

Back to life:

Beauty and self-care in the
post-pandemic world



Beauty in a post-COVID world: New insights

At the time of writing, the world was making faltering steps out of the pandemic, either back to some form of normality, or to the much discussed “new normal”. Of course, there has been a range of changes to consumer behavior. The question for pretty much every industry in the world is how much they will continue into the future.

For the beauty, wellness and personal care sectors, the key questions are all about the impact of consumers spending more time at home. How did they respond to the lack of visits to gyms, spas and beauty parlors? Did they focus more or less on their self-care? Did the shift from in-person interaction to video calls change the way they thought about their physical appearance?

To provide our partners with fresh insights, Lycored commissioned new market research. We surveyed 562 consumers in the UK and the US in June 2021. Over the previous 12 months, all had purchased a beauty, grooming or skincare product and spent additional time at home due to lockdowns.¹

A greater focus on self-care

Amidst the tragedy of the early stages of the pandemic, one reason to maintain hope was the speed with which the global health community recognized the importance of caring for ourselves, and for each other.

One doctor likened the situation to taking urgent action on an airplane ride: "Well, we've all hit the same turbulence, folks, and we all need to take good care of ourselves, our bodies, and our minds."² The World Health Organization was among the many bodies to provide tips on self-care during the pandemic.³

Lycored has long highlighted the importance of self-care in its many forms. Years before the pandemic, our #lettersoflove initiative was encouraging people to send affirmations of self-love to themselves.

Over a third (**35%**) of respondents to our survey said their focus on looking after themselves generally had increased during lockdown, and **31%** said they loved themselves more. Over half (**57%**) had thought about their emotional and mental wellbeing more. However, likely reflecting the many pressures of the pandemic, a third (**33%**) of respondents said their mental and emotional wellbeing had got worse (compared to **30%** who said it had improved), and **28%** said their focus on self-care had decreased.



35% said their focus on looking after themselves had generally increased



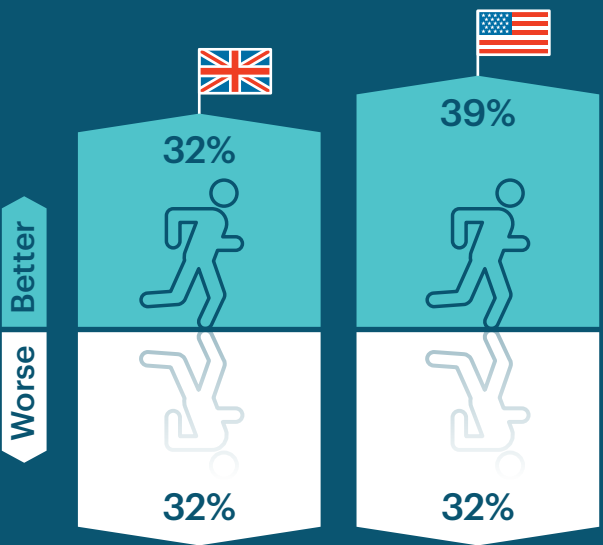
57% had thought about their emotional and mental wellbeing more

Physical wellness – contradictory pressures

A wide range of factors, many of them contradictory, has affected physical wellness – and attitudes to it – during the pandemic. They include the threat of the virus itself, the inability to exercise in favorite places like gyms, and a greater appreciation of the importance of physical health. One study highlighted the rollercoaster journey many consumers have been on, with many troubled by disruption to their routines in the early stages of the pandemic, but then undergoing a “positive change in perception” which helped them “find ways to substitute their normal activities.”⁴

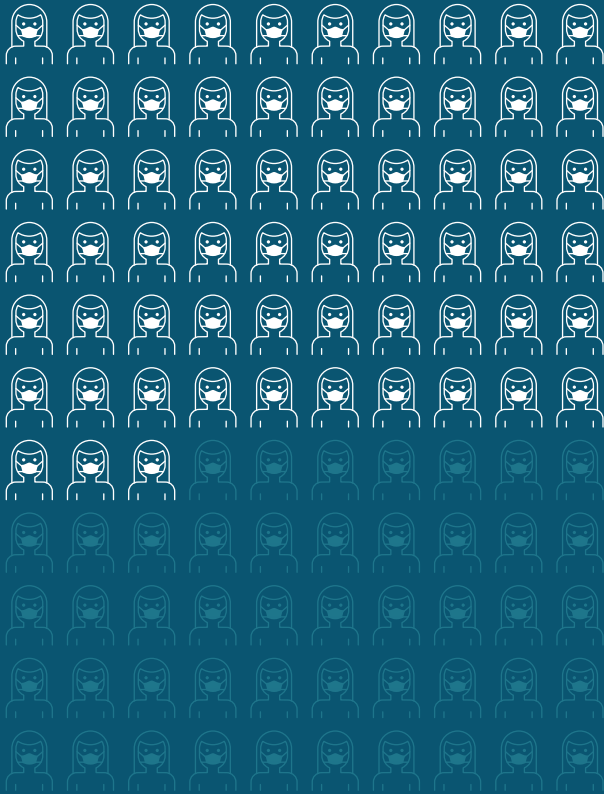
Our survey found that most (59% overall and 63% in the US) consumers had thought about their overall physical wellness more during the pandemic. However, this had not always resulted in actual improvements. In the UK, for example, there was an exactly even split between the numbers saying their physical health had got better and those saying it had got worse (both 32%). In the US, consumers were more likely to say their physical health had improved (39%, compared to 32% who said it had got worse).

Has your physical health got better or worse since lockdown?



63%

of US consumers thought about their overall physical wellness more during the pandemic



Greater focus on nutrition – for appearance as well as health

One well established trend during the pandemic has been greater consumer focus on nutrition, which has led to higher sales of vitamins, minerals and supplements.⁵

This was borne out by our research. Over half the consumers in the US (53%) said they had thought more about the relationship between their diet and their overall health during lockdown. Interestingly, the same number (53%) had thought more about the relationship between their diet and their physical appearance.

Still dressing up? Physical appearance became more important in lockdown

In the early stages of the pandemic, there was much speculation that the importance placed on physical appearance would diminish. An article in the UK's Guardian, for example, argued that "shutdown means that we interact less with the outside world and the societal pressures that come with it", asking the question "Who still dresses up, anyway?"⁶ In another, titled "Do we care less now about how we look?", contributors argued that "There are bigger things to motivate young people right now than beauty", and asked "Is life better when you can dress like a slob?"⁷

However, over a third (35%) of the consumers we surveyed said their physical appearance had become *more* important to them during lockdown, significantly more than the 26% who said it had become less important. The difference was particularly stark in the US, where 48% of consumers had become more concerned about how they looked.

In some cases, heightened focus on physical appearance may have been the result of negative influences. The Women and Equalities Committee of the UK Parliament conducted a survey into body image in July 2020 and found that lockdown had made 53% of adults feel worse about their appearance. Reasons included the closure of gyms and "widespread discussions in the media of 'lockdown weight gain'".⁸

35%

"Physical appearance has become more important"

26%

"Physical appearance has become less important"



The Zoom effect

There is another reason for the increasing focus on physical appearance. As the UK's Glamour magazine puts it: "Anyone who's had to replace their normal face-to-face meetings with a packed calendar full of Zoom catch-ups will be very familiar with their own face at this point...We've discovered our resting bitch faces in action and we've developed a new (obsessive) preoccupation with our under-eye bags and features."⁹

Our survey provides new insights into the results of this so-called "Zoom Effect". Over half (**54%**) of the Americans we surveyed said spending more time on video calls had made them think more about their physical appearance generally. Their greatest concern was the smoothness of their skin (**31%**), followed by the appearance of their hair (**27%**), the tone of their skin (**26%**) and the glow / radiance of their skin (**17%**).

This had translated into various changes to consumer behaviors. For example, more than a third (**33.5%**) of respondents said they had tried a new haircare routine as a result of the "Zoom effect", while three in ten (**29%**) had tried different beauty or grooming products.

And for many consumers, lockdown created new opportunity to experiment with such changes. Four in ten (**40%**) said that spending more time at home meant they were more able to comply with a long-term skincare or beauty routine.



Greatest concerns:



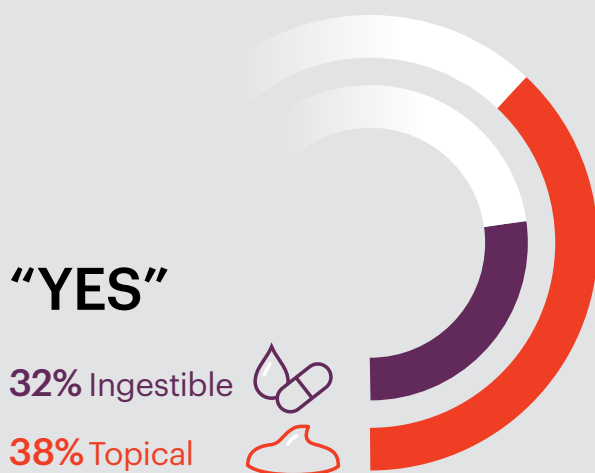
Higher purchases of skincare products – both ingestible and topical

We then asked consumers to think about their beauty, skincare and grooming habits beyond lockdown.

Globally, nearly four in ten (38%) said they expected to purchase topical skincare products more often, with 52% saying there would be no change, and only 10% saying they would buy them less often. The beauty-from-within category seems likely to receive a similar boost, with 32% of consumers globally saying they would purchase more ingestible skincare products once COVID restrictions were lifted.

Furthermore, these changes seem likely to endure well into the future. In the US, over half of consumers (51%) said the skincare habits they formed during lockdown would “totally” continue beyond it, and a further 33% said they would “partly” continue. Overall, eight in ten consumers (80%) said their new habits would totally or partly continue in the post-lockdown world.

Will you buy skincare products more often once COVID restrictions are lifted?



It is unsurprising that so many consumers envisage purchasing more ingestible skincare products in the coming years. Previous Lycored research shows that the beauty-from-within category is now firmly in the mainstream.¹⁰ Furthermore, our research suggests that interest has increased during the pandemic period, and that this may be a direct result of lockdown-related factors. Focusing more on self-care, consumers have demonstrated new awareness of the relationship between nutrition and their physical appearance. They have also had more time to comply with long-term skincare regimes.

80%

“My new skincare habits will totally or partly continue post-lockdown”

Lycoderm™ – A clinically proven ingestible skincare ingredient

As the ingestible skincare market grows, it is increasingly important to use on-trend ingredients that appeal to consumers' demand for naturality and scientific substantiation. One such ingredient is Lycoderm™, Lycored's proprietary blend of tomato phytonutrients and rosemary leaf.

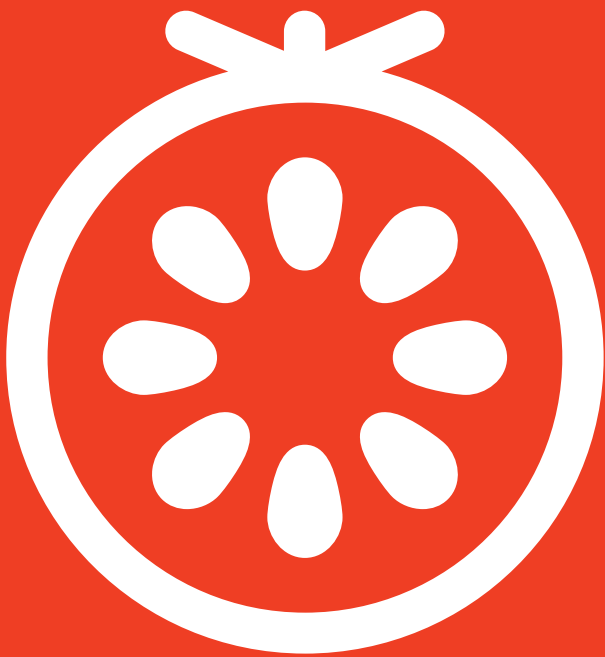
Lycoderm is carefully calibrated to maximize the synergy of its natural ingredients. The optimal concentrations of lycopene, phytoene, phytofluene, and carnosic acid supports skin health and appearance, helping balance the skin's response to environmental stress, and supporting the maintenance of natural collagen.

These benefits are substantiated by a wealth of scientific research, much of which took place very recently. Our 2020 "seeing is believing" study found that Lycoderm benefits overall skin condition as well as visibly boosting radiance and reducing the appearance of lines and wrinkles.¹¹ And in 2021, pre-clinical research demonstrated that the phytonutrients in Lycoderm work together to inhibit inflammatory cytokines that lead to the degradation of skin collagen.¹²

One of the impacts of the pandemic has been new awareness of the kindness we owe to ourselves, and to each other. When we show ourselves love, we can radiate something more powerful and more visible than any make-up we can put on. Beauty nutrition works on the same principle. When we nourish our skin from the inside out, we can create an even healthier glow than we can with a topical routine alone.

Find out more: lycored.com/lycoderm





Let's chat

Find out how we can help you create
your next product: info@lycored.com

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