

Ada Polla, co-creator of Swiss antioxidant line Alchimie Forever, naturally has lots of great skincare tips.

Perfect Winter Skin: Tips from Ada Polla

Ada Polla, owner of Alchimie Forever, says the secrets of good skin are as simple as the ones to maintain great teeth.



BY CHLOE THOMPSON

Anyone who frequents spas knows the name Alchimie Forever, and more than likely knows the face behind it: Ada Polla, a Swiss transplant by way of Harvard (undergrad) and Georgetown (MBA). She graciously took some time out of her hectic day to chat about some must-know skin-care tips, and shared a few things you might not have known, such as her latest must-read.



What's on the horizon for the holidays?

We just came out with five gift sets, ranging from \$39 to \$212, and we've really tried to think of the types of gifts that you want to buy and the types of people you want to buy for. For example, we have a gift set called "Heavenly Toes," (right) which is \$39, and that's been great for those people whom you want to recognize but you don't necessarily have a significant budget for.

We also have a men's essential skincare kit—a great gift for fathers, husbands, sons and boyfriends—containing variations of our different products such as a spa/facial at home kit. And then we have the Cadillac of skincare, a great set of anti-aging products, which is our premium gift set for your mom or your best friend—something a bit more luxurious. We shipped the first one yesterday, so they're available right now.

What kind of trends are you seeing for the winter season?

Winter is always geared toward a couple different symptoms of skin. Typically your skin tends to be drier, because of the switch from going to warm indoor areas to the very cold outdoors—which tends to dehydrate your skin, so we always look and focus on more nourishing, more moisturizing products.

We also experience more skin redness, and, again, those are blood vessels constricting when it's cold and dilating when it's hot and doing the same thing over and over. The nice way of looking at that is “rosy cheeks,” but we also tend to focus a lot on products that would help to alleviate that redness.

So in terms of product, what are the top three must-haves for winter from Alchimie Forever?



[Kantic+ intensely nourishing cream.](#)



[Kantic Brightening Moisture Mask.](#)



[532nm for hands and feet.](#)

What your number-one tip for the winter months?

Carry your moisturizer with you in your purse and re-moisturize during the day.

What are some skincare tips you have for men?

Upgrade. So many men use \$5 to \$6 soaps and shaving creams, which are better than nothing, but their skin, just like ours, needs anti-aging care with quality products.

Men are shy when it comes to asking about skin care. I usually recommend our [Nd: YAG \(antioxidant skin repair gel\)](#), and I get them to put a bit on their hand. It's oil-free, it smells extremely masculine and leaves no residue—not a frou-frou girl product, and it's not dewy so you can't even see it on their face.

And some anti-aging tips for women?

I think women should think about skin care and facials the way they think about dental care: You don't wait until your teeth are rotten to go to the dentist, and that's how you keep your teeth strong, white and healthy.

People think of skin care as a luxury, especially facials, which are extra maintenance that their skin needs. All of a sudden though, you're getting brown spots and wrinkles and you think "Oh my god, what happened?!" And I say, "Well, those actually took a lot more than one day to appear!" Yet people brush their teeth twice a day and wouldn't think of not doing it. [Bottom line: Take care of your face as you would your teeth.]

Another quick tip? If you're old enough to drink, you're old enough to use an anti-aging cream.

Your job and your roots (Ada is originally from Geneva) have taken you all over the world. What makes D.C. stand out?

I was born and raised in Switzerland, so I say this as a non-American citizen: No matter what your perspective or your political preferences or if you love the U.S., D.C. is the center of global power in terms of policy, changing the world and making new rules. I love that about D.C., it's just really exciting. And I'm not a politically inclined person, I never go up to the Hill or anything or run in those circles, but I like being in D.C. because I feel like this is where the world is being shaped today.

There are very specific things I love, too. There are no skyscrapers, and from my European upbringing, that's important—there are no skyscrapers in Geneva or Switzerland in general so having that height restriction and having the city be wider than it is tall and being able to see a big piece of sky is really important to my piece of mind. I go crazy when I go to New York and all I see is shade and really tall buildings.

I love D.C. for its size. It's big enough to have all the great cultural attractions, to have a great restaurant scene, to be interesting and exciting, but it's not overwhelming to me. It still has that neighborhood feel to it.

It's an understatement to say that you're a busy woman. What do you do in your free time?

I like to read. I read a lot when I travel, and I travel a lot.

I don't mind traveling, but it's one of those special things to look forward to—little extra treats. Reading is definitely one of them. I'm reading *Freedom* by Jonathan Franzen. My boyfriend read it and bought it for me because he loved it so much. Ninety-five percent of what I read is nonfiction. I love biographies, which to me is almost like fiction but it's a real person. I love historical books and books about business.

On my Blackberry, you have these little memos, and one of them for me is “books.” Every time I read about a book or I hear about one, I add them into my list. It’s an ever-growing list that I’m sure I’ll never get through!

I go out with my girlfriends, but most of my girlfriends also own their own businesses so my work life and my personal life are completely intermingled, even at dinner with girlfriends we’ll talk about business—it actually makes it more fun. People always comment that I seem to have no separation between work and life, and I really don’t, but I think that comes with owning your own business. It’s always present.

What’s your favorite spot in D.C.?

It’s on Georgetown University campus by the observatory. I actually just discovered this spot with my sister earlier this fall. It’s gorgeous and peaceful and quiet. Even though it’s in the heart of campus, you still feel like you’re a million miles away.

Assistant Editor Chloe Thompson writes about fashion, retail and entertainment for Washington Flyer.