

Sauna Your Skin Clear

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I was in a hotel a few weeks ago, and they had one of those magnifying mirrors in the bathroom. As I was brushing my teeth, I got a glimpse of a close-up view of my nose. Gross! I'm not typically a vain person, but I changed my morning plans and headed out to the nearest drugstore to buy a box of nose strips so I wouldn't offend the client I was about to visit.

Once your eyes open to what your nose looks like at 10x magnification, you can't ignore it anymore. I noticed that the strips would clean the blackheads out of my nose for a couple of days, but pretty soon, it would be back to its same yucky appearance. Sure the nose strips worked, but they are expensive, and leave a glue-like residue on your nose. There has to be a better way I thought.



There is. The sauna is the best exercise for your skin. If you use it correctly, you can sauna away your blackheads, pimples and other skin blemishes.

Using a sauna to clear your acne

To get started, you need a sauna. If you don't have one at your gym or spa, you can [find a public one in our database](#), or [search for a hotel sauna](#) if you'll be traveling. Any type of sauna will work for this:

A conventional Finnish-style sauna, an infrared sauna, or even a steam room or steam sauna all work well. It just needs to get your body hot enough to sweat.

To do this, you need:

- A bathing suit (or less if you're comfortable), because you're going to get wet;
- Two towels: one to sit on in the sauna, and one to dry off with;
- A [brush](#) , [loofah](#) , or [rough cloth](#) to exfoliate your skin; and
- Your preferred soap or facial cleanser.

To begin, take a hot shower and wash your acne problem area with your soap or cleanser. Make sure to rinse all the soap off well when you finish. Many cleansers can leave a residue that can promote acne. After your shower, dry yourself off.

Now head into the sauna. Lay your towel on the bench and relax. If you want, splash some water on the rocks to increase the sensation of heat. Wait until your body starts sweating.

If you've never used the sauna before, you may feel a some of moisture on your forehead just after you enter. This is most likely condensation and not sweat. Depending on the heat of the sauna, it may take 5-10 minutes before your body starts *really* sweating. You will know when, because sweat will be pouring out of every square inch of your skin.

Now that your sweat is flowing, take your exfoliating device of choice, and gently rub at the surface skin of all your problem areas. All that sweat will mobilize your sebum and mobilize all the dirt, dead skin and other contaminants that might be in your skin. When you are done exfoliating, stay in the sauna for another minute or two and let your sweat continue to do its magic.

Once you finish in the sauna, or if the heat gets to be too much for you, head back to the showers. Start with a warm shower and rinse your skin clean. When you have done that, turn the shower to as cold as is comfortable, and stand under it until you feel like the deluge of sweating has stopped. Don't use soap or other cleansers.

When you are done, towel dry again and take a break until you have stopped sweating. Take a drink, go for a walk, just sit and relax or even go for a swim if there is a pool available. Your body needs to recover from your first sauna round.

Once you feel like you are back to normal, head back into the sauna again. You should start sweating more quickly this time. Again, once your whole body sweat starts, exfoliate that problem area another time, sweat it out and shower off to cool down. When you are showering, resist the temptation to use soap. If you typically put on lotion after a shower, resist that temptation too. You will find that after a sauna, all of your skin's natural oils have done the job for you.

When you look at your problem area in the mirror, you will find that your skin is more clear than ever before. A sauna session like this at least twice a week will keep your skin clear for a lot less money than some of those fancy cleansers will.

Your skin: close up

To understand how a sauna removes acne, it helps to take a closer look at your skin. There are two major types of glands in your skin that secrete substances to help it: Sweat glands and sebaceous glands.

Sebaceous glands surround your hair follicles and secrete a waxy substance, called sebum, onto the surface of your skin. Sebum is unlike any other substance your body secretes, and all of its purposes are still not well understood by the medical community. Sebum helps protect your skin by moisturizing it and providing nutrients directly to the surface skin cells. It also helps repel water from your skin when you are cold, but also keeps your sweat from rolling off when you are hot. Some even believe it has antibacterial properties that protect your skin from disease.

The problems come when your sebaceous glands get blocked. There are many things that can block them: dead skin, cosmetics, bacteria, even a poor diet. If the blockage is at the surface of your skin, you get a blackhead. If the blockage is underneath, you get a whitehead, pimple or a boil.

The Sauna and Sebum

When you heat up your skin with a sauna, it does several things for you that can help get rid of your acne. Raising the temperature makes sebum more fluid causing it to flow. Also, when you start sweating, the sweat released softens your skin and mixes with the sebum to make it more fluid.

When you exfoliate your skin in the sauna, the sebum helps lubricate whatever device you are using, making it easier to get rid off all that stuff your skin doesn't want on it, while your sweat mobilizes it and carries it away.

Some risks:

A few words of warning before you try this treatment:

If you are on a prescription medication, talk to your doctor before you go in the sauna. The heat of the sauna can cause your medicine to be absorbed more quickly than normal, potentially giving you a short-term overdose. Some medications affect your body's response to heat, putting you at risk of overheating while in the sauna.

While you are in the sauna, listen to your body. If you feel lightheaded or nauseous, leave at once and get yourself into a cool shower to lower your body temperature. When you do go to leave the sauna, stand up slowly to reduce the risk of fainting.

Some types of acne do not respond well to a sauna treatment. For instance, if your acne is cystic, this regimen can complicate things. Keep an open mind, and if things don't work the way you expect them to, speak to a medical professional.