

What is the most effective way for collagen to work?

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Collagen supplements are effective for enhancing skin, joint health, and overall wellness. Topical collagens provide short-term benefits like improved texture and moisture retention. Consuming collagen-rich foods supports natural collagen production. Combining internal and external approaches delivers balanced results for better skin and joint health.

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Collagen has become a buzzword in beauty and wellness, and for good reason. This essential protein is vital for maintaining firm, youthful skin and healthy joints. With countless collagen products available, from supplements to topical creams, it can be challenging to know what works best for your skin and overall well-being. This article aims to provide clarity on collagen and how it can be incorporated into your skincare regimen

for optimal results.

Currently, what we know is that collagen is very effectively absorbed and actually shows up as positive changes in the skin – such as increased hydration, reduced pigmentation, reduce wrinkles, and overall skin youth. There have been multiple studies that trace the increase in collagen di and tripeptides (the specific building blocks of collagen) in blood stream after ingesting collagen, and coupling them with the skin benefits noticed, we do know that collagen in oral supplementation actually works!

Are Collagen supplements worth it?

Collagen supplements have rapidly gained popularity for their potential to enhance skin health, improve joint mobility, and strengthen hair and nails. When ingested, collagen is broken down into amino acids, which the body uses to support skin, joints, and muscles. Research indicates that these supplements can improve skin hydration and elasticity and even reduce fine lines.

For those looking for comprehensive benefits—including stronger nails and better joint function—collagen supplements can provide an overall wellness boost, making them an excellent addition to a holistic beauty routine.



According to Dr. Renita Rajan, certified dermatologist, founder, CHOSEN, "Even among oral collagen supplements, not all collagens are made equal. The process of extraction of collagen, say from fish skin, involves unique processes, which ensures that there is sufficient amount of dipeptides in the final collagen powder. Since this process is usually unique to each types/ grade of collagen, and is often proprietary to the collagen manufacturer, the results from consuming collagen vary widely. It is best to go with a research grade collagen – since this would have been typically tested in human studies and the dosages can be used to guide results in real life."

Collagen creams

In contrast, topical collagen creams do not have a similarly strong evidence base. There have been some early studies for collagen creams, but there have been a lot more studies for other skin actives, like hyaluronic acid or retinol for example. In early pilot studies for CHOSEN, we have seen some benefits, but we have observed that this differs greatly between collagen grades and sources. So ultimately before saying collagen creams work or otherwise, we would need to see which grades work specifically for Indian skin and what molecular sizes. In addition to the collagen itself, support ingredients in the formula(which drive the collagen molecule across the epidermis, the first layer of the skin, and into the upper dermis, the site where the action is expected to be)are equally important. In view of absorption, collagen creams may fare better than water based collagen serums.

According to Dr. Hitalkumar Patel, MD Dermatologist, hair transplant surgeon, medical director, The Skin Artistry, "Collagen-based creams and serums focus on hydrating and smoothing the skin's surface. While they may offer temporary benefits like improved texture and moisture retention, collagen molecules are too large to penetrate deep into the skin, limiting their ability to stimulate internal collagen production."

"However, some formulations that include smaller peptides, retinol, or antioxidants may encourage collagen synthesis within the skin. These creams are best for those seeking short-term improvements in skin texture and hydration but should not be relied upon for deep, long-lasting effects," adds Dr. Patel.

More recently, the collagen sheet trend is catching up – but this is quite different from actual collagen sheets which are medical grade wound dressings. Rather, collagen sheet masks are sheet masks which are soaked in some form of collagen serum, and do not have any proven benefits. However, confused beauty bloggers do misappropriate the benefits of collagen sheets for collagen sheet masks. All of this is to say, that people are searching for collagen, collagen supplements and anything related to this protein!

How to consume collagen?

Collagen is basically an extract of fish. So, it is perfectly okay to have it any time during the day. Given that it's a protein, it is a good idea to consume this postworkout as a form of recovery. Collagen can be consumed with mixing a scoop of it with water for better absorption.



Natural collagen boosters

In addition to consuming collagen supplements, dietary choices can play a significant role in collagen production. Eating collagen-rich foods, like bone broth, chicken, eggs, red meat, fish, oysters and particularly citrus fruits and berries, supports the body's natural collagen synthesis and can enhance the results of skincare routines and treatments.

Choosing the right approach

The choice between collagen supplements and creams depends on your goals. If you're looking for internal benefits, such as improved skin and joint health, supplements may be more effective. On the other hand, for those seeking immediate, surface-level enhancements, topical products can be useful, albeit with temporary results.

For the best results, a balanced approach is recommended. Collagen supplements provide internal support, while topical products can offer short-term surface improvements. Your skincare choices should reflect your individual needs, and whether you're aiming for smoother skin or overall wellness, a combination of internal and external efforts will deliver the best results.