



The Clean Beauty Starter Kit

My no-fluff guide to safer products, ingredient red flags, and what I actually use daily.



Let's be honest: figuring out what's *actually* clean and safe in beauty is overwhelming.

The labels say “natural,” “clean,” “dermatologist-approved.” But the ingredient lists read like chemistry homework. And even when you want to do better, you find yourself in the Target aisle spiraling:

- *Is it worse to use the “toxic” product or to use nothing at all?*
- *Is this just wellness fear-mongering?*
- *Is that mineral sunscreen going to leave me looking like Casper the ghost?*

I've asked myself all of it. Which is why I created this post: a no-BS guide with the exact tools, swaps, and products I actually use. Not perfect. Just better.



What I *Try* to Avoid

Here's what I look out for—especially in products I use daily or on large areas of my body:

- **Oxybenzone, Octinoxate, Avobenzone** –common in chemical sunscreens; linked to hormone disruption
- **Fragrance (parfum)** – a catch-all term that can hide hundreds of unlisted chemicals
- **Parabens & Phthalates** – endocrine disruptors tied to fertility issues
- **PFAS** – “forever chemicals” often in waterproof or long-wear makeup
- **Formaldehyde releasers** – sometimes found in nail and hair products

Want to check how your product stacks up? The [EWG's Skin Deep Database](#) is your friend.

Sunscreen: Clean or Nothing?

Ever had this internal debate?

- *“I don't have clean sunscreen. Should I skip it? Is chemical sunscreen worse than sun damage?”*

Short answer: Always wear sunscreen. Unprotected sun exposure increases your risk of skin cancer and speeds up aging.

Longer answer? Some chemical sunscreen ingredients (like oxybenzone) have been shown to absorb into the bloodstream and may disrupt hormone health. That's why I lean mineral-based whenever possible—but I'm not here to scare you, just help you make informed choices.

Safer Sunscreens that I Use and Love:

- [Babo Botanicals Sheer Mineral SPF 30](#) – great for sensitive skin and daily wear



- [Babo Botanicals Daily Sheer Mineral Sunscreen SPF50](#)
- [Alba Botanica Sunscreen Lotion, Sensitive Mineral, SPF 40](#)
- [Cetaphil Sheer Mineral Liquid SPF 30](#)
- [Native Unscented Mineral Face Lotion](#)

Hair + Body Care Staples

Body Wash:

- [Sustainable Lather](#) – bar soaps that are plastic-free, gentle, and smell amazing
- [Dr. Bronner's](#)
- [Nécessaire \(Fragrance-Free\)](#)
- [Nécessaire The Body Exfoliant Bar](#)
- [Drunk Elephant Juju Bar, Cleanse + Exfoliate](#)

Body Lotion and Oil:

- [Nécessaire The Body Oil](#)
- [Nécessaire The Hand Cream](#)
- [Nécessaire Body Lotion, Fragrance-Free](#)
- [OSEA Body Oil, Fragrance-Free](#)
- [Dr. Bronner's Lotion](#)

Hair:

- [Nécessaire The Conditioner Fragrance-Free](#)
- [Nécessaire The Shampoo, Fragrance-Free](#)

Curly Hair Faves:

- [Consciously Curly Co.](#) (moisturizing and non-toxic)
- [Innersense](#) (clean beauty staple)



The Deodorant Reality Check

Let's be honest: natural deodorant is a trial-and-error journey. I'm not chasing perfection—I just want something that *works* and doesn't overload my body with unnecessary chemicals.

One I reach for often?

[Hume Supernatural Aluminum-Free Deodorant \(Desert Bloom\)](#) – works well for me, doesn't cause irritation, and is rated a 3 on EWG due to limited data. Not a perfect 1, but still significantly better than most conventional formulas.

That's the reality of this journey: not everything has to be squeaky-clean to be a better choice.

Other faves I rotate between (rated even better):

- [Native Deodorant-Lavender & Rose](#)
- [Salt & Stone](#)
- [Humble – Simple and True](#)

My approach? Start where you can. Stay informed. Choose better—not perfect.

Toothpaste I Trust

- [Davids Premium Natural Toothpaste, Natural Peppermint](#)
- [Attitude Toothpaste](#)



Skincare That Works

Cleansers:

- [Honest Beauty Sensitive Skin Calming Cream Cleanser](#)
- [La Roche-Posay Toleriane Purifying Foaming Cleanser](#)
- [Cetaphil Gentle Skin Cleanser for Dry to Normal Sensitive Skin](#)
- [Garnier SkinActive Micellar Foaming Face Wash](#)
- [Native Unscented Aloe & Vitamin B3 Skin Care Sensitive Facial Cleanser](#)
- [Aveeno Calm + Restore Nourishing Oat Cleanser for Sensitive Skin](#)
- [True Botanicals Renew Nourishing Cleanser](#)

Moisturizers:

- [La Roche-Posay Double Repair Matte Moisturizer](#)
- [Honest Beauty Deep Hydration Face Cream for Dry Skin](#)
- [Honest Beauty Everyday Radiance Vitamin C Lightweight Moisturizer](#)
- [True Botanicals- CLEAR Repair Nightly Treatment Serum](#)
- [OSEA Dayglow Face Oil](#)
- [Drunk Elephant Marula Luxury Facial Oil](#)

Targeted serums + Eye care:

- [The Ordinary](#) – affordable, clean, and science-backed formulas (I rotate based on my skin's needs)
- [OSEA Age-Defying Serum](#)

Face Masks I Love:

I love a good face mask. Here are a few EWG-verified options:

- [Alder New York Clarifying Face Mask](#) – great for deep cleansing and balancing
- [Alder New York Brightening Face Mask](#)- Radiance Boosting Vitamin C & Calendula Exfoliating Mud
- [INNA Organic Sheet Mask Set](#)



Clean Makeup

Shops I trust are [Honest](#) or [ILIA](#).

Mascara I Rotate:

- [Saie Mascara 101](#)
- [ILIA Limitless Lash](#)
- [ILIA Fullest Volumizing](#)
- [Honest Beauty 2-in-1 Extreme Length](#)

Brows:

- [BrowPop Dual-Action Defining Pencil](#)
- [ILIA- In Full Micro-Tip Brow Pencil](#)
- [Well People Expressionist Brow Pencil](#)
- [Honest Beauty Honestly Healthy Bro Gel](#)
- [Ere Perez-Natural Aloe Gel Lash+ Brow Mascara](#)
- [Well People Expressionist Clear Brow Gel](#)

Makeup Removers:

- [Be Natural Organics Micellar Cleansing Water](#)
- [Garnier- Micellar Cleansing Water](#)
- [Honest Beauty Fragrance Free Cleaning Makeup Remover Facial Wipes](#)



Nail Care (That Doesn't Wreck Your Health)

Let's be clear: nail products are tricky. Many strengtheners and polishes are *not* EWG-friendly.

Safer Options:

Strengtheners:

- [Glamnetic Nail Strengthener](#)

Base/Top coat:

- [Ella+ Mila Ready Set Prep](#)
- [LOVE by Essie base and top coat \(rated 2 on EWG website\)](#)

Nail Polish:

- [LOVE by Essie](#)
- [SOPHi](#)
- [CND Vinylux](#)
- [Ella +Mila](#)

Nail Polish Removers:

- [White Rain- Acetone Nail Polish Remover](#)
- [Beauty 360- Advanced Nail Polish Remover](#)



Where to Start (Without Overwhelm)

If this feels like a lot, here's where I suggest beginning:

- **Sunscreen** (daily use, high impact)
- **Deodorant** (absorbed through lymph nodes)
- **Moisturizers + cleansers**
- **Anything with synthetic fragrance**

Start small. Swap one thing. Let it build from there.

Final Thoughts

This isn't about being perfect. It's about being more intentional with what we put on our bodies—and creating routines that support long-term health, not just short-term results. These are just a few of many safe products. Explore more on:

[EWG's Skin Deep](#) and see what feels good to you.

If this guide helps you feel a little more informed, confident, and aligned with what you're putting on your skin—that's the real win.

~ Natalie Youssef, MPH