# Experts warn against viral ’caveman method’ of skipping all skincare and washing



The rise of viral trends on social media has led to the emergence of various unconventional practices, with the latest being the so-called “caveman method” of skincare. This controversial routine involves eschewing all skincare products and even running water, allowing the skin to “heal” on its own. TikTok creator Tia Zakher has become a prominent advocate of this trend, drawing millions of viewers and sparking intense debate over its efficacy and safety. In her videos, Zakher showcases her flaking skin, explaining that what viewers see is merely dead skin that will eventually slough off as new skin emerges underneath.

Despite Zakher's enthusiasm, experts remain highly sceptical of this approach. Associate Professor Deshan Sebaratnam, a dermatologist at the Skin Hospital in Sydney, firmly advises against it. He highlights that while the human body naturally sheds skin cells, prolonged neglect of skincare can lead to complications, such as terra firma-forme, a condition characterized by excessive dead skin accumulation, which is more likely to occur in those who do not maintain regular hygiene.

Similarly, Associate Professor Yousuf Mohammed from the University of Queensland warns that although sebum, the skin’s natural oil, offers some protection, failing to wash the skin can create a breeding ground for harmful bacteria. “The caveman technique may have worked in prehistoric times, but today’s modern environment is rife with pollutants,” he noted. This observation raises essential questions about the applicability of ancestral practices to contemporary skincare routines.

The rationale behind the caveman method purports that completely avoiding skincare products allows the skin to reset itself. However, medical professionals argue that not all skin types share the same needs or tolerances. Dr. Ginni Mansberg, a GP and founder of ESK Skincare, underscores that there is no scientific evidence endorsing the method’s effectiveness. Individuals with sensitive skin or conditions like eczema might benefit from minimal skincare regimens, but suggesting complete avoidance is not universally advisable.

The notion that skincare brands promote excessively complicated regimens is also brought into focus. Sebaratnam criticises the prevailing myth that skincare must consist of multiple steps to be effective. He advocates for a more straightforward approach: applying sunscreen in the morning and using a gentle, soap-free cleanser in the evening. Such basic measures are sufficient for most individuals and can help prevent the build-up of oil and grime without the risk of irritation commonly associated with more aggressive products.

Opportunities for skin improvement often arise from understanding individual needs rather than relying on trends pushed by social media. Many consumers tend to gravitate towards expensive products, believing cost correlates with efficacy. However, Sebaratnam insists that the benefits derived from skincare can often be similar, regardless of the price tag attached to the product. Awareness of personal skin objectives can guide individuals in selecting products that are more effective for their unique conditions.

The caveman method, despite its alluring premise of simplicity and naturalness, exemplifies the potential dangers of disregarding professional medical advice in favour of viral trends. As dermatologists and skincare experts continue to challenge the method's credibility, they advocate for the importance of a balanced skincare routine, tailored to personal needs—underscoring that thoughtful care often yields the best results for the skin.

### Reference Map

1. Informed paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 4
2. Informed paragraph 3
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4. Informed paragraph 2, 4
5. Informed paragraph 2
6. Informed paragraph 2
7. Informed paragraph 2

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2025/may/13/caveman-method-skincare-routine-tiktok-tia-zakher> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://metro.co.uk/2023/02/28/can-the-caveman-skincare-routine-really-reset-your-skin-18315038/> - This article examines the 'caveman regimen,' a skincare trend where individuals avoid all skincare products to 'reset' their skin. Dr. Ginni Mansberg, a GP and founder of ESK Skincare, states there's no scientific evidence supporting its effectiveness. She emphasizes that while some products may irritate the skin, completely avoiding all skincare products isn't advisable for everyone, as different skin types have varying needs.
3. <https://www.popsugar.com/beauty/caveman-regimen-skin-care-49092385> - This piece explores the 'caveman regimen,' a skincare practice involving the cessation of all skincare products, including makeup and face washing, to allow the skin to 'reset.' Dr. Lal explains that while it can be beneficial for those with allergic skin diseases or eczema, the results are mixed, and some individuals may experience adverse effects.
4. <https://www.foxnews.com/lifestyle/why-the-caveman-regimen-is-a-scary-example-of-beauty-advice-gone-wrong> - This article discusses the 'caveman regimen,' a skincare trend where individuals avoid all skincare products, including face washing, to 'reset' their skin. Experts, including dermatologist Joshua Zeichner, M.D., highlight the lack of scientific evidence supporting this method and caution against neglecting regular cleansing, which is important for skin health.
5. <https://www.thehealthsite.com/beauty/acne/caveman-regime-will-living-like-a-caveman-give-you-acne-free-skin-k1217-546379/> - This article delves into the 'caveman regimen,' a skincare practice where individuals avoid all skincare products and face washing to let the skin 'heal.' While some proponents claim benefits, the article cautions that in urban environments, neglecting cleansing can lead to clogged pores and exacerbated skin issues.
6. <https://acneeinstein.com/caveman-regimen-for-acne/> - This article examines the 'caveman regimen,' a skincare practice involving the cessation of all skincare products and face washing to allow the skin to 'reset.' It discusses the lack of scientific evidence supporting this method and suggests that improvements may be due to the removal of specific irritants rather than the regimen itself.
7. <https://www.innateskin.com/caveman-regimen-skin-care/> - This article critiques the 'caveman regimen,' a skincare practice where individuals avoid all skincare products and face washing to let the skin 'heal.' It highlights issues with this approach, noting that modern environmental factors differ significantly from those in caveman times, making the regimen less applicable today.