

9 Urban Beauty Myths

Do these often-heard tips actually help you or hurt you?

“Mama always said ...” But was Mama always right? We may respect the advice our mothers and grandmothers heard through the grapevine, but when it comes to our hair, faces and bodies, some of those trusted tales might warrant a question or two. We spoke with a few beauty experts to find out the truth behind some of the top beauty misconceptions.

1. Greasing your scalp with hair grease will make your hair grow faster

Black women do a lot of things to make their hair grow faster. Greasing the scalp shouldn't be one of them. “Nothing cosmetic you put on your scalp will make it grow faster,” said cosmetic chemist and founder of BeautyStat.com. “Genetics determine your growth rate.”



2. Brushing your hair 100 times a day will make it shiny

Just having long, flowing locks isn't always enough. Most women want it to be shiny too. Unfortunately, brushing your hair 100 times a day is not going to fix dull tresses. In fact, it might actually create a whole new set of problems. According to Ron, the extra manipulation can damage your hair follicles and cause breakage.



4. Matching foundation to your inner wrist will guarantee the best color

Finding the perfect foundation color has always been a struggle for Black women. If you are using your inner wrist to find your color, you're only making it harder on yourself. Ron says the best way to find the correct color is by putting three different foundation shades on your cheek to see which blends in the best. If you need some extra help, stop by a makeup counter that carries a diverse range of shades, such as MAC or Fashion Fair, and ask their consultants to help you determine your ideal shade.



3. Only hair products that are made by Black companies and marketed toward Black women can be used on our hair

Shopping for hair products just got a bit easier! According to Ron, women no longer have to rely only on products that have a Black girl's face on it like they did in the '80s. “Many mainstream product lines like Pantene and Ouidad now cater to different hair types and problems that pertain to African Americans.” And interestingly enough, some of those product lines made specifically for women of color, such as Mizani, are owned or created by Whites and Asians.



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5. Using cocoa butter eliminates stretch marks

Cocoa butter is a great product for a wealth of wellness issues, but getting rid of stretch marks isn't one of them. The only method that can completely eliminate stretch marks is a medical procedure such as laser removal.

On the bright side, there are some things you can do to help *prevent* stretch marks from appearing—and here's where cocoa butter helps: Dr. Barbosa suggests frequently massaging skin with a moisturizer, like cocoa butter, to improve elasticity, making stretch marks less likely to develop.



6. Using Vaseline on your face is great for preventing wrinkles and moisturizing

While Vaseline is a great moisturizer and can be used for various skin conditions, it does not prevent wrinkles and should never be used on your face. Because of its rich texture, it can actually cause damage by clogging your pores, which isn't helped by the fact that the skin on your face is more sensitive than the rest of you. To slow signs of aging, Dr. Victoria Barbosa of Millennium Park Dermatology in Chicago recommends that you use moisturizer with sunscreen on your face during the day. After washing your face at night, a moisturizer should be applied to prevent dry, flaky skin. Be sure that your product of choice states on the package that it is non-comedogenic so it'll be less likely to cause blackheads or clog your pores.



8. The tingling feeling from a beauty product means it works

We've all felt that extra special sting when using a new skin-care product. Most likely it just means that the product has irritated our skin. "There are some ingredients that are added just for this purpose; to make you think it is doing something," said Dr. Brooke Jackson, author and dermatologist. When you apply products to a freshly washed face, your pores are open. That allows for deeper penetration, which may be the reason for that tingly feeling. "Try waiting five minutes after washing your face before applying to close up pores," Dr. Jackson said. If the feeling persists, even after waiting a few minutes, discontinue your use of the product.



7. Applying toothpaste is great for eliminating pimples

Although this seems like a remedy sent from heaven since it can dry some blemishes out, it isn't recommended. "The problem is that toothpaste can be very irritating and drying to the skin, causing more harm than good," Dr. Barbosa said. It also doesn't kill the bacteria that cause pimples. "So benzoyl peroxide and salicylic acid-containing products make better, safer spot treatments."



9. Washing your skin a lot will prevent dark knees and elbows

You can stop all that painful scrubbing. All it does is provide extra-clean elbows and knees. Get off the floor if you want to stop those dark joints from getting any darker. "Elbows and knees absorb pressure from leaning and kneeling," Dr. Jackson said. "Dark skin gets darker with irritation."

