



7 Ways You're Taking Off Your Makeup Wrong

By *Petra Guglielmetti* // May 27, 2016 10:05 Am



Katie Friedman

We know. Taking your makeup *off* is supposed to be the easy part. In fact, most nights, you feel like a gosh-darn American hero just for doing it at all. We're not here to add stress to your routine. But by doing some quick and easy troubleshooting, you can make your makeup removal routine go a lot more smoothly—and maybe dread it a little bit less. Just run through these seven common mistakes experts often see, along with their easy fixes. And hey, if none apply to you, imagine how proud you can feel then.

1. Rushing the job.

When it comes to removing eye makeup in particular, the slower you go, the better. "Let the technology do the work," says dermatologist Ranella Hirsch. "Apply makeup remover and let it sit, and sit some more. Give it a couple minutes, say while you brush and floss." This will soften mascara, liner, and shadow so it slips off easily and thoroughly once you finally wipe. "If you do this, you won't find smudges under your eyes in the morning anymore," Hirsch says. Giving remover time to work its magic also prevents you from having to rub/scrub with your makeup-remover pad—always a mistake, since friction can damage the delicate skin around your eyes, causing irritation and contributing to premature aging.

2. Leaving your hair down.

We totally get it: When it's past midnight and your pillow beckons, even an easy step like throwing your hair into a pony can feel like the most insurmountable P.I.T.A. But not doing so means you're likely stopping a couple inches short of your hairline when washing your face. "People often accumulate makeup residue around their hairline, which leads to clogged pores and breakouts," confirms celebrity facialist Joanna Vargas. Noted. Next time, we'll take the two seconds to tie it back. (Or you can slip on a terry headband if you're worried about dents.)

3. Relying on wipes.

Deep down you already knew they sounded too good to be true, right? Wipes can be an excellent first step in removing makeup, but a proper sink session should ideally follow. "Many of us make the mistake of just using wipes and going to bed, but the makeup really is *not* all off—you still have to wash your face ladies," says makeup artist Azra Red, telling us what we don't want to hear. "Using water and face wash is what's really going to remove residue and prep your skin for a good night regimen. If you use only wipes and then apply moisturizer, you might push dirt into your pores and wake up with pimples or blackheads." Well when you put it that way...

4. Using underwhelming cleanser.

That foamy stuff you've sworn by since 10th grade might not cut it anymore if your makeup routine has gotten more advanced. "Women tend to use face wash that isn't made to remove makeup," notes esthetician Joanna Czech. If you suspect yours falls into this category (evidence: those subtle BB cream smudges on your face towel post-cleanse), you could use a makeup remover like micellar water first—or consider switching to a cleansing oil or balm. These are among the most effective at coaxing off even the most stubborn makeup, like stay-put foundations, liquid lipsticks, and brow pigments (two great options to check out: Boscia Makeup-Breakup Cool Cleansing Oil and Clinique Take the Day Off Cleansing Balm).

We know what some of you are thinking—no way applying an oil-based product will leave your face cleaner. But the new oil cleansers really can work miracles. "A lot of people don't know that oil dissolves oil," says Czech, whose favorites include Tatcha One Step Camellia Cleansing Oil and La Mer The Cleansing Oil. She likes to remove them with a washcloth for added cleansing oomph. If you really can't stand the feel of an oil cleanser, she suggests milky and gel textures as good alternatives. Here are a couple others we love.

5. Missing this spot.

If there's one zone that's frequently neglected during makeup removal, it's the elusive edge of your eyelid, where liner and mascara can build up over time—and lead to eye irritation. Especially if you tightline your eyes with waterproof liquid, you might need to get in there with a more targeted tool and make sure every last speck is gone. "For detail work, I love the DHC cotton swabs with olive oil (\$6). They break everything down so you don't have to scrub, which results in lashes breaking off and falling out," says makeup artist Nick Barose. Speaking of lashes falling out, you also should never tug stubborn mascara chunks off with your fingers—but we suspect we didn't really need to tell you that. To coax clumps off without doing harm, make sure you give your remover enough time to penetrate (remember mistake No. 1?), and then press down gently with a flat cotton pad, moving slowly in the direction your lashes grow, to slide the mascara off.

6. Grabbing the cheapest cotton balls.

Despite their humble status in the beauty aisle—usually found hanging sadly in a plain bag off in some corner—the vessels you squirt your eye makeup remover on *aren't* all fluff. Or all created equal. "You don't want anything that's going to leave behind residue or break down during usage and leave fibers on your lashes or skin," says dermatologist Rebecca Kazin. That can lead to irritation at a time when you're trying to detox and soothe. Always opt for flat cotton pads instead of balls, ideally with a quilted texture. Basic drugstore pads work pretty well, says makeup artist Fiona Stiles—but specialty versions can be worth it for serious makeup wearers. "I only use Japanese cotton squares because the cotton is woven in such a way that it doesn't shed at all," she says. "They're like magical little pillows that remove everything."

7. Skipping the crucial last step.

Even if you don't have dry skin, makeup removal should always be followed up with at least some targeted moisture: Balm up those lips if you've just removed lipstick, and dab on eye cream. "Removing makeup can dry out the eye area, which is the most sensitive skin on your face," Kazin says. "You need to keep it soft and hydrated." Got it? OK, permission to hit that pillow granted.