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SKIN ■ MOISTURIZERS

How to Layer Moisturizers Like a Pro: Experts Explain the Dos and Don'ts

written by [ALFREDO MINEO](#) DECEMBER 11, 2024



Moisturizers are the plain white t-shirt of beauty. They are a staple in any routine, and depending on how you use them, you will achieve a slightly different end result. No matter who you ask, from a dermatologist or a #BeautyTok influencer, almost everyone will agree—moisturizing is crucial for [every skin type](#) (yes, that includes [acne-prone skin](#)). That said, everyone has a slightly different opinion on the best way to use the product.

MEET THE EXPERTS

- [Connie Yang](#) is a board-certified dermatologist of [PFRANKMD](#) by [Dr. Paul Jarrod Frank](#)

Choosing the Right Moisturizer

Not all moisturizers are created equal, and for good reason. Similar to key ingredients, texture may be another key factor in finding your perfect product. "If you have oily skin, consider a [lightweight gel-cream moisturizer](#) that dries down quickly without leaving the skin greasy," says [Dr. Connie Yang](#) of [PFRANKMD](#). "For those with dry skin, look for a thicker moisturizing cream that contains a combination of [humectants](#) and occlusives to draw in moisture and seal it." She notes that those with acne-prone skin should avoid occlusives as they can be [comedogenic](#).

Layering 101

To layer or not to layer? That is the question. There are no hard and fast rules on this one, according to the experts. However, if you have particularly dry skin or find yourself in colder weather, an added barrier to keep your skin hydrated might be in order. "[While it may not be necessary to layer moisturizers] if you're choosing the right product for your skin type, it can be helpful to double up on moisturizers to combat the dry winter months," says [Dr. Yang](#).

How to Layer Moisturizer

"When [applying skincare](#), the rule of thumb is to apply from thinnest to thickest consistency," explains [Dr. Yang](#). "Lighter serums go on before thicker creams to ensure proper penetration. This applies to moisturizers as well." Start with the lightest moisturizer on your vanity and work your way up to the heavy-duty formulas. For example, use the thin water-based gel formulas first before you reach for a thick cream.

While this process might remind you of [slugging](#), they are not the same thing. "Slugging involves applying a layer of occlusive ointment, like Vaseline or Aquaphor, on top of your skincare to increase penetration and absorption while also sealing in moisture and preventing transepidermal water loss," explains [Dr. Yang](#). In short, slugging is an intensive treatment and not the same as layering a few moisturizers together.