

Natural Blemish Relief

It may not be what you expect, but fighting acne with botanical oils may be the best thing you can do for your skin.

By **Lambeth Hochwald**

If it seems counterintuitive to consider applying a facial oil to treat pimples and blackheads, well, this is actually one of the smartest things you can do to improve the health of your skin.

Turns out, essential oils contain antiseptic, antibacterial and calming properties that work wonders to clear up acne, whether your breakouts are due to hormone imbalances, stress or a diet rich in fatty foods.

But which oils should you choose? Experts suggest looking for botanical oils such as argan oil (to help control surface oil) and borage seed oil (to fight inflammation) and essential oils like tea tree oil (to help rid your skin of acne-causing bacteria), lavender, oregano, clary sage and neroli. And always start slowly, using a drop or two (in a carrier oil to dilute it) to see how your skin reacts.

"What's great about certain plant-based oils is that they can help balance and calm acne-affected skin without clogging pores," says Jeannette Jacknin, MD, a board-certified dermatologist, natural skincare expert and author of *Smart Medicine for Your Skin*.

For Vered Beck, a master herbalist and aesthetician, it's a matter of approach, with drugstore products that include benzoyl peroxide and salicylic acid serving as more of an affront to the skin than a healing alternative. "Commercial products may work initially, but they will thin the skin over time," she says. "It's a harsh way to approach this problem."

Here, our three favorite facial oils, custom-blended to reduce redness and control oil production:



Herb Rich Serum for Blemished Skin

With a list of ingredients (like blackberry, burdock, fennel and ginger) that sound as healing as an aromatherapy bath, this lightweight formula from de la terre skincare blends pure organic botanicals, including naturally occurring seed oils, which aid in regulating excess oil production, with a natural source of vitamin C to help shrink large pores and treat blemishes. \$50; delaterreskincare.com

