

WELCOME TO blemish boot camp

A whopping 80 per cent of us are blighted by acne at some point in our lives. Here, leading dermatologists give their definitive guide to beating it at home...

1 KILL 'EM WITH KINDNESS

Does your zit-zapping arsenal consist of toothpaste, clays, peels and a DIY concoction you've seen a reality TV star use on Instagram? Put 'em down!

According to every skin boffin we've quizzed, we're being way too tough on spots.

'People feel they have to be really active. They'll wake up with the odd blemish, and reach for all kinds of harsh scrubs and masks, without any kind of logic or routine. It's the worst thing you can do – you're actually damaging your skin's barrier and making it even more vulnerable,' says leading dermatologist Dr Justine Hextall on behalf of The Harley Medical Group.

2 CLEANSE SMART

Ready to take a new gentle approach? Start with your cleanser. 'A mild formula will help your skin tolerate any treatments you apply afterwards,' Justine tells



us. 'Avoid foaming face washes that leave skin squeaky and tight. They strip your skin and result in more breakouts,' agrees Dr Sam Bunting – a dermatologist who's treated hundreds of acne sufferers during her career.

'Instead, choose a gel or cream cleanser, massage a two pound-sized amount for one minute, then wipe off using a damp muslin cloth before rinsing,' explains Sam, who

rates **Cetaphil Gentle Skin Cleanser, £8.99**, or for a deeper clean, **Avène Extremely Gentle Cleanser, £10.50**.

3 TRAINING YOUR SKIN

Forget overnight miracle-workers. 'People often give up on a product if they don't see an effect immediately. But our skin has a six-week cycle and, as with

workouts for your body, you should expect improvements over months not days,' reveals Sam.

'You'll get the best results if you build up your usage slowly. When it comes to

treatment creams (see our picks on the next page), start with a quarter of a gram every other day – that's equivalent to a line from your finger tip to the first crease – halved. After two weeks, if you're comfortable, apply this daily. After another two weeks, you can up it to half a gram,' she adds. 'Avoid your eyes, lips and the creases of your nose, and apply all over – not just on active blemishes.'



4 SHAKE UP YOUR MAKE-UP

'When acne sufferers visit my clinic, I go through their make-up routine, too. Often, they'll be using heavy-duty, long-wear foundations that can't be removed easily. Powders can be problematic as well.'

'Get into the habit of choosing lightweight, non-comedogenic (ie, non-pore blocking) make-up that can be removed with a gentle cleanser, using high-cover concealers only where you really need it,' explains Sam

(drsamskincareclub.com). Her favourites? **Armani Luminous Silk Foundation, £42**, **Lancôme Teint Miracle Foundation, £31.50**, and **Vichy Dermablend Foundation Stick, £15**. To erase big blighters? **NARS Radiant Creamy Concealer, £22.50**, gets Sam's vote. Remember to regularly wash your make-up brushes and pillow cases.

5 KICK-ASS MOISTURISERS

'Your skin can become drier or more irritable when you're going through acne treatment, and the right moisturising product will ease that,' says Sam, who recommends one for dry days and another for oilier times. 'We can be oilier the week before our period or drier after a boozy night out,' she explains. 'Moisturiser should usually be applied after your treatment cream, although sensitive complexions may find it helpful to do the reverse when trying a new spot product.'

Sam rates **Obagi Hydrate Facial Moisturiser, £48**, harleymedical.co.uk, while our testers like the results from **Clinique Moisture Surge 72-Hour Auto-Replenishing Hydrator, £36**.



87%

OF WOMEN IN EUROPE SAY ACNE HAS A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON THEIR LIVES, INCLUDING THEIR MOOD, SOCIAL INTERACTIONS AND EMOTIONAL STATE, ACCORDING TO THE NEUTROGENA SPOTLIGHT MOMENTS INDEX REPORT.

'Even after things started to clear up, it took a solid amount of time to be OK with my skin and gain confidence. But I realised it doesn't define who you are,' says 22-year-old Kendall Jenner, who still publicly battles acne.

