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WHY DOES MY FACE GET SO MUCH REDDER THAN EVERYONE ELSE'S WHEN I WORK OUT?



When I workout, sweat and a bright red face typically go hand-in-hand. At this point, I've just accepted that I'm going to look like a tomato anytime I get my heart rate up. But I have to admit, I am curious... Why am I the only one in my class who leaves looking like a fire truck?

To get to the bottom of my facial redness, I reached out to someone who deals with skin issues every day: a dermatologist. And of course there's a simple explanation for why it happens in the first place.

"Getting a red face while working out is completely normal—this is our body's natural response to regulating temperature," says Sheel Desai Solomon, MD, a North Carolina-based dermatologist. "As we exercise, blood is being pumped through our blood vessels, or capillaries, at a faster rate to maximize oxygen intake. The capillaries widen to deliver more oxygen to the working muscles and also push heat to the surface

of the skin to avoid overheating. This can lead your face to appear red and is especially visible in people with fair skin.”

Fair skin definitely checks out in my case. But the reason you might always be so much redder than your workout pals goes beyond skin tone.

“If you’re someone who gets redder than others, this could be because you have more capillaries in your face than others who have a light pink glow,” Dr. Solomon explains. “Other causes for facial redness can be skin conditions such as rosacea, alcohol use, certain foods, and different medications.”

No matter what the reason behind your redder-than-normal post-workout complexion may be, you don’t have to go through life basking in that overly-bright glow. Instead, use these expert-backed tips to give your skin some relief.

Use these 8 tips to help soothe your super-red face after working out

1. Splash or spray your face with cold water during a workout.

Instead of scrolling through your phone mid-workout as a break, splash some water on your face to help combat redness.

“This is a great tip to prevent facial redness after a workout altogether,” Dr. Solomon says. “During your workout, spray or splash cold water on your face to help your body cool down and calm down circulation. The sweat you produce when you exercise is already trying to do this for you, but a splash of cold water will take this cooling process one step further.”

2. Use a cold compress and moisturizer after a workout.

Aside from extra hair ties and deodorant, consider packing a washcloth in your workout bag. Your skin will thank you for it. “Applying a cold, damp washcloth to your face after exercising will alleviate tightness around the skin and reduce redness before cleansing your face,” Dr. Solomon says. “Follow this up with a gentle paraben-free moisturizer that will nourish the skin and help soothe inflammation.”

3. Use a cleansing wipe.

The next time you’re shopping, make a quick stop by the skin care aisle to pick up a pack of cleansing wipes. “There are a lot of great cleansing wipes on the market right now to help reduce redness and refresh the skin post-workout,” Dr. Solomon says. “Wiping your face with an aloe vera-based cleansing wipe will help calm everything down and prevent further irritation.”

4. Avoid alcohol and spicy foods.

It’s not just your workouts that are causing facial redness—it’s also what you do after you leave the gym.

“If you want to reduce facial redness, it’s essential to avoid things that may cause or aggravate inflammation,” Dr. Soloman says. “Excess alcohol can trigger the same response in your blood vessels when you workout, causing inflammation to become visible on your skin—especially your face. The same goes for spicy foods. They dilate the capillaries under your skin, thus making facial redness more noticeable.”

5. Add aloe vera to your skin care routine.

Having aloe vera-infused cleansing wipes can help combat redness after working out, but adding the soothing plant into your daily routine can do wonders, too.

“Facial redness is usually an indicator of inflammation or irritation, so lathering on some aloe vera or aloe-based moisturizer can aid in reducing its appearance,” Dr. Soloman says. “Its healing properties help to reduce redness, replenish the skin, and promote cell growth. If you’re someone who blushes more than most, I suggest using aloe vera on the skin daily.”

6. Try not to exfoliate too often.

Yeah, yeah—exfoliating makes your skin feel amazing. Unfortunately, if you deal with facial redness regularly, it’s best to keep it to a minimum. “Exfoliating is a great way to rid your face of dead skin, but it’s easy to go overboard,” Dr. Soloman says. “If you’re prone to redness or you have sensitive skin, exfoliate your skin sparingly and stick to chemical exfoliants.”

7. Grab the hydrocortisone cream.

If your facial redness won’t budge, you might have to bring in the big guns. And by that I mean hydrocortisone cream. “A hydrocortisone topical steroid cream is used to treat redness, swelling, and other irritating skin conditions,” Dr. Soloman explains. “Apply a small amount of an over-the-counter 1 percent hydrocortisone steroid to the affected areas daily to see visibly less red skin.”

8. Try laser or light therapy.

While natural treatments are great, you can also combat facial redness with laser or light therapy. It only takes a couple treatments to see results.

“Laser or light therapy can help reduce the visibility of blood vessels, redness, and thickening skin. The vascular laser wavelengths target the blood vessels and increase the heat, causing them to break down and disintegrate, all the while promoting repair and collagen growth,” Dr. Soloman says. “Patients can see between a 50 to 75 percent decrease in the appearance of redness in just after the first two treatments. The pulse dye laser, such as the VBeam laser, is an excellent treatment option for someone with mild to moderate rosacea or chronic facial redness.”

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