

HOLD ON RONA' – I GOT THIS!

We're all ready to fast-forward to 2021 – yet for the foreseeable future, we're still bound to a masked existence. Here's how to take care of your skin and avoid 2020's most unexpected grooming issue: "maskne"

Words by **Jesé-Ché Lillienfeldt**

SKINCARE

Let's face it: when it comes to their skincare regime, guys are a tad lazier than women. But there's a good reason why the word *care*'s incorporated in skincare. Men's skin is different from women's, meaning that if they wear a mask for an extended amount of time, it'll affect their skin differently. 'Our skin's also 20 to 25% thicker than women's due to testosterone,' says cofounder of [beautyvault.co.za](#) Shaegan Morgan. 'Also, men shave often, almost daily, which removes the upper-most layer of their skin, leaving it irritated and sensitive. Men who have facial

hair can have problems given the warm air and moisture trapped underneath the mask.' Although donning a mask for short periods may not impact on your skin seriously, 'when you're wearing a mask for a prolonged time, your skin encounters a build-up of moisture and possible irritation,' notes Vassilli Droganis, director at Africology.

TREAT YOUR MASK AS YOU WOULD YOUR UNDERWEAR

In other words, change it every day. Our face masks come into contact with viruses, bacteria and

dirt as we're always touching them with our hands. We're also talking through them, so sweat, saliva and bacteria can build up inside the mask during the day. Dead skin cells, oils and products can be embedded in the fabric, creating an unhygienic environment that can lead to breakouts. Don't use a dirty face mask as you may increase your chances of 'maskne' – acne caused when sweat, oil and bacteria are trapped on your skin while wearing a mask. 'Maskne is a common issue among professionals who have to use a mask regularly,' says Morgan. 'When you breathe and talk, your

mask tends to trap warm air, moisture and saliva, creating the ideal environment for bacteria to grow. These bacterial imbalances, and friction from the mask, can clog your pores and can result in acne or fine pimples."

STAY AWAY FROM THESE GUYS

Avoid products that contain alcohol or are fragrance-based. Any petrolatum-based products will aggravate your skin and block your pores, so ditch those. Then, look out for harsh foaming agents such as sodium laureth sulfate, which can seriously irritate and dry out your skin.

ESSENTIALS TO INCORPORATE IN YOUR ROUTINE

When choosing a moisturiser, you want to protect your skin by creating a barrier between it and your mask. Pick one that's noncomedogenic, which means it won't clog your pores or cause breakouts.

>> **Vitamin E** is an antioxidant that fights free radicals (unstable molecules caused by sun exposure and pollution) and protects your skin, reducing the appearance sagging, wrinkles, and roughness.

>> **Hyaluronic acid** – It naturally occurs in your joints, skin and eyes, and slowly decreases as you age. When applied to the surface of your skin, it works as a humectant to retain moisture. That makes your skin look plump, healthy and youthful.

>> **Glycerine** also acts as a humectant. It improves hydration, protects against irritants, boosts your skin barrier function, and speeds up the wound-healing process.

FIVE WAYS TO PREVENT SKIN ISSUES

- 01** Healthy skin stems from consistent behaviour and choosing the right products for your skin type – but it also requires a holistic approach. Monitor your diet, water intake, sleep patterns and even your moods.
- 02** Wear a clean, sanitised fabric mask, or a new disposable one, daily.
- 03** Apply extra moisturiser to the area your mask covers. Masks absorb moisturiser, leading to skin dehydration. Be sure to wear sunscreen daily, even when the sun isn't shining.
- 04** Use a purifying treatment more often than usual to treat skin congestion and prevent breakouts.
- 05** Use a lip gel or lip balm that's hydrating and moisturising as chapped and dry lips are a byproduct of wearing a face mask.



BEARD CARE 101

It's vital to care for the skin underneath your facial hair. When your skin is covered, you often neglect washing and moisturising. We all know by now that beards harbour all kinds of ugly, potentially harmful bacteria – and they can lead to skin problems. Some of these problems, including ingrown hairs, can be exacerbated if you scratch, as this encourages bacteria to travel up

the hair to the surface of the skin. That bacteria, along with dry skin and ingrown hairs, contribute to itchiness. If you cover your skin, it doesn't get to breathe as often as other exposed areas. 'Maintain your skin by keeping it clean and hydrated, especially if you have a beard. Otherwise, you could end up with 'beardruff', and your skin could dry out, appearing flaky or scaly,' says Droganis.

THREE THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT SKINCARE

- 01** Start caring for your skin sooner rather than later. It helps prep your skin for any long-term damage that you may not be able to see now but will be evident in a few years.
- 02** An effective skincare routine

doesn't have to be daunting – and it can help prevent acne, treat wrinkles, keep skin looking healthy, and reduce premature skin ageing.

03 For healthy skin, invest in a cleanser that's pH balanced and use an exfoliator to get rid of dead skin cells. ❌