

TEST DRIVE

The Neutrogena Light Therapy Acne Mask clears up breakouts in as little as one week. Hair and makeup, Mark Williamson; manicure, Holly Falcone. These pages: Prop stylist, JoJo Li.

TECHNIT UP A NOTCH

Welcome to a new era of skin care: Devices that plug in, light up, spin around, and possibly scare your dog (more on that in a second). We enlisted real women and top dermatologists to flip on nine of the latest options and report back on whether they make good on their line-smoothing, face-firming, acne-banishing claims. **By Katie Becker**

PHOTOGRAPHED BY GRANT CORNETT

THE ZIT ZAPPERS

Tria Positively Clear 3-Step Acne Skincare Solution

The claim: This device (\$149) shoots out blue LED lights—kind of like a flashlight—that kill acne-causing bacteria. Shine it over breakouts and breakout-prone spots for five minutes every day to shrink pimples and prevent new ones.

The test drive: “I started this two weeks before my period, and my skin stayed totally clear,” says our tester, who gets hormonal breakouts. “When I stopped using it, I started breaking out again.” So (obviously) she turned the thing back on, and her pimples went away a day or two faster than usual. It’s painless—“the device heats up, but it’s not uncomfortably hot”—and easy to travel with.

The expert opinion: Studies show that this particular type of blue light destroys acne-causing bacteria and turns down the dial on sebum production so you’re less oily, says Roy Geronemus, a clinical professor of dermatology at NYU Langone Medical Center. But, he notes, it’s not a fit for everyone: “It’s not helpful for blackheads and whiteheads, nor for deep cystic acne. It’s good for the little red bumps called papules and pustules, which are the most common forms of acne.” Geronemus recommends using the Tria along with prescription acne medications (like retinoids) or as a safe alternative for those who can’t tolerate other treatments due to skin irritation and dryness or pregnancy.

Neutrogena Light Therapy Acne Mask

The claim: Wear this hockey-mask look-alike (\$39.99) for ten minutes daily and its blue and red LED lights will reduce breakouts in as little as one week.

The test drive: “I recently stopped birth control, and my skin started getting oily and breaking out,” says our tester. “After using the mask for about a week or two, I definitely saw results.” Not only did her acne clear, but she’s been less oily, her pores seem smaller, and her complexion has brightened up. “They say you can keep your eyes open while you use it, but the lights were too intense for me. I keep my eyes closed and listen to podcasts to pass the time.”

The expert opinion: There are plenty of published papers showing that blue and red lights effectively treat acne, says Neil Sadick, a clinical professor of dermatology at Weill Cornell Medical College in New York City. The combo works by killing acne-causing bacteria (with the blue lights) and bringing down inflammation (with the red lights). “When hair follicles on the face become plugged, bacteria overgrows and enzymes are released that cause inflammation,” Sadick explains. While he’d like to see more research on this particular device, he says “it’s very safe, it won’t hurt your eyes, and it’s OK for all skin types.” Plan to use it for six to eight weeks to see full benefits.

“THE THING SOUNDS LIKE A REALLY LOUD VIBRATOR. WHEN MY IN-LAWS WERE VISITING, IT WAS AWKWARD.”

THE FACE LIFTER

Clarisonic Smart Profile Uplift Firming Massage Head

The claim: If you pop the cleansing brush off of your Clarisonic Smart Profile device and pop on this triangular, rubbery attachment (\$54), it will harness the device’s vibrations to help creams and serums penetrate and firm skin. You should use it for three minutes on your face, neck, and décolletage twice a day for brighter skin (after 1 week) and a tightening effect (after 12).

The test drive: Right off the bat, our tester noticed a firmer jawline for a few hours after each use. “I would apply a rich moisturizer first, which helped the applicator glide along my skin without tugging,” she says. Still, its triangular shape meant it hugged best along the jaw; the flatter surfaces of the forehead and cheeks were a bit harder to maneuver along. The main downside? “The thing sounds like a really loud vibrator,” she says. “When my in-laws were visiting, it was awkward. I felt like I had to give them a heads up on exactly what I was doing before I retired to the bedroom and turned it on.”

The expert opinion: Facial massage is semi-legit. “Mechanical stimulation can increase muscle contraction and give a temporary lifting effect that lasts several hours,” says Sadick. But that’s about it. “Massage has never been shown to increase penetration of skin care,” he says. “That’s a myth.”

LAYING IT ON THICK

Are you always cutting corners on your multistep layering routine? Well, there’s a device for that. Take a 20-question assessment and Nu Skin uses your answers to generate a customized, five-step anti-aging regimen. But here’s where it addresses your laziness: The regimen arrives in a preloaded device, the AgeLoc Me (\$480). The machine—it looks like a sleek, high-tech soap dispenser and is about a foot tall—sits on your bathroom counter. With the press of a button, it delivers a single predosed pump of all your recommended serums and creams—a full routine mixed into one dollop. The results: hydrated skin and a pleasantly surprised sensitive-skinned tester. Just keep in mind that if you’re always running around, this system isn’t remotely travel-friendly. —KATHLEEN SUICO

THE WRINKLE SMOOTHER

Beauty Bioscience GloPro

The claim: Run a roller studded with teeny-tiny needles (they're 0.3 millimeters long) over your skin three times a week and lines will look smoother after one month. The tool (\$199) also vibrates, which is supposed to make the pinpricks feel less creepy and uncomfortable.

The test drive: Once she got over her initial intimidation, our tester quickly became "obsessed." And then flattered. "After a week and a half, I started getting a lot of compliments on my skin—I heard that it was glowier at least three times," she says. "It feels more springy and looks plumper. And I think there's been a decrease in wrinkles on my forehead." Any pain was minimal: "It feels like an intense facial scrub." In the hour after treatment, however, her skin did look red, so she uses the roller only at night.

The expert opinion: Microneedling has become popular among dermatologists, who love it for smoothing acne scars, wrinkles, and stretch marks. "In the office, we use a device with pins that go deeper [than at-home devices], but anything that causes small wounds is helpful," says Sadick. "Wounding triggers skin's repair functions, like producing new collagen to help smooth wrinkles. Most people should see results in three to four weeks." For safety, Sadick advises that you don't use this at-home roller over the same area multiple times in one sitting or when your skin is irritated. And don't use an exfoliant right afterward. Also, we cannot stress this enough: Clean the MicroTip Attachment Head thoroughly with rubbing alcohol after every use, and replace it every three months.

OUR TESTER QUICKLY BECAME "OBSESSED... I STARTED GETTING A LOT OF COMPLIMENTS."

Clockwise from left: Tria Positively Clear 3-Step Acne Skincare Solution, Beauty Bioscience GloPro, and Michael Todd Beauty Soniclear Petite.

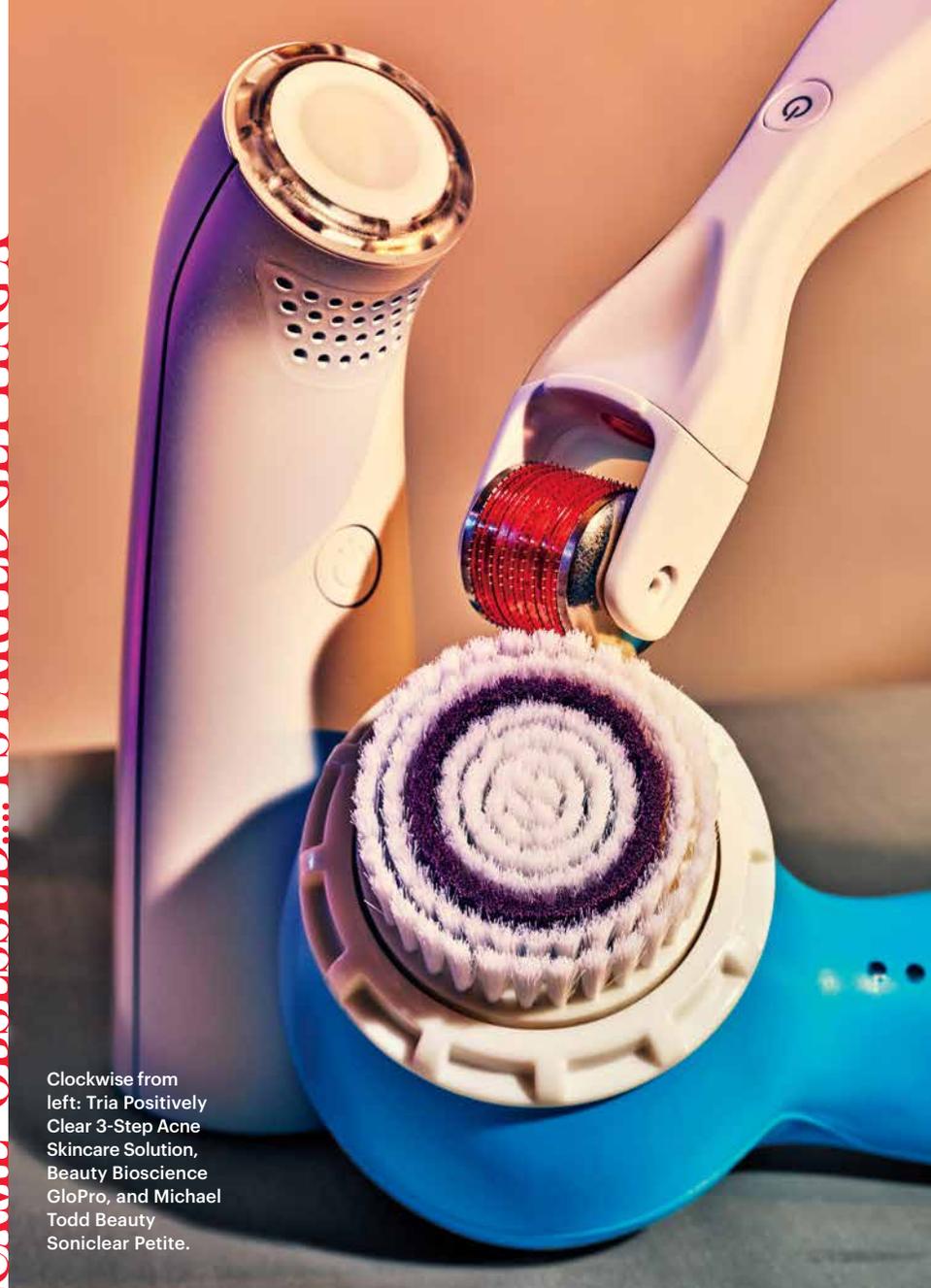
THE POWER CLEANSER

Michael Todd Beauty Soniclear Petite

The claim: This facial-cleansing brush (\$89) uses a high-speed motor to oscillate (rather than spin) its nylon bristles to get your skin squeaky clean. The brush head has unique antimicrobial bristles that prevent stain- and odor-causing bacteria.

The test drive: Immediately after each use, our tester noticed a brighter, softer complexion. "I used the brush twice a week on the highest setting with a gentle cleanser," she says. "It felt like a cell phone vibrating." After her first use, her cheeks were a little tender, so moisturizer afterward is a must. As promised, the brush stays clean—no smell, no foundation buildup, no need to worry about breakouts.

The expert opinion: "Vibrating brushes are always superior to scrubs or washcloths because the oscillations draw out oil, debris, pollution, and dirt, rather than swirling it around on your skin," says Tina Alster, a clinical professor of dermatology at Georgetown University. And of course, the antimicrobial bristles are a plus.





From top: Dr. Dennis Gross Skincare SpectraLite EyeCare Pro and Newa Skin Care System.

GETTING INTO EYE GEAR

If you hate crow's-feet (or love *RoboCop*), man, have we got news for you: The new Dr. Dennis Gross Skincare SpectraLite EyeCare Pro (\$159) shines collagen-boosting red and amber LED lights around your eyes and between your brows—and makes you look like a cyborg. “We know that red light can reduce inflammation in the skin and kick-start the creation of new collagen; amber light helps skin rejuvenate, but not as much as red,” says Alster. “It should take about a month or two to see crow’s-feet and ‘eleven’ lines begin to reduce.” The directions say you can keep your eyes open while wearing the glasses, but our tester had to find a different time to catch up on *The Crown*. “The light is really bright—when I turned them on, my dog ran away from me,” she says. Another new gadget, Me Bright (\$129), is a small wand that emits red LEDs and radio frequency. Shine it on the skin around your eyes for three minutes, five days a week, and after two months “you might see a modest amount of skin tightening,” says Geronemus. (His assessment is in line with what the company says you can expect.) Our tester noticed her crow’s-feet softening after about a month. But again, the device was too bright for her to keep her eyes open while using it.

“THE LIGHT FROM THE GLASSES IS REALLY BRIGHT—WHEN I TURNED THEM ON, MY DOG RAN AWAY FROM ME.”

THE SKIN TIGHTENER

Newa Skin Care System

The claim: This handheld wand (\$450) firms skin using radio frequency (a.k.a. controlled heat). Use it on wrinkles up to five times a week for four minutes on each area that you want to target—it vibrates when it’s time to shut it off. You’ll see fewer wrinkles (in a month) and firmer skin (in two months).

The test drive: “Immediately after every treatment, my skin looked smoother and plumped up,” our tester says. “After four weeks, it felt firmer and looked smoother overall—but not Botox smooth.” She found it wonderfully mindless to glide the device in circular motions around her face, which meant she could easily use it while shooting off emails (albeit with one hand). “The electrodes just feel warm,” she says. “If 1 is room temperature and 10 is curling-iron hot, it’s a 4.”

The expert opinion: “Radio-frequency energy is the gold standard to contract collagen fibers and stimulate new collagen in a medical office,” says Alster. At-home radio-frequency devices use less energy, but if you stick with one, it’ll deliver enough heat over time (at least two months of regular use) to rival in-office skin-firming results. “When I used it, I saw some immediate tightening, though that’s possibly from mild tissue swelling,” says Alster. “I think this is really good for people with a small amount of laxity in the cheeks and jawline.”