



## WHERE DID ESSENCES COME FROM?

While it seems like essences popped up overnight, they've actually been around for a while, but only recently gained traction. "Women gravitate toward essences due to their light texture," says Christine Chang, founder of Glow Recipe, an e-tailer focused on Korean beauty products. "They are more potent, concentrated treatment options and can be layered with lotion or moisturizer for boosted results." Essences remain a beauty mainstay in Korea because their properties make them compatible with a multistep skin-care regimen.

## HOW THEY WORK

Essences are void of much filler, so the actives in them (hyaluronic acid, botanical extracts, antioxidants, acids and fermented ingredients) are delivered deeper. "Their consistency lets water-soluble ingredients penetrate quickly," says Redondo Beach, CA, dermatologist Annie Chiu, MD. "They give a light dew, but not as much hydration as a moisturizer." Essences can be layered for better penetration of products applied afterward. For the most part, they work to nourish, hydrate and protect skin.



## HOW TO APPLY THEM:

You would think that an essence would be applied similarly to a toner, using a cotton ball or pad. But, that's not the case.

### STEP 01

Pour a small amount of product into your palm.

### STEP 02

Pat the product into your skin. Your hands allow for more of the product to be absorbed into your skin than a cotton pad does. Plus, it helps to stimulate blood circulation.



(shown on previous page)

### La Mer The Brightening Essence Intense

**\$320, [cremedelamer.com](http://cremedelamer.com)**

**Good for:** Major brightening and tackling signs of aging

**What's in it:** The brand's VibraWhite Ferment Blend

For skin that needs a boost in tone and clarity, this is the essence you want to use. Loaded with brighteners and fermented ingredients, the formulation helps soften and hydrate skin while creating a more luminous complexion with nearly invisible pores.

**What the tester says:**

"It goes on easily with a milky consistency and my skin seems brighter and more even in tone."

### LJH TeaTree 90 Essence

**\$45, [glowrecipe.com](http://glowrecipe.com)**

**Good for:** Oily and acne-prone skin

**What's in it:** Tea tree oil

Tea tree is one of the oldest remedies used to soothe oily, acneic and red skin, so it's no wonder that it's the star ingredient in this product. Apply it right after washing your face (and toning, if you use a toner) to treat troubled skin while infusing it with moisture and taking down inflammation.

**What the tester says:**

"It absorbs right into my skin and leaves it feeling baby soft."

### SK-II Mid-Day Essence

**\$80, [sk-ii.com](http://sk-ii.com)**

**Good for:** Moisturizing and hydrating skin

**What's in it:** Pitera, a vitamin-rich yeast

The sister product to the brand's Facial Treatment Essence, this spray-on version keeps skin fresh and guarded from the effects of the environment. Use it alone, before or after applying your makeup, or throughout the day.

**What the tester says:**

"I use this spray midday to wake up my tired-looking skin and give my makeup that perfect dewy effect."

### Missha Time Revolution The First Treatment Essence

**\$49, [misshaus.com](http://misshaus.com)**

**Good for:** Improving elasticity and getting a healthy glow

**What's in it:** Fermented yeast and niacinamide

A favorite in Korea, this essence works to promote healthier, stronger skin by strengthening its protective barrier, shielding against sun damage and refreshing its overall look and feel.

**What the tester says:**

"It feels like water on my skin, but is pretty powerful! When I apply it before my moisturizer, my skin instantly looks better than normal."

### Su Man Skincare Rehydrating Toning Essence

**\$62, [net-a-porter.com](http://net-a-porter.com)**

**Good for:** Getting a plumping effect

**What's in it:** Hyaluronic acid, rose petal and green tea extract

This gel essence, created by famed aesthetician Su-Man, blends Eastern traditions with Western technology. When used twice a day, it invigorates your skin to leave it feeling moisturized, plump and with a dewy glow.

**What the tester says:**

"It provides just enough hydration so that I don't need to apply any moisturizer on top."