cleanser: Glytone Acne Self Foaming Cleanser





GLYTONE
Acne Self Foaming Cleanser

\$40
DERMSTORE

Why it's worth it: If you have oily or breakout-prone skin and need an everyday cleanser that won't leave your face feeling tight or stripped, Glytone Acne Self Foaming Cleanser is a great place to start. "It uses a mild 0.5% salicylic acid to keep pores clear without overwhelming your skin. I recommend this after you've effectively treated blackheads but need a gentle cleanser to prevent recurrent flares—this is your product," says Dr. Safaee. She notes that it's gentle enough to use twice daily, and, for a little extra oomph, "you can leave the cleanser on for 30–60 seconds before rinsing." It's a steady, reliable wash that helps keep oil and congestion in check day after day.

More to know



Best Face Serum: Allies of Skin Azelaic & Kojic Advanced Clarifying Serum

**ALLIES OF SKIN**

Azelaic & Kojic Advanced Clarifying Serum

~~\$99~~ \$74 (25% OFF)
AMAZON**\$99**
NORDSTROM**\$99**
DERMSTORE

Why it's worth it: So, how can a single serum take on blackheads, whiteheads, enlarged pores, excess sebum, uneven texture, dullness, *and* dark spots all at once? With a cocktail of powerhouse ingredients, naturally. Allies of Skin's Azelaic & Kojic Advanced Clarifying Serum “combines 10% **azelaic acid** to reduce buildup in the pores, 1% **kojic acid** to brighten discoloration from acne marks, and a hexylresorcinol complex for gentle exfoliation,” says Dr. Safae. But like most effective treatments, it rewards consistency: “It usually takes about four weeks to start noticing a difference, but with continued use, most see results within eight weeks,” she adds. If you're after clearer, smoother, more even-toned skin in a single step, this multitasker is at least worth the fifteen seconds it takes to apply.

More to know**Best for Mature Skin: SkinCeuticals Blemish + Age Defense**



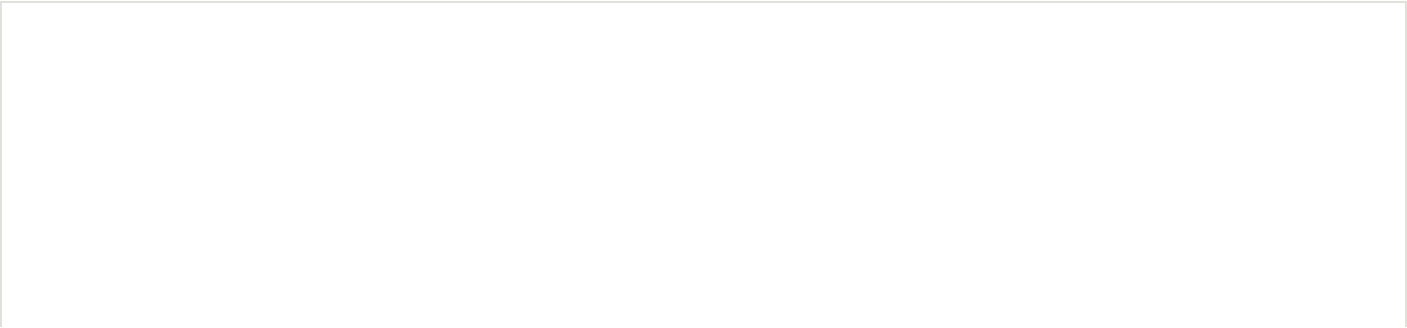
SKINCEUTICALS
Blemish + Age Defense

\$115 SKINCEUTICALS
\$115 DERMSTORE
\$115 BLU MERCURY

Why it’s worth it: While most people associate acne with their teenage years, breakouts and fine lines can absolutely coexist (we never said life was fair). For mature, blemish-prone skin, SkinCeuticals’ Blemish + Age Defense addresses both concerns in a single step. “This oil-free serum is very lightweight and uses both AHAs and BHAs to help unclog pores, but also improve the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles,” says **Shannon Humphrey**, MD, a board-certified dermatologist based in British Columbia, Canada. The formula layers dioic acid to reduce excess oil, salicylic acid to clear blackheads and prevent new blemishes, and glycolic and citric acids to smooth texture and brighten tone. If you’re into products that multitask, this one is a one-two punch.

More to know ▼

Best Drugstore: La Roche-Posay Effaclar Adapalene Gel 0.1% Retinoid Acne Treatment



**LA ROCHE-POSAY**

Effaclar Adapalene Gel 0.1% Retinoid Acne Treatment

\$40
AMAZON**\$40**
DERMSTORE**\$41**
ULTA BEAUTY

Why it's worth it: Once upon a time, adapalene was only available with a prescription—so when it finally arrived over the counter, we knew we'd be in good hands with a sensitive-skin-friendly drugstore favorite like La Roche-Posay. Effaclar Adapalene Gel 0.1% keeps things refreshingly simple with an eight-ingredient formula. “It's effective at reducing clogged pores, blackheads and whiteheads, and improving texture—all with generally less irritation than some older retinoids,” says Dr. Safae. The lightweight gel absorbs quickly, plays well with most moisturizers, and makes nightly retinoid use feel far less intimidating. For anyone navigating breakouts without wanting to wreck their barrier, this is a smart place to start.

More to know

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the best thing to remove blackheads?

The best way to remove blackheads is by using **exfoliating ingredients**, regulating oil production, and keeping pores clear. **Salicylic acid** is particularly effective because it penetrates deep into pores “because it can penetrate into the pores to break down the plugs of oil and dead skin,” says Dr. Khalifian.

Glycolic acid also provides gentle exfoliation at the surface, preventing dead skin from clogging pores. “Adding glycolic acid to your skincare regimen will help prevent the formation of blackheads by gently exfoliating the skin,” he adds. **Retinoids** also play a key role by boosting cell turnover, helping to clear existing blackheads and prevent new ones.

For deeper purification, clay-based ingredients like kaolin and bentonite absorb oil and detoxify pores, while charcoal works to pull out impurities. Gentle physical exfoliants can also help polish away dead skin without irritation. Pore strips might give you that weirdly satisfying instant gratification by pulling out surface-level blackheads, but for the long haul, a solid routine with these powerhouse ingredients is the real game-changer—keeping your skin smooth, clear, and totally congestion-free.

Which tool is best to remove blackheads?

While **blackhead remover tools** may seem like a quick fix, they often do more harm than good. If not done correctly, squeezing or picking at blackheads at home can lead to inflammation, scarring, and even bacterial infections. “I always recommend that my patients come to the office for any extractions,” says Dr. Khalifian. “A comedone extractor can safely remove blackheads if used correctly.”

If you're thinking your fingers might be better, the answer is no, since you risk bacterial infection (eek), inflammation (ack), and scarring (ugh). “Avoid using fingernails, pins, or unsterile tools you might have at home,” adds Dr. Mamelak. “These approaches can damage the skin, leading to additional breakouts and even scarring.”

Instead of relying on tools, a consistent skin-care routine with the right ingredients—like salicylic acid, glycolic acid, and retinoids—is the safest and most effective way to clear blackheads and prevent new ones from forming.

How do you remove a blackhead that won't come out?

If a blackhead won't come out, don't force it—squeezing can lead to inflammation, scarring, or even push debris deeper into the pore. Instead, focus on a consistent skincare routine with salicylic acid to dissolve oil buildup and retinoids to speed up cell turnover. “Stubborn blackheads can be frustrating, but if it's not ready to come out, don't force it!” says Dr. Khalifian. “Start using a salicylic acid-based cleanser and retinoid cream regularly to soften the plug.” Glycolic or lactic acid can also help exfoliate the surface, while clay masks absorb excess oil. “For persistent blackheads, consult a dermatologist or esthetician for professional extractions or exfoliating treatments,” he says.

Meet the experts

- **Shannon Humphrey**, MD, a board-certified dermatologist and co-founder of Humphrey & Beleznyay Cosmetic Dermatology, based in British Columbia, Canada
- **Saami Khalifian**, MD, a board-certified dermatologist and founder of SOM Aesthetics in San Diego, CA
- **Adam Mamelak**, MD, a board-certified dermatologist at Westlake Dermatology in Georgetown and Cedar Park, Texas
- **Debbie Palmer**, a board-certified dermatologist and co-founder of Dermatology Associates of New York, based in Harrison, New York
- **Joyce Park**, MD, a board-certified dermatologist and founder of virtual dermatology clinic **Skin Refinery**
- **Maryam Safaee**, MD, a board-certified dermatologist based in Los Angeles
- **Ryan Turner**, MD, a board-certified dermatologist and founder of **Turner Dermatology**, based in New York City

How we test and review products

When *Allure* tests a product, our editors look at it from every angle in an effort to best serve you. We review ingredients, scrutinize brand claims, and, when necessary, examine peer-reviewed scientific and medical studies. In addition to testing each and every product that's included in each and every review, we rely on experts who shape their fields, including dermatology, cosmetic chemistry, and medicine, to help us vet the ingredients and formulas.

For our list of the best blackhead-remover treatments, we considered each product's performance across five primary categories: product ingredients and efficacy, packaging, fragrance, texture, and product wear. Every product was determined to have excelled in each category by our editorial team, which is composed of in-house writers and editors as well as contributors—along with special consideration from board-certified dermatologists. To learn more information on our reporting and testing processes, read our complete reviews process and methodology page.

Our staff and testers

A beauty product is a personal purchase. You might be searching for a face cream to address persistent dryness or a new nail product to add to your Sunday self-care routine; you may simply be browsing around for the latest launches to hit the hair market. No matter what you seek or your individual needs and concerns, *Allure* wants to ensure that you love anything we recommend in our stories. We believe that having a diverse team of writers and editors—in addition to the wide range of outside testers and industry experts we regularly call upon—is essential to reaching that goal.

After all, can we *really* say a skin-care product is the "best" for people over 50 if the only testers we've solicited opinions from folks who have yet to hit 30? Can we honestly deem a high-end diffuser worthy of your hard-earned cash if it's never been tested on curls? We're proud that our staff spans a wide range of ages, skin tones, hair textures, genders, and backgrounds, which means that we are able to fairly assess any beauty product that comes into the beauty closet.

Bid acne adieu with these editor- and dermatologist-approved solutions:

- [17 Best Face Washes for Acne-Prone Skin, According to Dermatologists](#)
- [11 Best Serums for Acne to Keep Your Complexion as Clear as Day](#)
- [12 Best Moisturizers for Oily Skin, According to Dermatologists](#)

Now, watch the *I Love LA* cast spill secrets after sipping the truth serum:

Shop all of our latest obsessions in one place! And don't forget to follow Allure on [Instagram](#) and [TikTok](#)—or [subscribe to our newsletter](#) to stay up to date on all things beauty.



Christa Joanna Lee is a writer, editor, and copywriter specializing in beauty and wellness, parenting, and lifestyle. With deep roots in the magazine world, she's developed editorial and branded content for print and digital outlets such as *Lucky*, *Bustle*, *Teen Vogue*, *SELF*, *Woman's Day*, *New York Magazine*, and *InStyle*. Before ... [Read More](#)

Contributing Writer



[KEYWORDS](#) [SHOPPING](#) [SKIN](#) [ACNE](#) [SKIN CARE](#) [DERMATOLOGISTS](#) [BLACKHEADS](#)

We Got You Covered.

Sign up to the Skin Check newsletter: an insider's guide to all things skin care.



[SIGN UP](#)

By signing up, you agree to our [user agreement](#) (including [class action waiver and arbitration provisions](#)), and acknowledge our [privacy policy](#).

[Read More](#)



SKIN

9 Best Drugstore Exfoliators to Unclog Pores and Soften Skin

Smooth, baby-soft skin ahead.

BY JAILYNN TAYLOR



SKIN

7 Best Moisturizers for Breakout-Prone Skin That Hydrate Without Clogging Pores

These seriously soothe and strengthen your barrier.

BY LILY WOHLNER



SKIN

9 Best Body Moisturizers for Itchy Skin That Provide Immediate Relief

Curb discomfort with formulas that hydrate and alleviate itchiness every time.

BY CHRISTA JOANNA LEE

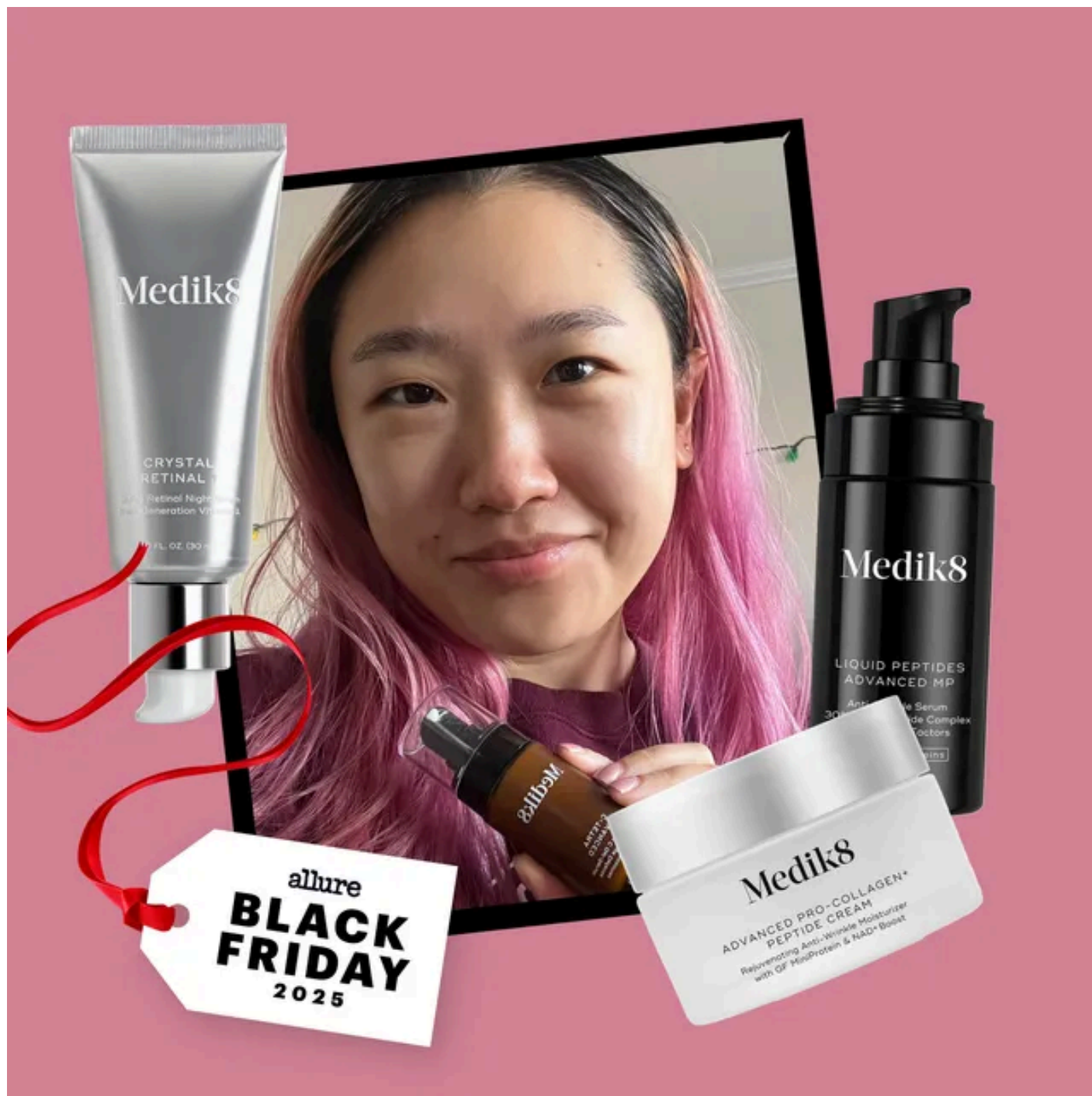


SKIN

8 Best Alastin Products That Derms Swear By

If your goal is firm, bright, and bouncy skin, this is the lineup to know.

BY CHRISTA JOANNA LEE



SKIN

7 Best Medik8 Products for No-Nonsense Results

From the iconic retinal treatment to the new copper-peptide creams, we spotlight our favorite formulas.

BY CHRISTA JOANNA LEE



SKIN

8 Best Face Oils for Lasting Hydration

Oils that soften, soothe, and won't leave you looking like a disco ball.

BY CHRISTA JOANNA LEE

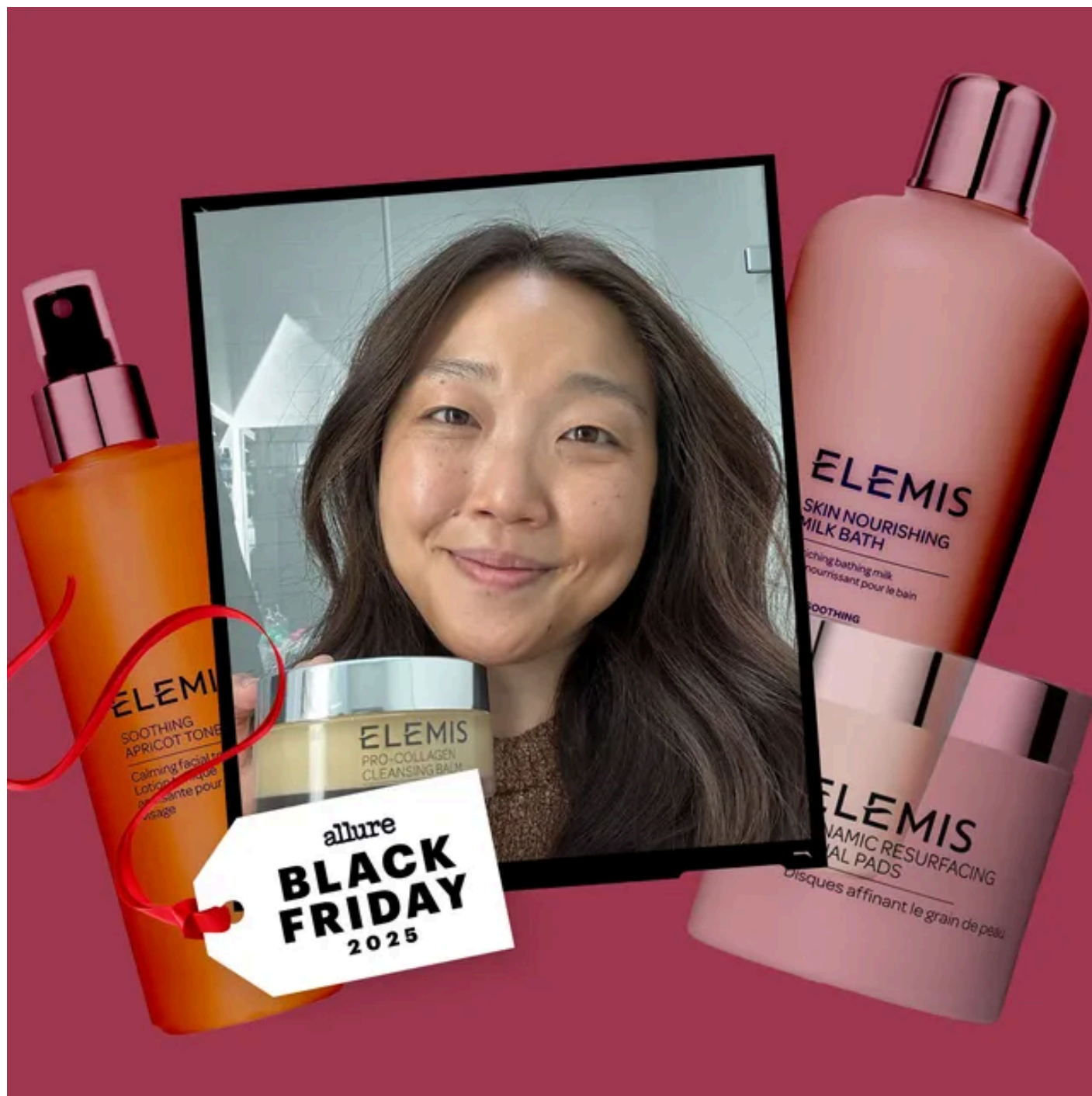


SHOPPING

30 Best Early Korean Skin-Care Black Friday Deals We're Already Adding to Cart

These early K-beauty deals on skincare, hair, and makeup are worth checking out now.

BY CHRISTA JOANNA LEE



SKIN

7 Best Elemis Products for Just-Left-the-Spa Skin at Home

From skin-softening balms to firming moisturizers, these are the staples worth every penny.

BY CHRISTA JOANNA LEE



SKIN

Trinny London's Naked Ambition Serum Proves Vitamin C and Sensitive Skin Can Coexist

Bright skin, zero drama.

BY LILY WOHLNER



SKIN

12 Best Lip Balms for Dry Lips to Soothe All Year Round

These formulas help draw in and retain moisture for soft, smooth lips.

BY CHRISTA JOANNA LEE



SHOPPING

6 Best Color Correctors for Dark Circles to Refresh Tired Eyes

When concealer alone doesn't cut it, these temporarily zap and neutralize dark shadows.

BY CHRISTA JOANNA LEE



SKIN

8 Best Cleansers for Mature Skin to Glow at Every Age

Tackle dryness, fine lines, and uneven tone while maintaining your glow.

BY CHRISTA JOANNA LEE

A collection of various skincare products from the Allure Beauty Box, including bottles of serums, creams, and tubes of treatments, some with gold and black packaging.

Get \$247* of Beauty for Just \$29.99 \$19.99

UNBOX PREMIUM PICKS FROM CHARLOTTE TILBURY, KAT BURKI,
TATCHA & MORE PLUS 2 FREE GIFTS — \$65 VALUE!

USE CODE: BEAUTY

allure
BEAUTY BOX

JOIN NOW