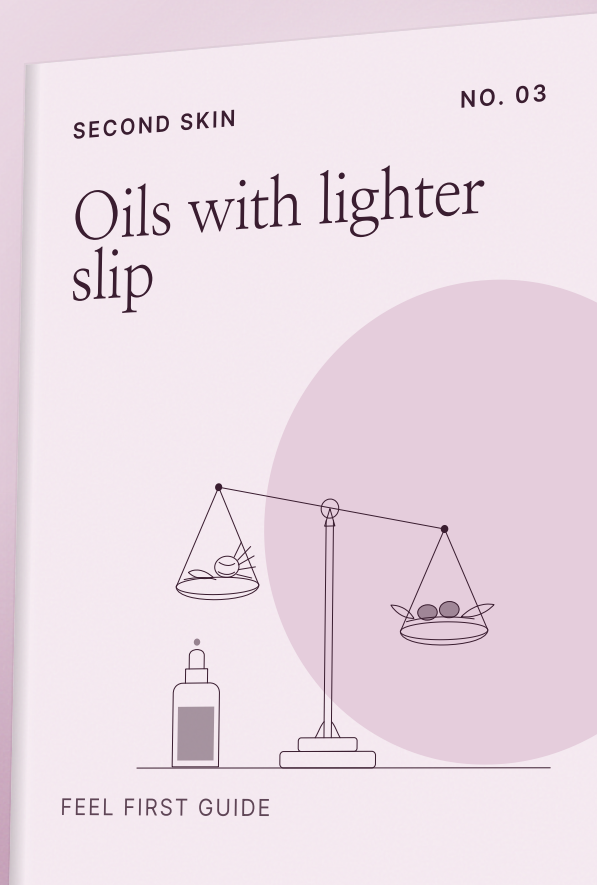




TEXTURE GUIDE · TEXTURE

Facial oils without the heavy greasy feeling

Too many oils leave a slick film that sits all evening and stains a pillowcase. This tactile guide translates fatty acid balance, pore ratings and freshness into feel, so a reader can pick a weight she enjoys and keep it part of a morning or night ritual.

- **Feel acids**
Linoleic sinks fast and thin while oleic leaves soft cushion.
- **Question charts**
Pore scores started in rabbit ears long before human tests.
- **Protect bottles**
Small dark bottles kept cool hold scent and glide.

By Melissa Whitaker · Updated Aug 12, 2026 · 10 min read

CONTENTS

01	What linoleic and oleic acids mean on skin	05	Keeping oils fresh, pressed well and easy to use
02	Getting to know oils through fatty acid weight	06	The checklist
03	Matching texture to oily, dry, sensitive and mature skin	07	Sources and further reading
04	Reading comedogenic scores without letting them rule		

Every bathroom shelf holds that one pump bottle bought with hope and left untouched. It looked lovely, the cap had real heft, then two drops sat on the cheeks like plastic wrap and never sank in. Understanding slip, cushion and staying power turns that gamble into a calmer choice that fits a routine.

01

What linoleic and oleic acids mean on skin

Linoleic acid is built from 18 carbons with 2 double bonds, and human bodies cannot synthesize it. Oleic acid is also built from 18 carbons but with only 1 double bond, and human bodies can create it. That tiny structural contrast changes the sensation in use, with linoleic linked toward support and oleic linked toward softness and glide.

Ceramides account for roughly 50 percent of the skin barrier and rely on linoleic acid for production, notably ceramide 1. When ceramide 1 receives enough linoleic acid for its task, the barrier retains water more uniformly and feels smoother to the touch. Plant oils consist of triglycerides at generally around 99 percent plus unsaponifiable matter at generally around 1 percent, covering phytosterols, squalene, carotenoids and vitamin E, so the fatty acid profile influences feel more than the minor fraction.

Sebum reflects the same pattern from within. People with oily acne prone skin often show sebum low in linoleic acid and elevated in oleic acid. Sebum depleted in linoleic grows thicker and moves less freely through the pore, which favors blockage. That association does not show that smoothing on a linoleic rich oil fixes acne or substitutes for acne treatment or sunscreen, and the topical dose of linoleic acid required to alter sebum makeup across individuals remains unknown.

Oleic acid functions chiefly as a monounsaturated softener that adds suppleness and padding. It also serves as a penetration enhancer, allowing companion lipid ingredients to settle toward upper layers. A face oil remains lipid based and fails to supply water the way a humectant moisturiser does, but may ease dry skin and help lessen the sense of moisture loss. Plush oleic oils can feel soothing on unbroken dry skin, yet references differ on their fit for sensitive or

inflamed skin. A review covering 27 clinical studies across 17 vegetable oils concluded oils rich in oleic acid with little or no linoleic acid may provoke further structural harm in the stratum corneum on inflammation affected skin, while unaffected skin may accept them.

02

Getting to know oils through fatty acid weight

High linoleic oils touch lighter and travel fast with brief cushion. Safflower contains about 75 to 80 percent linoleic acid, grapeseed contains about 70 to 75 percent, and hemp seed contains about 55 to 60 percent linoleic acid. Rosehip behaves as part of this airier set in practice, though the examined figures focus on hemp, safflower and grapeseed. These textures favor people who dislike heft, and they layer neatly above a water based moisturiser.

High oleic oils touch richer and keep a longer supple veil. Olive contains about 70 to 80 percent oleic acid, avocado contains about 60 to 70 percent, and sweet almond contains about 60 to 70 percent oleic acid. Apricot kernel falls close to this fuller group and usually seems a touch lighter than olive or avocado. Fullness can flatter dry cheeks, shins, elbows and hair tips, where added glide feels like attention instead of slickness.

Mid range choices rest between those extremes. Argan provides a middle course for people seeking some substance without weight. Jojoba oil is described as truly a wax ester that echoes sebum architecture, with about 5 to 10 percent linoleic content, which clarifies why a tiny amount seems sufficient. It stretches thinly, remains relatively steady, and fits facial routines when denser oils seem excessive.

Coconut oil sits separately because saturation dominates it. An examined composition table lists about 48 to 52 percent lauric acid, 18 to 19 percent myristic acid, 8 to 9 percent palmitic acid, 5 to 6 percent oleic acid and 1 to 2 percent linoleic acid. That saturated build keeps it firm at cool room temperature and substantial on skin. Many faces experience it as too weighty, while legs, feet and hair lengths may appreciate it.

OIL TYPE	FATTY ACID CHARACTER	TEXTURE AND BEST FIRST USE
Safflower, grapeseed, hemp seed	High linoleic, polyunsaturated	Thin and quick, suited to oily or combination faces
Olive, avocado, sweet almond, apricot kernel	High oleic, monounsaturated	Plush and pillowy, suited to dry or mature skin
Argan, jojoba wax ester	Balanced or wax based	Medium body, suited to daily facial layering
Coconut	Mostly lauric and myristic, saturated	Thick and sealing, suited to body rather than face

FROM THE EDITORS

Oleic means monounsaturated, with one double bond that feels plusher and lasts longer, yet may irritate skin where inflammation has already weakened the barrier. Linoleic means essential and polyunsaturated, with two double bonds that assist ceramide synthesis but turn rancid sooner.

03

Matching texture to oily, dry, sensitive and mature skin

Oily and acne prone skin generally favors airy linoleic rich oils applied sparingly. Safflower, grapeseed and hemp seed deposit less padding and blend more smoothly above a gel or light lotion. Begin with nighttime application only, monitor for blockage across two to three weeks, and maintain acne medicine and sunscreen as usual. Oil lends comfort in this setting, it fails to treat acne alone.

Dry and mature skin frequently favors oleic rich padding that smooths fine texture. Olive, avocado and sweet almond press agreeably into slightly moist skin above moisturiser, when the humectant film grips water and the oil slows its departure. A sheer second pass across cheeks or around the mouth can help during cold weather. Body skin accepts fuller application, so residual oil on the palms can close over shins, elbows or cuticles instead of rinsing away.

Sensitive skin prefers minimal variables. Select a fragrance free single oil, test a patch along the jaw or behind the ear, and add one product at a time and observe. Apricot kernel or sweet almond may seem gentler than olive for certain faces, while other people favor jojoba for its

delicate wax ester glide. Where skin shows cracks, eczema tendency or fresh inflammation, restraint matters because high oleic low linoleic oils may harm stratum corneum on inflammation affected skin. A clinician can advise whether oil should pause until calm resumes.

Combination skin can hold two textures together. A sheer linoleic oil may flatter the forehead and nose, while a fuller oleic oil flatters cheeks and neck. Hair tips also accept oil gracefully, particularly avocado or sweet almond eased lightly through dry lengths. Keeping face and body applications distinct prevents moving a dense body oil onto a reactive face.

04

Reading comedogenic scores without letting them rule

The 0 to 5 comedogenic scale originates from rabbit ear assays reported by Fulton, Pay and Fulton in 1984, in which materials were placed on rabbit inner ear for 2 to 4 weeks. By touch, rabbit inner ear reacts far more strongly than human facial skin. Starzyk and colleagues note the rabbit ear model reacts to the slightest touch in their 2025 JAAD Reviews review. A number that appeared worrying in that system may carry little relevance for a human cheek.

Human research offers a softer view. A 2006 study by Draelos and DiNardo in the Journal of the American Academy of Dermatology assessed finished cosmetic products on human upper back skin and found finished products were not necessarily comedogenic. A cream made with pore clogging ingredients does not always clog pores say Draelos and DiNardo dermatology researchers. A 2021 double blind randomised human trial by Waranuch et al. found four finished creams containing lanolin, apricot kernel, avocado and sunflower lipids were non comedogenic while octyl palmitate increased microcomedone counts. Strength and placement on the ingredient list, the complete formula, and individual clogging tendency all affect the outcome.

Public charts introduce further confusion. Ingredients scored 0 to 2 are widely viewed as the safer band and 3 and above as deserving care for acne prone skin, yet the same plant lipid may register 0 on one site and 2 on another. A 2025 JAAD Reviews review found the term noncomedogenic has no legal meaning in the US and consumer rating databases follow no scientific or regulatory standards. Which precise finished formulas will block pores for a specific person absent personal testing remains unanswered by research.

Treat scores as a loose sorting aid, not a ruling. No oil and butter rating chart can promise how a finished cream will sit on acne prone skin say Herbal Dynamics Beauty guide authors. Test a fresh oil for two weeks, hold the remainder of the routine constant, and track blockage, comfort and texture. Lived observation outweighs any isolated digit.

FROM THE EDITORS

Finished formula, quantity applied, and personal skin count more than any lone ingredient number. A non-comedogenic label has no legal definition in the US, so view it as brand intent instead of a guarantee.

05

Keeping oils fresh, pressed well and easy to use

Polyunsaturated linoleic rich oils turn stale sooner than oleic rich or saturated oils, particularly under heat, light and air. Oxidation flattens aroma, darkens tone and roughens slip. Cold pressed oils usually carry a shorter shelf life of 12 to 18 months and belong in a cool dark spot with the cap closed. How long a particular opened oil remains fresh in a home bathroom compared with laboratory storage lacks firm proof, so choose small bottles, mark the opening date, and store oil clear of steam and sun.

Extraction style alters color, aroma and longevity. Cold pressing means mechanical separation with no heat above 120 degrees F (49 degrees C) and no chemical solvents. The finished oil preserves more tocopherols, polyphenols and pigments, which many founders value for personality. Refining may involve solvent extraction with hexane, degumming, neutralisation with sodium hydroxide, bleaching through clay, and deodorising at 450 to 500 degrees F (230 to 260 degrees C). Refined oils still perform as softeners and may bring more neutral scent colour consistency and stability for certain formulas. Organic as a farming standard fails to indicate extraction method, so examine labels for both phrases. Whether cold pressed trace compounds create measurable lasting skin gains relative to refined versions of the same oil stays unproven.

Everyday application remains uncomplicated when oil finishes the sequence. Face oil guidance suggests using 1 to 3 drops warmed between fingertips and pressed into slightly damp skin, or layered above moisturiser at night. Warmth loosens the oil, dampness assists spread, and pressing limits tug. Oil cleansing keeps a separate rhythm as a wash off practice, with oil worked across dry skin then lifted with a soft cloth or second cleanser. Blending a drop into moisturiser rescues a lotion that seems too sheer in winter. Add one product at a time and observe, so any shift in breakouts or softness traces back to the oil itself.

The checklist

-
- ☐ Pick linoleic safflower grapeseed or hemp for oily faces
-
- ☐ Pick oleic olive avocado or almond for dry skin
-
- ☐ Consider jojoba or argan when middle weight appeals
-
- ☐ Reserve coconut oil for body hair ends or feet if face clogs
-
- ☐ Test a fresh oil near the jaw for two weeks
-
- ☐ Press 1 to 3 drops into slightly damp skin at night
-
- ☐ Place oil as the last layer above moisturiser, not below
-
- ☐ Use oil cleansing as a wash off phase before cleanser
-
- ☐ Stir one drop into moisturiser for winter dryness
-
- ☐ Select small dark bottles and mark the opening date
-
- ☐ Hold oil cool dark and closed, distant from shower steam
-
- ☐ Select fragrance free single oils for sensitive skin
-
- ☐ Maintain acne care and sunscreen steady while trialing oil
-
- ☐ Discard oil that smells sharp looks darker or feels rough
-

Sources and further reading

- Comedogenicity in cosmeceuticals: A review of clinical relevance, regulatory gaps, and future directions · [sciencedirect.com](https://www.sciencedirect.com)
- Vegetable Butters and Oils as Therapeutically and Cosmetically Active Ingredients for Dermal Use: A Review of Clinical Studies · [pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov)
- Comedogenic Checker — Ratings for Any Product's Ingredients · comedogenic-checker.com
- Cold Pressed Oil for Skin: A Simple Guide to Choosing Quality Face Oils · conscious-skincare.com
- Is the Comedogenic Scale Accurate? Where the 0–5 Ratings Really Come From — and the 4-Week Test That Beats Them *CallNature Journal* · callnature.com
- Is It Comedogenic? How Pore-Clogging Ratings Work · scienceinsights.org

For information only, not medical advice. Patch test anything new, and see a dermatologist about a reaction that lasts, spreads or stings.



WRITTEN BY

Melissa Whitaker

Melissa produces the interviews at Second Skin: the research, the question lists, the follow-ups. She asks every founder how a formula should feel at nine at night, then asks why it took eleven samples to get there.
