





ELEVATING FACIALS WITH MASKOLOGY 101

by Janel Luu, Le Mieux Cosmetics

Sheet masks have entered the mainstream as superstars in *Instagram* selfies. Now, it's time for the newest trend on the horizon—customized masking—and professional estheticians are on the inside track.

Consumers, like spa clients, are on the lookout for unique multi-sensory experiences. Masks are perfect for creating “customized programs” for clients. Savvy estheticians become “maskologists” by formulating masks according to each client's unique skin signature, taking into account seasonal transitions, hormones, stress, lifestyle behaviors and other factors.

Much like an experienced chef creates a tableside dish for a customer at an elite restaurant, a professional esthetician has the talent and skills to customize and formulate the perfect mask for a client's needs... and elevate the client's experience in the process.

TYPES OF MASKS AND BASES

Concoct an exciting, effective mask by choosing a base and simply adding three or four ingredients. Masks provide infinite possibilities for just about any skin type and condition, whether dry, oily, acne-prone,



You can mix unique masks for any skin condition with only three or four ingredients.

hyperpigmented, sensitive, irritated or mature. The following bases may seem elementary, but with them, you can release your inner formulator!

ENZYME MASKS

Exfoliating powder choices include fruit enzymes like papain and bromelain, which digest pore-clogging keratin proteins and tighten enlarged pores. Papain is derived from papaya, and helps in the desquamation of dead skin cells. Extracted from the pineapple stem, bromelain also soothes inflammation. Powder enzymes have optimal efficacy when activated with steam.

CLAY AND MINERAL MASKS

Ideal for oily or acne-prone skin, masks containing mineral-packed clays like bentonite, French green clay and kaolin absorb excess oil and rid pores of dirt and dead skin cells, while improving circulation and skin oxygenation. Calcium carbonate is another pore-clearing, blackhead-blasting ingredient. Pearl powder is a treasure trove of minerals and amino acids that improve cell metabolism and combat oxidative damage.

CREAM MASKS AND GEL MASKS

Cream masks and gel masks boost moisture and seal it in, especially important during seasonal changes. Hyaluronic acid, glycerin and ceramides are hydrating agents that work with occlusive ingredients that keep water inside and protect the skin from the outside. Moisturizing botanicals include shea butter, sacha inchi seed oil, macadamia seed oil and algae extract.

TEXTURE-CHANGING MASKS

Powder-to-rubber masks usually contain seaweed-derived alginate to create the form of the mask. Rubber masks trap moisture underneath and intensely hydrate, nourish, calm and brighten skin. Adding a liquid activator to a powder mask creates a multi-sensory experience—a tickling, popping sensation as skin cells are hydrated and oxygenated.

Methyl perfluorobutyl ether and ethyl perfluorobutyl ether are activators that allow the mask to spread evenly and cause the fizzing and cool sensation on skin. Powder-to-fizzy-foam masks have lightweight molecules that spread into pores more easily and oxygenate skin, improving circulation and radiance.

MASK MIXOLOGY

After choosing a simple base for the mask, it's time to add gel, a microscrub or other ingredients that create something exciting (snail slime notwithstanding). Experiment with different clays. Throw in a little surfactant like a cleansing gel and mix it up for a totally different texture. To add a little polish, take a clay mask, cream mask, add a little microdermabrasion scrub and voilà! You've created an exfoliating, deep pore cleansing, moisturizing mask. Below are additional mask formulating favorites to inspire you.

DRY, DEHYDRATED SKIN

Customized, two-layer masks rebalance the water to oil ratio, lock in moisture and reduce the appearance of wrinkles. As a base, gel masks re-hydrate dry, dehydrated, photo-damaged and aging skin, while cream masks fortify the lipid barrier.

Perfect Prep Mask. Apply a mandelic acid peel to increase the efficacy of the mask. Due to its large molecular structure, mandelic acid is ideal for sensitive skin. Mix a powder enzyme mask with an oxygenating gel instead of water to exfoliate and oxygenate skin, creating an instant glow.

Cream Me Clay Mask. Blend a cream mask into a clay mask base. Add hyaluronic acid and botanical oils like macadamia oil, rosewood oil or shea butter to seal in moisture. Apply and remove residue with a damp towel after 15-20 minutes. Clay absorbs oils, and cream adds moisture.

Texture Rules Mask. Powder-to-rubber masks are occlusive, so they intensely hydrate and drive ingredients deeper into the skin. Add different textures from oatmeal, lavender, herbs, or other botanicals to intensify the sensory experience.



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OILY, ACNE-PRONE SKIN, CLOGGED PORES

Clay and powder enzyme masks balance oily skin and target clogged pores that increase the risk of breakouts. Enzymes are activated by steam, heat or liquid. To customize clay masks for skin type and optimize exfoliation, apply a layer of acid before applying the mask, or mix acid into the mask.

Mineral Therapy Mask. Add a mineral-based solution to a powder enzyme mask, which is ideal post-extraction. Magnesium, potassium, selenium and zinc help clarify clogged pores and relieve inflammation and redness. Since minerals help transport nutrients into and out of cells, they help maintain pH balance, preventing skin from becoming too acidic or too alkaline.

Pore-fection Mask. Target enlarged, clogged pores with a clay mask. Add gel, enzymes and surfactant cleanser. Blend well and apply, avoiding eye areas. Remove with warm water or towel.

To CBD or Not-To-CBD Mask. For clients with acne and a fascination with the latest trend in cannabis, add a CBD isolate blend to a powder enzyme mask for calming and soothing blemish-prone, irritated skin.

DULL, HYPERPIGMENTED SKIN

Glow-Getter Mask. Start with a powdered clay base that contains alginate, a seaweed extract. Add antioxidant serums with vitamins C and E and apply. Antioxidant-enriched masks help brighten, protect against environmental damage and strengthen underlying collagen.

Hydro-Oxygen Mask. Prep with a mandelic acid peel. Next, mix a powder enzyme mask with oxygenating gel to exfoliate and oxygenate skin, creating an instant glow while helping fade dark spots and balancing uneven skin tone.

Is there anything more rewarding than results?

“My favorite product is Clear Body Therapy. It is used for actinic damage, fine lines, wrinkles, and acne. A very versatile product for so many conditions. I love it and my patients do too!”

– Patricia Mader, Owner, The Dermatology Center and a V-ELITE member

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SENSITIVE, ROSACEA-PRONE, IRRITATED SKIN

Warm and Comfy Mask. Start with an enzyme mask. Add cream and blend with chamomile-derived azulene, which has anti-inflammatory effects that soothe irritated skin. Apply and use steam to transport the mixture into the skin's lipid layer.

Quench the Fire Mask. Start with a gel mask. Add hyaluronic acid to hydrate and calm dry, dehydrated, irritated skin. Refrigerate the gel ahead of time to create an extra cooling and soothing sensation for clients after procedures that leave skin feeling irritated.

Mother Nature Mask. For clay masks that moisturize and soothe irritated skin without clogging pores, blend in non-comedogenic botanical extracts such as shea butter, argan oil and calendula oil.

LINES AROUND LIPS

Lip Hugger Mask. Apply lip cream around and on lips. Spread a thin gauze over lip area, then apply a powder-to-rubber molding mask for 15-20 minutes.

Perfect Pucker Mask. Layer lip area with a serum enriched with peptides, ceramides, and antioxidants. Spread gauze over lip area and apply powder-to-rubber molding mask. Nutrients are propelled into skin, plumping and smoothing lip area, without moisture evaporating.

AGING SKIN

Super-natural Microscrub Mask. After this mask, skin looks so healthy, smooth and radiant, it almost doesn't look human. Start with a clay base. Add toner containing brightening botanical extracts like bearberry, mulberry, or licorice root. Add some microdermabrasion scrub. Blend and apply with a fan brush. Place wet gauze and a warm towel over it. Wait ten minutes and remove, using your hands to scrub gently. Skin feels incredibly clean and looks out of this world.

Gua Sha Meridian Mask. Prep skin with a gentle mandelic acid peel. Mix a gel mask with an oxygenating gel, or with a moisturizing cream mask. Glide jade gua sha tools along facial meridian lines.

BECOME A MASKOLOGIST

The key to being a formulator is to select from ingredients on hand, mix, match and customize in the most appropriate way for the client. With



Rubber masks trap moisture underneath to intensely hydrate.

an understanding of basic chemistry, professional estheticians become formulators by creating customized programs according to the client's skin condition, and by enhancing the client's experience with the use of multi-sensory products.

As a formulator, you can also create a product with multiple uses. For example, a clay-to-cream product can function as a cleanser as well as a mask by just leaving it on for a few minutes, then rinsing it off. Another option would be to formulate a two-in-one face wash, where the client gets the benefits of a cleansing cream as well as a purifying clay mask.

The bottom line? It's all about customization. Have fun with what you do in your spa (a.k.a. "formulating lab") and your clients will benefit! ✂



Janel Luu has over 35 years experience in the cosmetics industry as an international educator, researcher and formulator. Her extensive background in product development built a solid foundation for her skin care brands, including Le Mieux Cosmetics, Le Mieux Clinical, PurErb, NatraRx, Luminé Veil and MD-GEN.