

# The Routine Bible

## *Volume One · Foundations*

From bare skin to a complete, effective routine — built on skin cycling, paced by your skin. Starter and Beginner: the two tiers that take you from nothing to a routine that works.

Volume One of Two

2 tiers

Weeks 1-14

Start wherever you are. A total beginner walks the whole way; if you already use a few actives, find your tier and drop in. You only level up when your skin says you're ready — never on a deadline.

### HOW TO USE THIS

## **A starting point, not a prescription**

This is a standardised starting point — a proven framework built to be shaped around your own skin as you go, with my guidance and the rest of the Skin School content. A few principles make it work:

- Find your tier and start there. A total beginner starts at week 1; if you already use actives, drop in where you fit. You don't have to start from scratch.
- Your skin sets the pace, not the calendar. The week numbers are a typical guide; the graduation gates are the real rule. If your skin needs longer at a step, take longer.

- One new active at a time. Everything is eased in singly, so if something doesn't agree with you, you know exactly what it was.
- Go slow on purpose. Strengths only ever rise gradually — rushing actives, especially retinoids, is the number-one reason people get irritated and give up.
- It's yours to customise. Adapt the products, the pace and the order to suit your skin as you learn — this is the map, not the territory.

#### BEFORE YOU START — PLEASE READ

This isn't personal medical advice. If you're pregnant or breastfeeding, skip retinoids and check with your doctor about the rest. If you have a skin condition such as rosacea, eczema or melasma, or you use prescription skincare or medication that affects your skin, treat this as a framework to adapt with professional guidance. Always patch test a new active, and if something stings, burns or stays red — ease off and go slower.

#### THE WHOLE JOURNEY AT A GLANCE

##### TIER 1 · VOL ONE

### **Starter** · *Weeks 1-2*

Prep. Cleanse, moisturise, SPF + B/HA serum. No actives.

##### TIER 2 · VOL ONE

### **Beginner** · *Weeks 3-14*

Weekly rhythm begins. Acid, then low retinal, then vitamin C.

##### VOL TWO · NEXT

### **Intermediate** → *Advanced*

Strengths step up — idebenone, PDRN, repair nights — to Master.

By the end of this volume you'll have a complete, effective routine you can run for the long term. *Volume Two · Progression* is the optional climb beyond it — only when your skin is ready.

THE ONE TECHNIQUE TO LEARN FIRST

## One layer at a time, and let each dry

This is the bit most people get wrong. Don't pile products onto wet skin. Apply your active and wait until it's fully dry before anything goes over it — that protects how it works. Then your B/HA serum, then a mist of thermal spray over it (the mist gives it the water it needs to draw in, instead of pulling it from deeper in your skin), let that settle, and only then seal with moisturiser.



You'll learn the thermal-spray step in Starter, before any actives — so by the time the actives arrive, the rhythm is already second nature. And because each active goes on dry skin, the steps that follow don't need repeating: once a layer is dry, the next simply goes on top.

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## Starter WEEKS 1-2 · PREP

*Master the basics before a single active arrives.*

Two weeks to prep — build a calm barrier and learn the rhythm, including the thermal-spray step, before any actives. *No weekly pattern yet: every night is the same.*

ACTIVES

None yet

#### THE JOB

Calm barrier + habit

#### NEW SKILL

The misting step

#### MOVE ON

~2 weeks

### Morning

SAME EVERY DAY

Cleanse

B/HA serum — your daily constant

Thermal spray — let it dry

Emollient moisturiser

SPF 50+

### Evening

SAME EVERY DAY

Double cleanse

B/HA serum

Thermal spray — learning the misting step

Ceramide moisturiser — richer at night

## Why start with nothing

A calm, intact barrier is what lets every active later land without drama. Two weeks of just cleanse-serum-moisturise-SPF builds the habit and the foundation — skip it and actives have nothing stable to work on. Your moisturiser is the one thing that shifts between day and night: a lighter emollient under SPF in the morning, a richer ceramide cream to repair overnight. For that night cream the repair comes from the whole barrier trio — look for ceramides paired with cholesterol and fatty acids, ideally in a physiological ~3:1:1 ratio, which rebuilds the barrier far better than ceramides alone.

◆ *Ready for Beginner when*

the routine is an automatic daily habit, your skin is calm and comfortable, and the order feels natural. Around 2 weeks.

2

## Beginner WEEKS 3-14 · YOUR ACTIVES ARRIVE

*One active at a time, never two new things at once.*

Your weekly rhythm starts — but the actives arrive *one at a time*. The acid night comes first, the retinoid joins (one night, then two) about two weeks later, and only then does vitamin C build in the morning. A hydrating toner joins your mornings now, too.

### ACTIVES

Acid · Retinal 0.05% · Vit C

### THE SHAPE

1 acid + 2 retinal nights

### ORDER IN

Acid → retinal → vit C

### MOVE ON

~weeks 12-14

● Acid night   ● Retinal night   ● Recovery night   ● Hydrating toner (AM)  
C Vit C that morning

	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
AM	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
PM	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

Your week once fully eased in — hydrating toner every morning, vitamin C daily by week 13. Acid Monday, retinal Wednesday & Friday, recovery between.

## Why one at a time

If you introduce the acid, the retinoid and vitamin C all at once and your skin reacts, you'll have no idea which one did it. Spacing them out means every active gets a clean trial — and your barrier is never hit with two new things at the same time.

## Choosing your first acid

Use a leave-on acid — a toner or serum you apply and leave on. Start gentle and build slowly. A PHA is the kindest — it works on the surface, exfoliates slowly, and hydrates at the same time, so it's the safest place to begin. Next gentlest are lactic and mandelic — mild AHAs (the gentle end of the same family as the stronger glycolic). Save glycolic (the strong AHA) and BHA for once your skin is well-established — BHA suits oily or congested skin in particular. The acid only steps up in strength much later, in Volume Two.

## What each night looks like

MONDAY  
C+  
BUILDS  
IN  
OVER  
THE  
TIER

**Retinoids**  
**nights**

Double  
cleanser  
Buffer  
acid  
Hydrating  
toner  
ceramide  
moisturiser,  
dry  
if  
dry  
let

it dry  
dry skin  
Vitamin  
C,  
gentle  
B/Retinal  
HA 0.05%  
serum  
→ let  
thermal  
spray  
— let  
B/it  
let  
HA dry  
dry  
serum  
B/  
Ceramide  
HA  
moisturiser  
serum  
spray  
→  
→  
thermal  
ceramide  
spray  
moisturiser  
→  
emollient  
seal  
moisturiser  
SPF  
50+

ALL

OTHER

NIGHTS

## Recovery nights

Double  
cleanse

B/  
HA  
serum

→  
thermal  
spray

→

ceramide  
moisturiser

*Dry  
or  
sensitive?  
Press  
in  
an  
extra  
layer  
or  
two  
of  
hydrating  
toner  
before  
your  
serum  
tonight.*

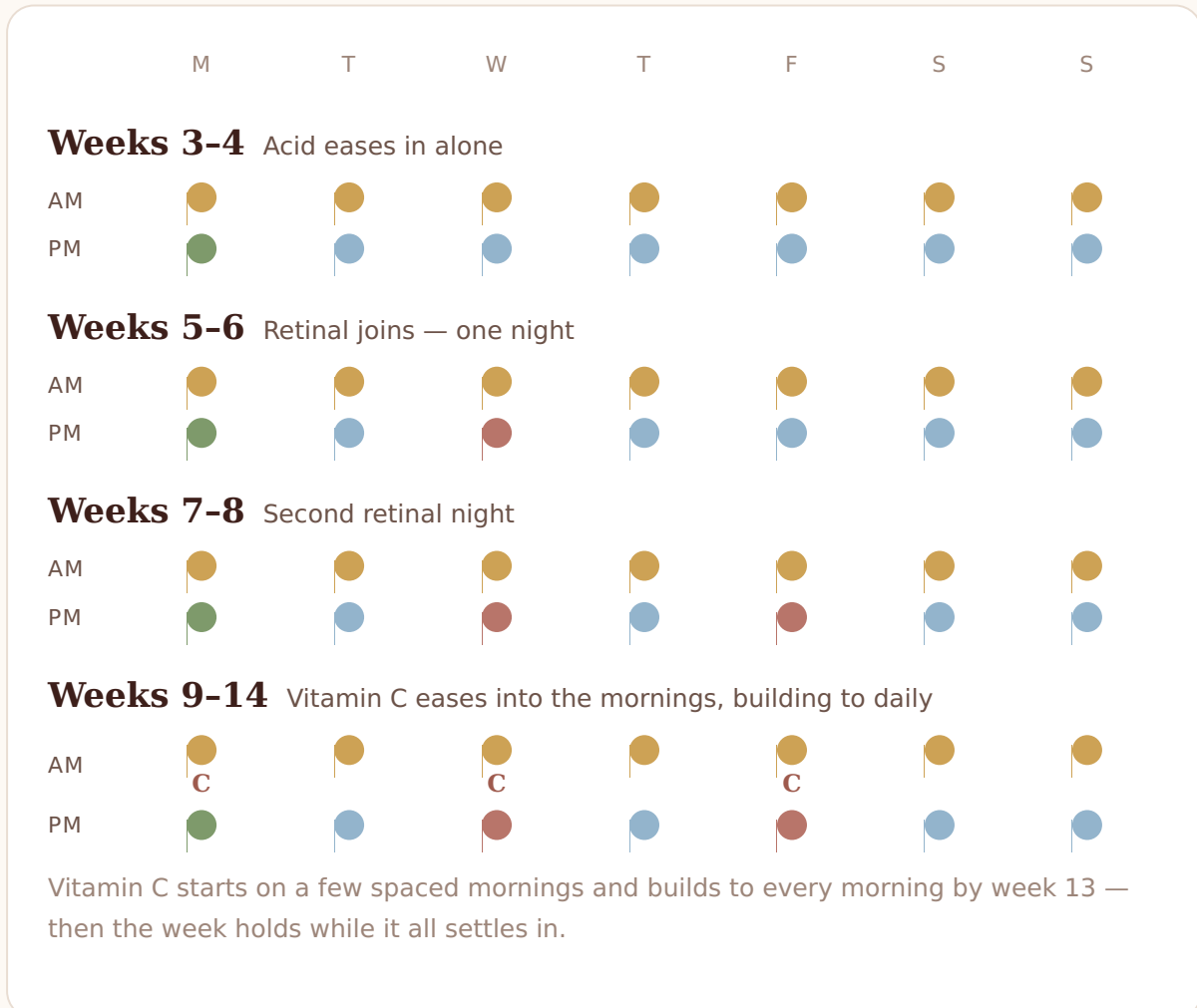
## **Bare skin is the deepest delivery — earned**

On clean, dry skin an active works most directly: retinal, like vitamin C and acids, can go straight onto bone-dry skin after cleansing for the strongest effect. But the most direct route is also the most likely to irritate if any sensitivity is there.

So while you're building tolerance, you cushion the retinal — a thin layer of moisturiser *before* it (the buffer), or moisturiser *before and after* (the sandwich). The moisturiser is the real cushion: its richer texture is what slows the retinal down. A watery toner won't do that job — hydration actually speeds an active in, not down — which is why retinoid nights stay toner-free for now and lean on the buffer instead. Use it freely; you'll wean off it in Volume Two as your skin learns to take the retinal bare. And if even a buffered low-strength retinal is too much for your skin, bakuchiol is a gentler, non-retinoid alternative that gives similar results — there's more on it in the Buffer card.

## How the week eases in

One active at a time — watch the evening fill in, then vitamin C ease into the mornings. Same dot language as your weekly map; only what changes each step is shown.



### ◆ *Ready for Intermediate when*

the weekly rhythm feels comfortable at low strengths, vitamin C is daily and well tolerated, and your barrier stays calm — no lingering redness or flaking the morning after an active. Usually weeks 12-14. Intermediate is where Volume Two picks up.

# You've built your foundation

By here you have a real, working routine: a calm barrier, one weekly acid night, a low retinal twice a week, and vitamin C every morning. This is a brilliant place to be — many people happily run a routine at this level for the long term.

When your skin is fully settled and you want to go further, Volume Two · Progression takes you up through Intermediate and Advanced, the same careful way:

Retinal up to 0.15%

CoQ10, then idebenone — the antioxidant network

PDRN on retinoid nights

A weekly EGF + peptide repair night

Eye masks · PHA / BHA-toner mornings

A stronger acid · ending at Master

It's the routine I run myself. We'll get you there only when your skin says it's ready. Take Volume Two when you're ready to climb.

## THE RULES THAT HOLD ACROSS FOUNDATIONS

One serious active per night, never a retinoid and acid together. Let each layer dry before the next — active, then your B/HA serum, then a mist of thermal spray over it, then the moisturiser seals; once a layer is dry, the next just goes on top. One leave-on acid night a week; gentle daily exfoliation comes later, in Volume Two. Retinoid nights stay toner-free for now and lean on a moisturiser buffer while you build tolerance. Double cleanse every night, since SPF goes on every morning. Strengths only ever rise through a gradual change-over, never two actives at once. And above all — this is a standardised starting point to adapt to your own skin. The week numbers are a guide; the graduation gates, and your skin, are the rule.