

THE INSPIRED ESTHETICIAN

Improve Your Treatment and Business Results Through Seasonal Client Home Regimen Reviews!

By Douglas Preston

What do you do when you feel that you've already sold your client everything she or he needs for a personal home skincare regimen? Review the regimen every spring and fall! Think about it—when a client has been prescribed a home care plan that's correct for warmer and possibly more humid months, will that approach still work as well when the air turns colder and drier? Of course not! So why wait until we begin to see environmental changes in the skin before addressing them? After all, our clients depend on professional estheticians to not only improve the complexion problems they see, but also to *prevent* those we know are coming as the weather changes. This proactive attention to client needs is what sets the high-caliber esthetician apart from the rest and, of course, we all strive to be one of those, right? Okay, here's the plan:

1. Inform all of your facial clients (present and future) that you will soon begin to review their home care regimens twice per year, every April and September. This gives the client something to look forward to and also suggests that the client/esthetician relationship is intended as a long one. At the beginning of March ask all of your visiting clients to bag up and bring in everything they use for skincare (and even hair care if you're concerned about skin congestion that may be resulting from it) for the next appointment. You'll need to remind them to do this when making your confirmation calls the day prior to the appointment, so don't forget! Be sure to tell your clients that it doesn't matter to you where the products came from. The purpose of the review is to make sure what they're using is what they *should* be using according to your professional opinion and their skin improvement goals. Allow an extra 15-30 minutes for these important appointments where the review has been added! Perform the review *prior* to the scheduled facial treatment so you can plan for product adjustments afterward.
2. When you sit down with your client and begin the review have a brief discussion whereby you ask how their skin has been looking/feeling and what, if any, improvements they would like to achieve in the coming months of facial treatment. This will give you some advance understanding of where you should lead the product review. Be sure to write their responses down on a client form for your records.
3. Now, line up all of the products your client brought in for review and determine which ones are still suitable for the current season and skin improvement goals. Next, make appropriate suggestions for adjustments, additions or even eliminations from the collection. For example, your client may have bought a low-grade sunblock while on vacation that doesn't agree with their skin type, or received a "gift with purchase" moisturizer the last time they filled their foundation at the department store. Should they be using that product? You'll discover that

your clients will be very happy to abandon almost anything you judge as incorrect for their personal use or contradictory to their appearance goals.

4. Following the facial treatment briefly demonstrate the new products you want them to use now. The facial itself and the skin analysis you perform just prior to the treatment will help to reinforce your product suggestions.
5. Be sure to tell your client when you plan to schedule their next product review (if it's currently April then the next review will be in September) and be sure to remember to do so!

This simple but effective technique serves a number of important purposes for both your client and your practice overall. Among these are:

- It structures you to routinely update your clients' treatment programs and allows you to discover mistakes they may be making in their personal care.
- Your clients will have a special appointment to look forward to and it will reinforce the importance of following a correct home care regimen.
- It demonstrates your exceptional interest in their skin care habits even when they are not in the treatment room.
- The reviews can also be applied to makeup products and seasonal makeup designs as well.
- They increase sales!

Also, by scheduling a standout appointment in April and September it helps reduce the common problem of cancellations that routinely occur at both tax time (April) and back-to-school season (September.) Clients are less inclined to miss an appointment that has been designated as more important than others, especially when they are asked to prepare for it in advance.

By using this simple strategy with all of your skincare clients you'll not only perform better services in the spa but also increase your perceived value to your clients. This is especially important during economic downturns when clients make critical decisions about what luxuries they'll keep and which will be eliminated. You want to remain on the "keeper" list!