



7 Visible Signs of Stress on Your Skin, Hair and Nails (and What to Do About Them)

BY LINDSAY TIGAR · APRIL 12, 2018



You know what it *feels* like when you're stressed—but do you know what it *looks* like? The uncomfortable experience of feeling overworked, under pressure and stretched thin doesn't just make your stomach rumble and your heart race, but it's illustrated on your skin, your nails and your hair. As holistic esthetician [Tammy Fender](#) explains, stress affects all of our body systems, our mind, emotions and sense of wellness, but symptoms often arrive first in our largest organ—our skin.

Because stress causes our body to fire off more cortisol, you begin to develop poor habits—like turning to salty, fatty foods or wrestling with the sandman—lowering your overall state of health. Not only

dangerous for your waistline and your productivity at work, but also, your skin's elasticity and appearance.

Here, some clear ways your skin, hair and nails are impacted by stress—and, more important, what to do about it.

1. Excess Oil and Breakouts

Dealing with a client you just can't seem to please? Or is your relationship heading south? Fender says these added worries and heightened anxiety pushes your sebum production to overflow, resulting in unwanted acne scattered across your T-zone. When you're distraught, many have the tendency to touch their face or rub their eyes, resulting in even more oil and bacteria that can clog your pores and result in consistent breakouts.

What to do: Dermatologist [Kavita Mariwalla, MD, FAAD](#) recommends that using a soothing serum or [clarifying face mask](#) will force you to have quiet time a few times a week to clear your head, while soothing your skin.

Try: [Juice Beauty Soothing Serum](#) or [Eminence Organics Calm Skin Arnica Booster-Serum](#)

2. Deeper Lines and Wrinkles

It's not only pimples that rear their head when your social and work calendars are overflowing, but wrinkles begin to deepen, too. After all, the concept of "aging overnight" after hearing difficult news isn't just a saying but a warning. As Fender explains, excess cortisol can cause premature aging, breaking down the healthy collagen that gives our skin its structural integrity and elasticity. Aside from making you look older, the harsher lines on your face can also make you look sad, depressed or angry.

What to do: When you're beat, it's that much more important to follow your [anti-aging skin regimen](#), even when you lack the energy to follow the step-by-step process, according to dermatologist and beauty expert [Dr. Anna Guanche](#). If you're having a night when you "just can't" with a serum and a mask and the whole shebang, she insists on at least washing your face and applying your go-to anti-aging moisturizer with a heavy hand, including your neck and your décolletage areas, too.

While skin care products can sometimes treat and mask symptoms, Dr. Guanche says it's also important to exercise stress-management techniques that get to the crux of your angst. Some of her recommendations include practicing yoga and meditation, going for a walk, talking with friends or even spending some QT with your pup. The bottom line, she says, is to find your own personal happy place—and soak it in.

Try: [Perricone MD Cold Plasma](#)

3. Dark Circles

When you're having trouble pushing through even the easiest of tasks, you might find yourself daydreaming about your bed, where you can finally decompress. But when bedtime rolls around, you suddenly remember every lingering item on your to-do list and can't catch shut-eye, no matter how hard you try. Over many nights, this results in tired, dark circles that reveal your sleepless night and for some, signs of aging, according to Dr. Guanche.

What to do: Though the quickest way to destress your eyes is via fillers, a less dramatic way to approach those pesky pigmented areas is with a solid concealer. Though it won't decrease your anxiety, it will give you more confidence to tackle your day since they won't shine through when you look in the mirror. For a heavy-duty buy, try [Becca Cosmetics Under Eye Brightening Corrector](#).

4. Redness and Skin Sensitivity

According to Heather Hickman, senior director of education for [Dermalogica](#) and the International Dermal Institute, stress can [compromise your skin's natural barrier](#), which may exacerbate existing skin conditions, like eczema and psoriasis. "Chronic negative stress can also disrupt the skin's natural barrier, which prevents harmful substances from penetrating and fluids from escaping. This can lead to irritated and dehydrated skin."

What to do: Aside from regular self-care activities and avoiding your sensitive skin's triggers, it's also important to choose skin care products designed to minimize inflammation and strengthen your skin's natural barrier.

Try: [PCA Skin Dual Action Redness Relief](#)

5. Dull and Dehydrated Skin

Attempting to impress your boss before review season and manage a household of kiddos (or even your gaggle of friends) while working on your side hustle? It's no wonder you're feeling less than stellar. When you have too much to do and not enough hands or hours to finish it all, eating well and hydration don't become a priority. "Your skin is an organ and it needs nutrients to maintain its radiance. If you don't have enough hydration, your skin will become dry and cracked and make you look years older than you are," Dr. Guanche says.

What to do: Apart from the obvious remedy of upping your water and nutrient intake, Dr. Guanche says that regular facials are helpful, too, since they can be targeted and tailored to your skin type. [Regular exfoliation or occasional peel](#) followed by a super-hydrating moisturizer is a nice addition to your arsenal, too.

Try: [DERMAdoctor Kakadu C High Potency Evening Oil](#)

6. Hair Loss

In extreme cases of stress, your scalp may also start to [shed handfuls of your strands](#). This is because an overabundance of anxiety and pressure interrupts the [healthy hair-growth process](#), during which we continuously sprout and lose our hair. During periods when you're maxed out, your hair can't manage its normal routine and instead falls out more than it normally would, according to Fender.

What to do: Your hair is thirsty for robust nutrients and supplements, so make sure to give it what it needs topically and internally. You can also take vitamins with essential nutrients that promote hair health.

Try: [HUM Nutrition Hair Sweet Hair](#)

7. Weak and Brittle Nails

You thought you kicked the nail-nibbling habit in high school, but now that you're faced with a month's worth of work that's due, *um*, tomorrow, you're chomping away. Dr. Mariwalla says this is common for most people but stressful on the nails. In addition to biting, you might also pick at your cuticles, causing habit tic nail deformity. "This is when someone chronically rubs the nail such that it creates a groove that seems as if it will be permanent," she explains.

Even if you don't have this habit, poor nutrition and nutrient absorption caused by stressful situations can also put a damper on healthy nail growth.

What to do: A nail and cuticle oil is your best friend in this case, as it'll treat your nit-picking by giving it the TLC it needs.