

How To Banish Back Acne—Aka Backne

BY FARA ROSENZWEIG PUBLISHED JAN. 14, 2016



Having acne break out on your face is not fun, but at least you can dab a little make-up on to cover it up. But back acne—aka backne—is the worst. Those tiny red bumps can leave some wanting to cover up and kiss tank tops and backless and strapless shirts good-bye.

But there is hope. You can fight this skin problem that nobody likes to talk about.

“When we think of acne on the back or chest, we think it’s somewhat hormonally based. It’s also common in people who are exercising and sweating and wearing sports bras,” says dermatologist Dr. Rebecca Kazin, MD, FAAD of the Washington Institute of Dermatologic Laser Surgery and the Johns Hopkins Department of Dermatology.

While sweating is completely normal—and a good thing to keep you cool—during a run, it can play a role in causing break outs. “Sweat plus occlusion from under garments or clothing, which rub, irritates skin and can spur breakouts. Much like when you wear a baseball hat and you break out around the hair line,” shares Kazin.

Before you head out for a run, Kazin suggests you use a toner or wipe skin off before you put your sports bra on. She also suggests to make sure your workout clothes are dry and clean before you put them on. It also helps to wear your hair up to avoid sweat on the neck and back.

After your run, it's best to rinse off right away. This will help prevent backne, wash off sweat and prevent clogged pores. If you're not able to hop in a shower right away, Kazin suggests changing out of your workout clothes and into something loose-fitting.

"Medicated pads used for the face can also be good to cleanse the area if you aren't going straight home to take a shower," adds Kazin.

When looking for products, consider them if they have these ingredients: salicylic acid, glycolic acid and benzoyl peroxide. "Be careful with benzoyl peroxide because it can lighten your clothing and towels," warns Kazin. "If you're using Retin A or other topical prescriptions, you can usually go with a stronger concentration on the back because skin is thicker." If you have a bad back breakout, or you're looking for something a bit stronger than over-the-counter items, consider a chemical peel or microdermabrasion with a dermatologist.

Many products you use for the face can be used on your back. Some go-to products to throw in your gym bag are:

- **Karin Herzog Shower Body Scrub**—This high-performance body scrub combines white marble powder and jojoba, almond oil, apricot oil and vitamin E to remove dead skin cells and refine and polish with no irritation.
- **Clarity Rx ClearZit On The Spot Blemish Control**—This easy-to-use applicator is ideal to spot-treat unexpected blemishes and breakouts. Mixed with salicylic acid, glycolic acid, menthol, witch hazel and camphor to combat breakouts, inflammation, redness and soreness.
- **emerginC Scientific Organics Citrus-Kombucha Body Wash**—Made with kombucha, aloe, grape stem cells, spirulina, pine bark extract and white and green teas, the wash provides a gentle, deep clean to leave your skin feeling silky and smooth.
- **Surya Brasil Sapien Women Shower Gel**—Free of BHT, EDTA, Parabens and sulfates, this provides deep hydration for the skin. It's formulated with natural coconut and mango essential oils, along with a trace of raspberry and vanilla.

If you need a little extra exfoliation on your back, use a brush like the Clarisonic Smart Profile once or twice a week. It's important to not overuse it because it can cause irritation. Make sure to change out the brush about every three months to avoid skin irritation and bacteria buildup.