

# Acne Positivity: But Where Are The Men?

WHY ACNE IS A MEN'S ISSUE TOO

BY KIM HASLAM

The acne positivity movement of recent years has gone a long way towards empowering women to embrace their natural skin, blemishes and all. It showed us that we're not alone (even Chrissy Teigen gets period skin!) and gave us permission to not hide our spots with heavy makeup (which can often make breakouts worse). This is all great, of course - but I couldn't help but notice that the movement falls short of being truly inclusive. Where are all the men?

Acne certainly isn't just a women's issue. Plenty of men struggle with breakouts; men in their 30's and 40's, men with corporate jobs, men with kids and mortgages - a far cry from the stereotypical teenage boy with pimples that springs to mind. The good news is that there are lots of natural solutions available to banish your blemishes for good.

## Causes of Male Adult Acne

Whilst the causes of acne vary from person to person, the two main drivers of acne that we want you to keep in mind are inflammation and excess oil production. Here are some of the most common underlying causes:

### Hormonal Imbalances

Our hormones *should* work together like a well-tuned orchestra. But in times of stress, cortisol (our main stress hormone) can set our other hormones off-kilter. Just as with women, excess androgen hormones (like testosterone) can trigger increases in oil production that may lead to acne.

Our cortisol levels can rise for many different reasons, including over-exercising (it might be time to rethink that 6am F45 class), a demanding job (yes, even if you think you're 'coping well') and even just drinking coffee (which can be very dehydrating and irritating to the gut lining - try a delicious [matcha latte](#) instead?).

### Gut Imbalances

Hippocrates was onto something when he noted that [all disease begins in the gut](#). The breakouts on your skin are a mirror of what's going on in your gut - and in the case of acne, it's inflammation.

Our diet shapes and feeds our [gut microbiota](#) (the trillions of colonies of bacteria living in our gut). Many of us tend to eat a diet with a little too much sugar, dairy and unhealthy fats, which can be a trigger for acne. Food intolerances, certain medications, and stress can also mess up your gut microbiota.

### Lifestyle Causes

Men are often guilty of using overly-harsh products and dull razors, which can easily irritate the skin barrier. Sweating at the gym and then forgetting to wash your face (guys, it's not just women who need a good cleanser!), or even just wearing a collared shirt and tie too tightly can cause breakouts. Men tend to have oilier skin than women, and facial hair can trap these natural oils, which can promote acne.

## So What Can I Do About It?

If you're looking for a way to get rid of your acne for good, here are some ways to start supporting your skin to heal.

Acne is a multifactorial condition, meaning there are usually several different causes happening at the same time. Start with the 'easy wins'. Make sure you're using **soothing, natural products** and a clean, sharp razor. Overly-harsh products will strip your skin of its natural oils which can cause inflammation and increase oil production.

Many of us feel we're too busy to include regular relaxation practices in our lives, but practices such as **yoga** and stretching can actually help us to metabolise excess cortisol (our stress hormone). Detoxification practices such as sauna also help to support hormonal balance - and don't forget to **moisturise** afterwards as dry skin will produce more oil.

Let's be honest - acne is a total nightmare, whether you're a woman or a man, and it should be relegated to a list of things you shouldn't have to tolerate after a certain age (along with maths homework, your voice breaking in front of the girl you like, and learning to shave). The good news is there are plenty of opportunities to heal your skin. Here are some of our favourite acne-friendly products to get you started: