

The Baumann Skin Type: What It Is and How Do You Determine Yours?

BY MARILYN OLIVEIRA • JANUARY 5, 2016

We've been told that one of the biggest skin care mistakes we can make is to use products that aren't compatible with our skin type. But, according to Dr. Leslie Baumann, CEO of Baumann Cosmetic Dermatology and author of New York Times best-seller *The Skin Type Solution*, there's an even bigger concern: not knowing how to properly assess your skin type.

“Properly identifying skin type is key for positive skin care outcomes,” says Dr. Baumann. “But the problem with the traditional classifications (normal, dry, oily and combination) is that they provide very little information about the skin.”

To give us a more accurate way of diagnosing our skin type, Dr. Baumann developed the Baumann Skin Type, a patent-pending skin-typing system that categorizes the skin according to 16 unique skin types. Each skin type is a combination of four different components: dry or oily, sensitive or resistant, pigmented or non-pigmented, and wrinkle-prone or tight. So instead of Normal, Dry, Oily, Combination and Sensitive Skin, your skin type could be something like Dry-Resistant-Pigmented-Tight (DRPT) or Oily-Sensitive-Nonpigmented-Wrinkle-Prone (OSNW).

To determine which of the 16 skin types your skin belongs to, Dr. Baumann, together with board-certified dermatologist and long-time follower of the system Rebecca Kazin, M.D., FAAD, broke down each component for us.



DRY (D) vs. OILY (O)

- **Major Identifiers**

Dry Skin: Rough texture, dull color and tightness, especially after cleansing

Oily Skin: Shine, acne breakouts and visible pores

- **Influencing Factors**

Sebum production. “Sebum creates a fat-based film on the skin, which may also have an effect on skin hydration,” Dr. Baumann explained. “The ability of the barrier layer (the stratum corneum) to help hold in moisture also plays a role, as well as the natural levels of hyaluronic acid in the skin.”

- **Suitable Products**

Dry Skin: Look for products that tackle dryness and dehydration, like nonfoaming cleansers, moisturizers that trap and draw in water, and in the case of acne, retinol products at a lower strength so they don't irritate skin.

Oily Skin: To help manage excess oil and shine, look for a foaming cleanser, which removes more oil from the skin, an oil-free moisturizer, powder sunscreen and products that contain retinoids and hydroxy acids to control oil production. “If you tend to break out,” Dr. Kazin added, “you can use over-the-counter acne products with benzoyl peroxide since your skin can likely tolerate it.”

SENSITIVE (S) vs. RESISTANT (R)

- **Major Identifiers**

Sensitive Skin: Often reacts to skin care products with redness, burning or acne

Resistant Skin: Rarely experiences negative side effects

- **Influencing Factors**

The skin's stratum corneum. “This layer of the skin serves as a barrier to keep hydration in and irritants out, and the strong stratum corneum associated with resistant skin can make the skin resistant to the beneficial effects of skin care ingredients due to less absorption,” explains Dr. Baumann.

- **Suitable Products**

Sensitive Skin: Reach for anti-redness formulas that contain soothing, anti-inflammatory ingredients like licorice root extract, vitamin E and tea tree oil, and avoid retinoids, glycolic acid, benzoyl peroxide and fragrance.

Resistant Skin: Feel free to opt for products with stronger and higher concentrations of active ingredients.

PIGMENTED (P) vs. NON-PIGMENTED (N)

- **Major Identifiers**

Pigmented: Dark spots and/or uneven skin tone

Non-Pigmented: Even skin tone

- **Influencing Factors**

The skin's tendency to develop unwanted pigment. “Unwanted pigment can be sun-induced, as in melasma, solar lentigos and freckles, or due to injury in the form of post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation (PIH),” shares Dr. Baumann. Skin color also plays a role. “Generally, the darker your skin color, the more at risk you are for hyperpigmentation,” adds Dr. Kazin.

- **Suitable Products**

Pigmented: Products that contain lightening ingredients. “Hydroquinone has long been the gold standard,” says Dr. Kazin. “But for patients concerned about side effects, I recommend ingredients like

kojic acid, vitamin C, arbutin and lignin peroxidase.”

Non-Pigmented: Religious application of sunscreen for prevention

WRINKLE-PRONE (W) vs. TIGHT (T)

- **Major Identifiers**

Wrinkle-Prone: Lines, wrinkles and sagging

Tight: A smooth and taut complexion

- **Influencing Factors**

Sun exposure, age, ethnicity, genes and lifestyle habits. “There is still a genetic component to this parameter, but sun exposure is the primary cause of skin aging due its destructive effect on essential skin proteins like collagen and elastin.”

- **Suitable Products**

Wrinkle-Prone: Products with anti-aging ingredients that stimulate collagen production, such as retinol

Tight: Sunscreen to maintain the skin’s youthful appearance