



Best red light therapy devices for getting an at-home glow-up

by Elizabeth Kadar August 20, 2024

Red light. Green light. Orange light. Blue light. With so many different LED light therapy devices on the market approved for at-home use, it can be hard to know which one (or ones) you need to target your specific skincare concerns. The best red light therapy devices can help turn back the hands of time, improving the texture and appearance of skin, boosting collagen and fighting wrinkles, fine lines and acne. They can also be beneficial for things like hair growth, inflammation and muscle recovery post-workout.

While red light therapy isn't a magic tool or a quick fix by any means, when used appropriately and consistently over time, the results can be quite impressive. Whether you're looking to even out your skin tone, zap the blemishes away or smooth fine lines, we've rounded up the best red light therapy devices for every issue. Let's glow!

What to consider when buying the best red light therapy devices

Your goals

New York State licensed esthetician, laser technician and oncology esthetician, Rachel Lozina, founder of Blue Water Spa in Oyster Bay, New York, recommends taking into account what your number one goal is prior to purchasing. "For example, if your goal is anti-aging," she says, "you would want to look at red LED, infrared LED and far infrared LED, because these wavelengths are best suited for stimulating collagen and elastin and increasing circulation within the skin cell structure."

If acne is your biggest concern, Lozina says blue LED is the way to go "because this hits right at the sebaceous gland and



minimizes oil activity and productivity. If you're looking to heal wounds and help aches and pains then you want to use an infrared wavelength." Many red light therapy devices are multi-purpose, too, so you can pick one that offers everything.

Features

Navin S. Arora, DO, FAAD, founder of Borealis Dermatology, advises looking for devices with adjustable settings such as intensity levels, timer settings and various wavelengths to suit your individual requirements.

Safety

Red light therapy is generally considered safe for all skin types. To guarantee safety and effectiveness, Arora recommends making sure that the device you choose is FDA-cleared or CE certified.

Brand reputation

When in doubt, opt for a red light therapy device from a brand or big beauty retailer with a trusted reputation. "Research reputable brands known for producing high-quality red light therapy devices with positive customer reviews," adds Arora. Budget

"Determine your budget range, as prices for red light therapy devices can vary significantly," notes Arora. Some come in under \$100 and are very affordable, whereas others are much more sophisticated and/or powerful and can set you back hundreds, even thousands, of dollars.

continued on next page



How we selected the best red light therapy devices

For this piece, I spoke with several experts, including two board-certified dermatologists, a licensed esthetician and laser technician, a celebrity esthetician and the founder of Maysama, an evidence-based, woman-owned brand offering pulsed red light therapy tools. I asked each for their insight on what to look for in the best red light therapy devices, and share their favorites across many categories.

I also did plenty of research to narrow down the most popular and trusted brands and only included red light therapy wands and masks with overwhelmingly positive reviews and ratings. A couple of the devices on this list I've had the chance to try myself, though not long enough yet to see full results.

How to effectively use red light therapy devices

Cleanse and hydrate your skin

Making sure your skin is clean and free of any products before using a light therapy device is key to absorbing the maximum amount of light, according to [Arora](#).

According to Bev May Sanderson, founder of Maysama, light penetrates hydrated skin better, so it's also prudent to use hydrating skincare such as mists, toners or water or gel-based serums as a pre-LED treatment.

Follow instructions

For your safety and best results, read the user manual carefully before you begin and follow the guidelines for light therapy treatment during the process. If you're more of a visual person like me, many brands will also have instructional videos with tips and tutorials to help you achieve optimal results and learn how to best operate and use your device.

Be consistent

Consistency is key! Especially since, according to Sanderson, it can take weeks to months to see results. Commit to regular light therapy treatments by making it a part of your morning or evening routine.

Protect your eyes

[Arora](#) tells us you should always wear protective goggles or keep your eyes closed when using red light therapy devices to avoid potential eye damage. Some devices may even come with protective eyewear.

Benefits of red light therapy

There are many benefits of red light therapy, from improving skin tone and texture to reducing fine lines, wrinkles and blemishes, to helping with pain relief, inflammation, wound healing and hair growth.

What is the difference between LED light therapy and red light therapy?

While these terms are often used interchangeably, [Arora](#) tells us there are some key differences: "Red light therapy typically uses wavelengths between 630-700nm, while LED therapy may incorporate a broader spectrum of wavelengths." He also notes that red light therapy is more specific in addressing certain skin and health concerns, while LED therapy may offer more generalized benefits, saying that "red light therapy devices tend to provide higher intensity and concentrated light for targeted treatments."

Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

Is red light therapy at home effective?

Definitely! "LEDs have made low-level light therapy more accessible and more affordable, so it is now becoming extremely popular for at-home use," says Sanderson. "Researchers have narrowed the optimal window for healing and biostimulation to just 2-10 joules/cm², which is easily achieved with many at-home LED devices, from masks to panels."

Is it safe to use red light therapy devices?

If used correctly, yes. It's crucial to follow the manufacturer's guidelines to prevent any adverse effects, and avoid direct eye exposure to the light.

How often should you use a red light therapy device?

This depends on your specific goals and the device you are using. Each device has instructions for recommended treatment times and suggested frequency, depending on your needs.

Which skin types can benefit from red light therapy?

According to [Arora](#), all skin types can benefit from red light therapy, but individuals with concerns such as acne, fine lines, wrinkles and inflammation may find it particularly beneficial. Studies have shown red light therapy can help improve skin tone, increase collagen production, reduce inflammation and promote healing. Sanderson adds that "ladies of color should consider using pulsed LED light, as pulsed light has been shown to better penetrate melanin-rich skin."

