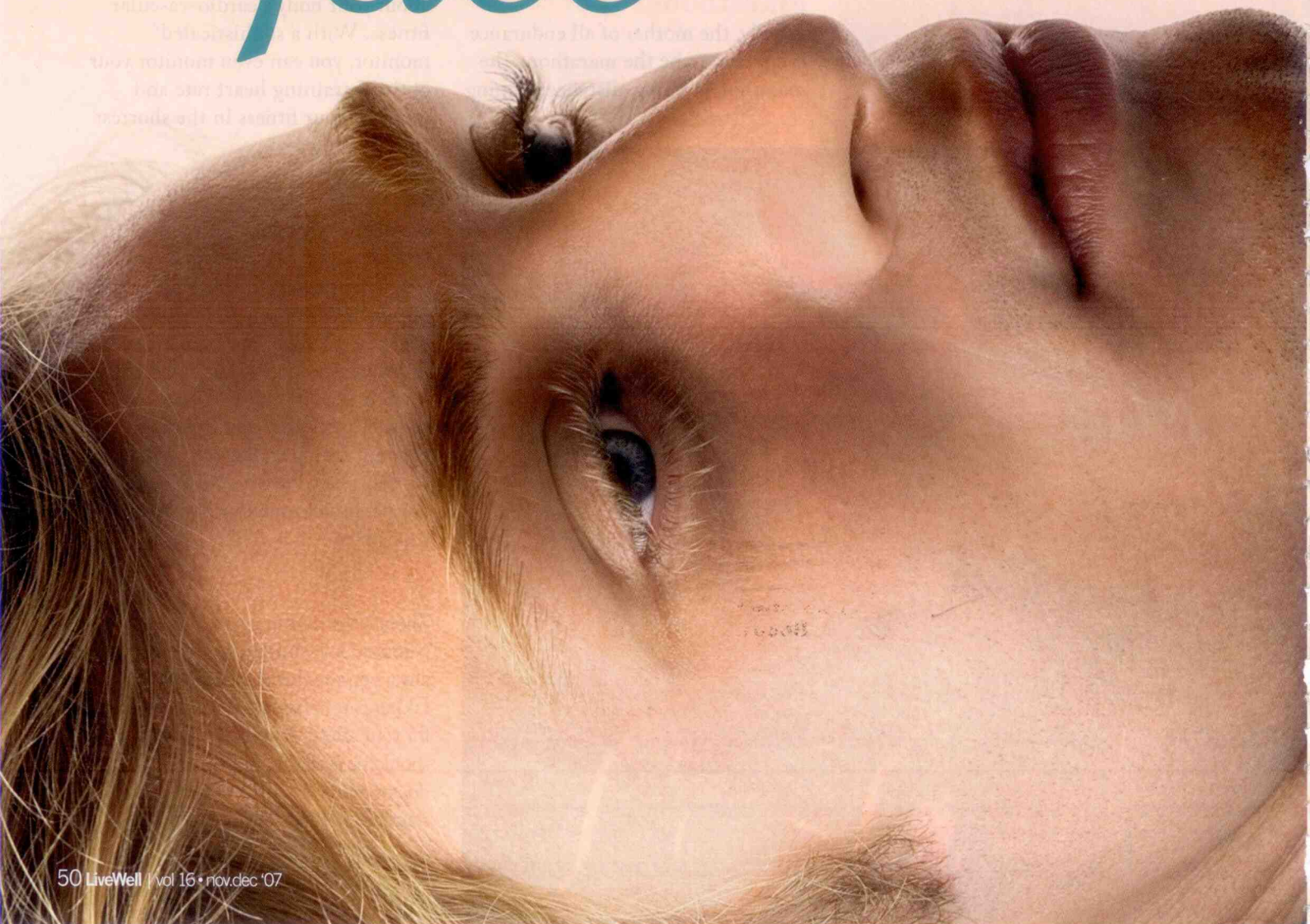


Think facials are only for women? Take note: men have faces too! Find out why you need one!

# Saving face

**H**ave you got a thick skin? If you do, it won't hurt to hear this: a man's face is about 20% thicker than a woman's face. But while you might shrug off embarrassments that most women won't be able to live down, there's also a catch: in addition to thicker skin, a man's face contains more active oil-producing sebaceous glands.

Hence it is also oilier. Then again, it is also firmer as it has more collagen and elastin. What all this means is, while your facial skin is more resilient against environmental effects like pollution and the sun, at the end of the day, it requires more deep cleansing on a day-to-day basis than a woman's face does.



Yet the great unwashed masses of men are aplenty for all to see. Most men do not understand the importance of having a regular cleansing routine. And for some very dire cases, perhaps only a prolonged bout of facials and medication can clear up their skin. Are you one of them?

### Face the problem

Men are very susceptible to acne breakouts and pimples due to their oilier skin. Male hormones are responsible for stimulating sebum (oil) production, quantities of which build up when the pores are blocked by dirt or grime, leading to the formation of blackheads and whiteheads.

These are in turn time-bombs waiting to become inflamed acne, triggered by the action of certain bacteria in the skin. The result: unsightly, pus-oozing blemishes on the skin that may mar your otherwise handsome features.

According to Dr Wong Su-Ni, Consultant Dermatologist at Pacific Specialist Practice, in the case of a severe acne outbreak, a dermatologist should be consulted, for appropriate treatment that goes beyond the skin to target the acne-causing bacteria.

### Face off your fears

Say you don't have acne. You should still adopt a daily cleansing regime, to unclog your pores and get rid of dead skin cells. And, maybe you should consider going for facials on a regular basis. Guys, despite your gut reaction to what you might consider an effeminate activity – read on to find out what you need to know about facials!

Most facials consist of a few steps: washing of skin in preparation for extraction, extraction (which refers to the elimination of blackheads and whiteheads), application of a skin

mask which makes the skin smooth and supple (different skin masks have different effects), toning (to close up pores), and depending on the treatment required, an acid peel to exfoliate dead cells and allow new layers of skin epidermis to surface.

This last process eventually lightens up skin pigmentation, eliminating blemishes and creating a smooth, glowing complexion that even girls might envy. However, not all facials are created equal. Says Dr Wong, "facials vary as do the skill of the therapist. Some are very "gung-ho" and try to extract everything, which can actually cause deeper inflammation, while others are wiser and extract only blackheads."

It is important to note that the first time that you go for a facial, if your skin contains a lot of impurities, it may take a while for improvements to show up. Patience and perseverance is the key.

### Face up to reality

If you have been worrying about the credibility of a particular facial treatment, stop. Even though many of these are not medically proven, it does not necessarily mean that they contain no benefits. Controlled studies have been shown that many of these therapies are better than placebo.

Common facial procedures like IPL (Intense Pulsed Light), radiofrequency and acid peels have medically proven benefits for pigmentation and acne, early sagging, and fine wrinkles and superficial scars respectively, but only with certain machines and at specific doses (e.g. higher concentrations of chemical peels)

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that may not be available at some facial therapy centres.

And while not all facials may be equal in benefits, some do help you to relax and in the soothing environment, provide pampering relaxation for the soul.

Depending on the condition of your skin, the therapist may suggest certain procedures together coupled with an in-house package. Prices range from \$60 upwards for a single session to more than \$160, and this can even vary based on the type of procedures and packages taken up.

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Your face may be your most precious asset. It is the window through which the outside world looks upon your personality and intellect, and as the saying goes, it can be used to read you like a book.

So you've been wondering if you should have a facial, go for one with the knowledge you have gained here and experience the difference it can make. Beautiful skin belongs to everyone, not just women. **LW**