



A Colorful Future

Knowing how to treat a variety of skin types will expand your client base.

CONSIDER THE RAINBOW OF COLORS THAT MAKE UP THE MILLIONS of skin tones. Cosmetically speaking, African-American skin spans a wide range of color variations from a creamy light coffee color to a deep ebony black. Asian skin exhibits colors that appear very white to light yellow to dark golden tan. Even Caucasian skin can be visually misinterpreted and placed into inaccurate categories. In reality, Caucasian skin ranges greatly, from milky alabaster white to dark olive.

As demographics have shifted, the traditional skincare needs of your spa clientele have changed dramatically. A new generation of skin colors and types has evolved from a nearly infinite number of racial blends. My own stepchildren are both Hispanic and Caucasian—should their skin be treated as Latino or Northern European? My niece is part Chinese and half Caucasian. How should her skin be treated—as Anglo or Asian? The challenge of skincare today is how to treat this new classification of skin type now being identified as the “new skin of color.”

Broadening Your Horizons

Over time, the lack of information about ethnic skin has led to misconceptions, misinformation, and myths—creating a recipe for skincare disasters. A common mistake occurs when darker skin is treated the same as lighter skin, resulting in pigmentation morbidity and other unnecessary injuries. One explanation for this could be that the majority of cosmetology schools provide a skincare curriculum based on only one skin type. Change is

necessary because the new skin of color is destined to dictate the future of skincare, and spa owners, cosmetic surgeons, dermatologists, estheticians, and skincare specialists should find it important to prepare for this future.

Practice Makes Perfect

Education is the key to all esthetic success. Once the new classification of skin is understood, disasters can be avoided. Learning about the skin’s anatomy, histology, and physiology *continued on page 60*

Skin of Color Dos and Don'ts

- **Do (Use):**
 - Exfoliant masques
 - Gentle cleansers
 - Only certified antioxidants
 - Retinol vitamin A palmitate daily
 - SPF daily
 - Topicals that impede pigmentation
- **Don't (Avoid):**
 - Aggressive astringents
 - Detergent-based soaps and cleansers
 - Harsh scrubs and buffing pads
 - Products that contain sodium lauryl sulfates

Christine Heathman's manual details how to treat skin of color.



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is essential for accurately recommending appropriate products and treatments.

Even if more comprehensive programs are launched tomorrow, thousands of licensed professionals across the United States lack thorough knowledge of the new skin of color. Spa owners should encourage their estheticians to complete advanced studies, which should also include hands-on instruction.

“Knowing the genetic history of your clients’ skin and what makes it tick will enable you to be more effective in its treatment.”

Know Thy Boundaries

By understanding that different races have their own identifiable characteristics, you have the foundation of knowledge necessary for handling the new skin of color. For example, many product ingredients commonly used to manage acne can cause hyperpigmentation if not properly administered. It is important to truly understand product ingredients and properties as well as the type of skin on which you'll be using the product. Further complications that uniquely affect the new skin of color may also arise during

treatment. For instance, I have treated acneic skin of ethnic combinations that produced an overabundance of oils in the sebaceous follicle environment. The pores were so tight due to other genetic factors, however, that it was nearly impossible to extract any lesions. This made me realize that knowing the genetic history of your clients' skin and what makes it tick will enable you to more effectively treat it. Having an idea of how to conquer these new skin challenges will drive new business into your clinic and spa and provide an unparalleled referral system.

I also recommend avoiding microdermabrasion when treating skin of color. The professional sandblasting method can create unwanted pigmentation in this type of skin and may inject micro-fine crystals into the skin. A gentle alternative is DermaSound—a safe and effective mechanical method which is non-invasive.

So, I ask you again, are you up to treating the new skin of color? Keeping informed about advancements in products and clinical protocols and developing an in-depth understanding of these special skin types will provide advantages for your spa that before now have been unavailable. It is the well-informed professional who will inherit the future of esthetics. And the future is skin of color.—*Christine Heathman*

Christine Heathman CME, LMT, is the founder and CEO of GlyMed Plus, a professional skincare system that was developed more than a decade ago. She has been a practicing master esthetician, educator, and skincare leader in the research and development of skincare products and progressive protocols for more than 25 years. For more information, call (800) 676-9667 or visit www.glymedplus.com.

The Color-Blind Solution: DermaSound

- **Benefits:**

The promise of no pain, no injury, and no irritation make DermaSound the ideal clinical spa treatment for all skin types. It can be used without any pretreatment protocols, which the destination spa with transient business will appreciate, and it provides a remedy for all aging, acne, and pigmentation concerns. DermaSound is a substantial advancement in the treatment of skin of color, which can be extremely

unpredictable due to its varying character of many racial influences.

- **How It Works:**

This cutting-edge technology utilizes low-frequency sound waves for a safer mechanical exfoliation, molecular product penetration, and healing micro amp therapy. Instead of corundum crystals used in microdermabrasion, DermaSound treatments use gentle water bubbles that move with the flow of

liquid across the skin and suddenly collapse when they reach regions of higher pressure, creating a kinetic force. The rapid oscillation of low-dose ultrasonic DermaSound interacts with distilled water on the skin to produce a harmless controlled exfoliation. The process safely detaches and removes skin cells of the stratum corneum, which in turn activates cell turnover and catalyzes the renewal process.—*C.H.*