

Advertorial



I Gave Up On Collagen Before I Found Out I Was Quitting 11 Days Too Early

Posted by: Rachel Moore

The cabinet I won't look at

In my kitchen, there's a cabinet that I can't stand to open. I'm sure you know the exact one I'm talking about.

The one filled with half-empty supplement containers and products you bought but never used.

Products you thought you'd stick with, but never did. In mine, I've got 3 tubs of collagen just sitting there.



Two of them are half full. One is still sealed, because I bought it in January and thought I would finally commit to taking it.

But I always quit after about the 19th day.

Turns out I needed to wait the full 30.

It happened way faster than anyone warns you about

I want to be specific about how this started, because I think it starts the same way for a lot of us.

It wasn't the mirror. I've made peace with the mirror. You get a certain angle, a certain light, and you know what you're going to see.

It was a photo someone else took of me.



My cousin posted it. Nice day, good time, we were just at the park enjoying the day. Figured we'd take a photo to commemorate the moment.

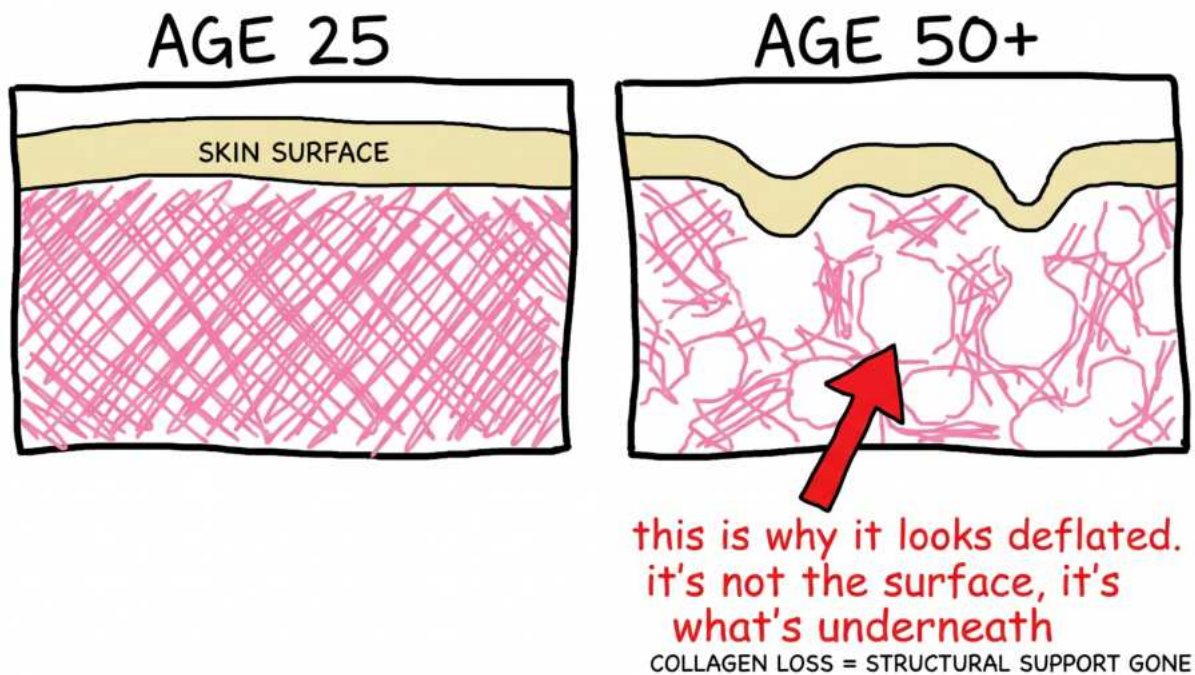
But when I saw it, I couldn't help but blurt out, "Who is that woman?"

It wasn't sarcasm or a joke. I was genuinely confused, even a little concerned.

Then I realized. Oh. That's me. And more than that, that's me looking exactly like my mother did, and I'm not ready.

The thing that got me wasn't wrinkles. I want to be clear about that because I think it's what everyone assumes.

It was that my face looked deflated.



Like something had been let out of it. Dull. My lips looked thinner than they used to. The light had gone out of it somehow, and I hadn't noticed it going.

And it was recent. That's the part that scared me. This wasn't a slow thing I'd made peace with over ten years. This was the last year, maybe eighteen months, and it felt like I just watched it happen in a single instance.

I said to my husband, "I feel like I'm watching my body age right in front of me."

He said I looked great. Which was kind. But utterly useless.

My doctor brushed it off like it wasn't happening

I did the responsible thing. I brought it up to my doctor. Surely he would have an answer.



But I got the shrug. You know the shrug. The "that's pretty normal at your age," shrug, and a gentle pivot to my blood pressure and diet.

I sat in my car in the parking lot afterwards. I felt something, like I was the crazy one, like none of it was happening, and I was just seeing things.

In that moment, the only thing I could feel was pure rage.



Because here's the thing. It IS normal. But that doesn't mean it's nothing.

I read something later from a woman going through the same thing, and she said it better than I ever could. Something like, if a man walked in complaining about an ingrown hair on his testicle, you'd think the building was on fire.

I laughed out loud. Then I felt like crying. It was that exact feeling of being managed instead of being helped.

So I did what I imagine you're doing right now. I went online at eleven at night and started reading.



I bought my first collagen because of a woman's forearms

Not a study. Not an ad. Forearms.



My friend Deb, who is two years older than I and whom I have known since our kids were small, had forearms that looked wrong. In a good way. Smooth. Not that crepey papery thing that had started happening to mine.

I asked her how. She said collagen, sort of embarrassed about it, the way we all are about admitting we care.

So I bought some.

And that's where the cabinet story starts.

Tub number one lasted 19 days. Here's exactly how it died.

I want to walk through this honestly, because when I finally understood the pattern, it genuinely changed how I felt about myself.

The first tub smelled like fish.



Not subtly either. I'd open it in the morning and get this waft of low tide and just... brace. Every single day, bracing before my coffee.

Day 19, I was tired, I was running late, and I looked at that tub and thought, "Not today." That was it. That was the whole decision. I didn't quit collagen. I just didn't feel like it on that Tuesday, and then the tub slowly got shoved to the back of the shelf. Before I knew it, it was completely out of sight.

Tub number two clumped.



Little gelatinous knots at the bottom of the glass, no matter how long I stirred. You just end up chewing your drink. I lasted maybe two and a half weeks before sentencing it to the same fate as the first.

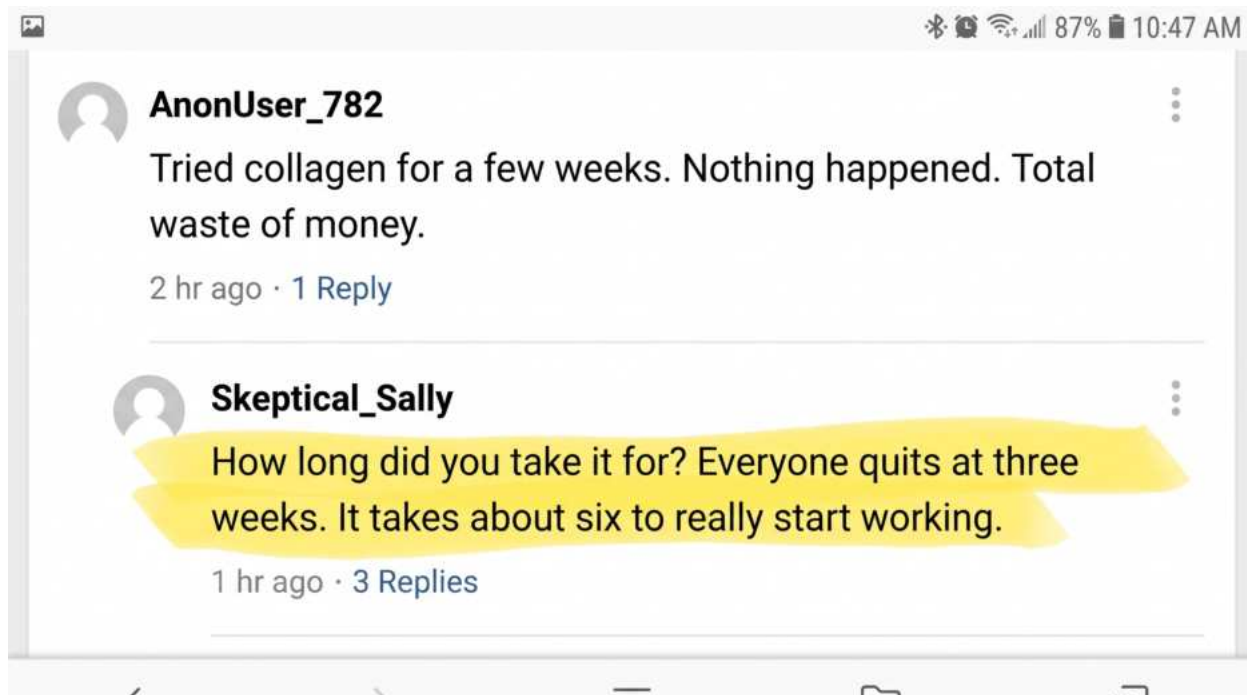
Tub three I never even opened. I think I bought it as a kind of apology to myself.

Not really planning to commit, just more so as proof that I cared enough that I'd spend the money. (but clearly not enough that I'd follow through)

And every time I opened that cabinet, all three of them said the same thing.

You fell for it again.

Then a woman said something that irritated me



I was reading a thread, one of those long ones where women are open about their thoughts, and someone had posted more or less my exact complaint. Tried it, nothing happened, waste of money.

And a woman replied, a bit sharply, "How long did you take it for?"

The original poster said about three weeks.

And this woman said, and I'm paraphrasing, but not by much: that's the answer. Everyone quits at three weeks. Give it about six weeks, and then all of a sudden you'll see results.

My first reaction was defensive. Convenient, isn't it, that the magic point is always just past where everyone gives up.

But it bothered me enough that I went looking.

Turns out it doesn't work on a dose. It works on a deadline.

Here's what I found, and it's not complicated, and I'm still slightly annoyed that nobody says it plainly.



The research on collagen and skin mostly measures results somewhere around the six to eight week mark. Before that, there isn't much to see. A 2023 review in a journal called *Nutrients* pooled 26 different trials covering over 1,700 people and found real improvements in skin hydration and elasticity. Fourteen of those studies used collagen from fish specifically.

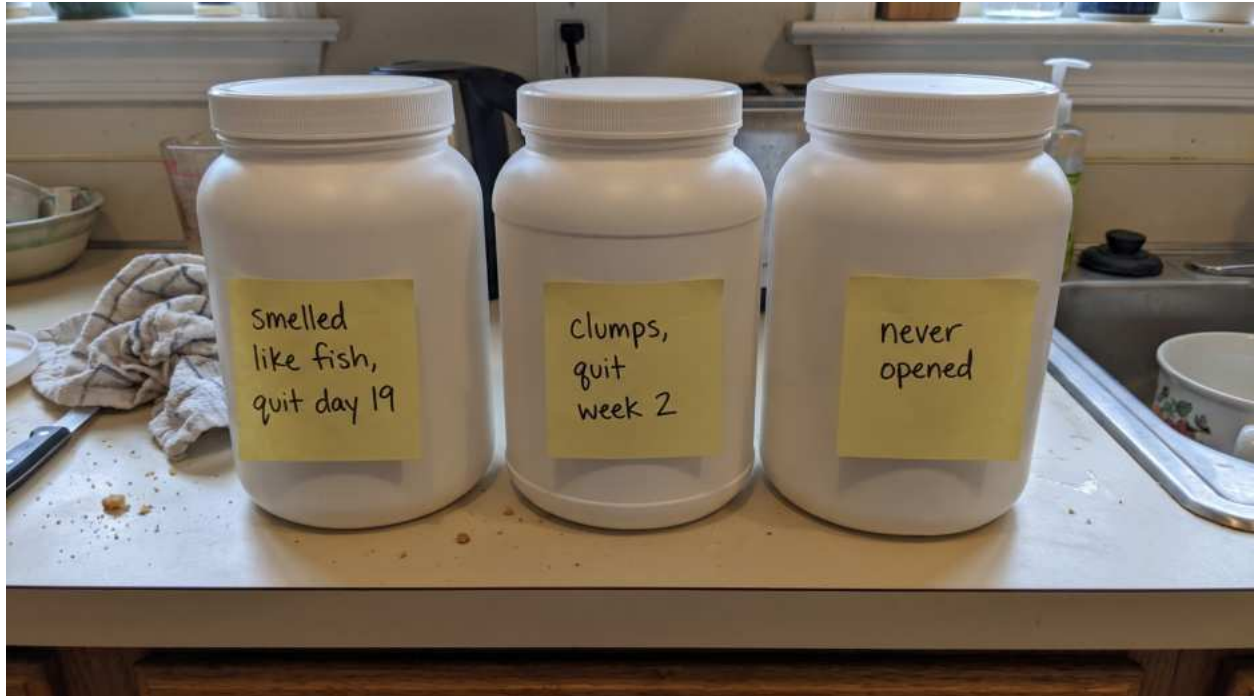
But you have to actually get there.

Which means quitting at week three gives you the exact same result as never opening the tub at all.

Same result. Same disappointment. Same tub in the cabinet.

And when that landed, I went back through my three failures and looked at them properly.

Fishy smell. Clumping. And one I'd forgotten about, which a friend of mine later told me made her coffee taste like gravy, so she stopped.



Not one of those is a problem with collagen.

Every single one is a problem with the powder being unpleasant enough to skip on a bad morning.

I didn't have a discipline problem.

I had three products that made quitting the reasonable choice, and I chose reasonably, three times.

I cannot tell you how much better I felt about that cabinet.

The only question I ask myself

I stopped asking "Does collagen work?"

I started asking, "What does it need to have?"

And once you ask it that way, the answer is almost boring. It has to taste good enough that you don't brace. It has to dissolve properly. And it has to go into something you already do every morning without thinking, so there's no new step and nothing extra to wash.

Deb, when I asked her, wasn't more disciplined than me. I'd just assumed she was.

But every morning, she just stirs it into her matcha.



She'd been drinking that matcha every morning for years, before the kids, before the emails, the one part of her day that's hers. She wasn't remembering to take a supplement. She was making her tea.

She'd never once had to decide.

What she was actually using, and why it mattered more than I expected

It's called Carrara. It's marine collagen, made by Pique, and the reason Deb used that one instead of the cheaper tubs was the reason I ended up buying it too.

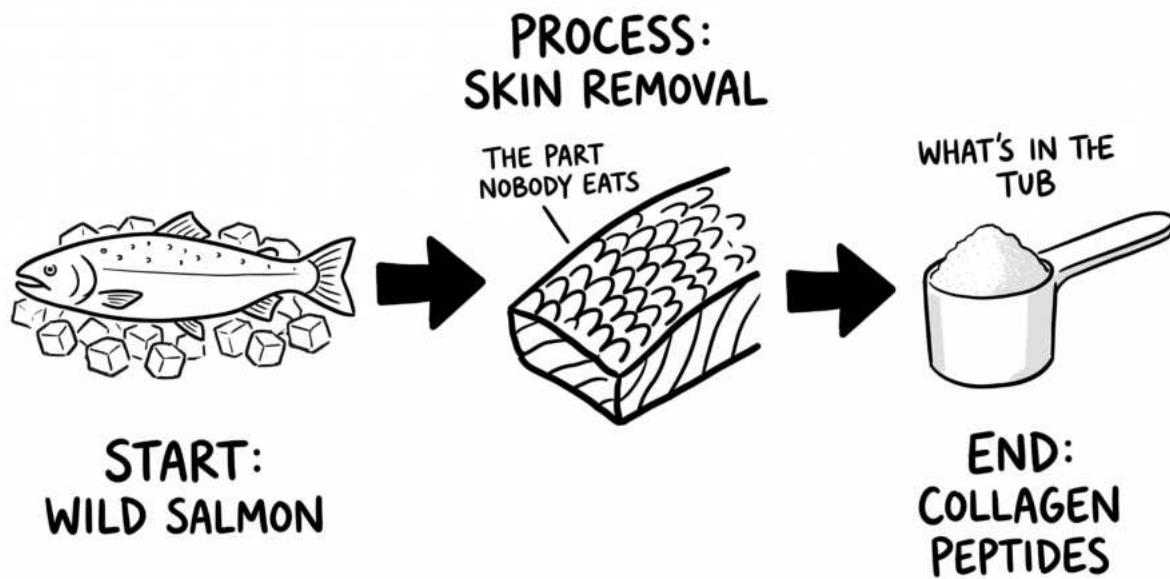


There's an idea that's been rattling around my head for years, and I bet it has for you, too. That people in places like Japan, Korea, and Vietnam seem to age differently, and that it may have something to do with the food. All those broths simmered for a day. Bones, skin, cartilage. All the bits we in the west scrape into the bin.

I don't know if that's true. Nobody's proven it.

But I'm also the woman who eats the salmon skin off her plate while everyone else pushes it aside, because some part of me has always thought that's the good part.

Carrara is basically that, but concentrated. Marine collagen from wild-caught Hokkaido salmon. Skin and scales.



(Which, side note, is also why the mercury worry doesn't really apply the way people assume. Mercury builds up in fatty flesh. It doesn't collect in skin and scales.)

There's one more thing in it that I didn't understand at first, and now I think it's the actual reason it's more expensive than the tubs I'd been buying.

Most collagen is Type I and Type III. Vital Proteins, Sports Research, all the big ones. Type I and III, that's it.

	the ones I bought	this one
Type I	✓	✓
Type III	✓	✓
Type II	X	✓ ← nobody else has this??
tested for metals	X X	✓
dissolves	X (lumpy)	✓ (clear!)

Carrara has those and Type II as well. It comes from salmon nasal cartilage, which almost nobody bothers sourcing because it's difficult and expensive to get.

And they screen it for toxins three times and publish the results, which I checked, because I'm the kind of person who checks.

The first morning told me almost everything I needed to know

I opened it, and it smelled like coconut.

I want you to understand what a big deal that was after Tub One. I had physically braced before opening it. Muscle memory. And it smelled of vanilla and coconut.

I stirred it into my matcha. It vanished. No knots, no grit, no film.

I couldn't believe it.



My matcha tasted like matcha.

That was the first morning. Nothing had happened to my face yet, obviously.

But I remember thinking: Oh, I could do this every day and never think about it.

Which, it turns out, was the entire point.

Absolutely nothing, and I nearly stopped again

Let me be honest about this part because I think it's where most people fall off, and I want you to be ready for it in a way I wasn't.

Nothing happened.

Week one, nothing. Week two, nothing. Somewhere around week three, I had a bad morning and caught myself thinking, "Well, here we go again."



And here's the thing. I didn't push through it. I want to be really clear about that because I don't want to sell you some story about willpower.

I didn't have to push through anything. It was in my matcha. Making the matcha is not a decision I make; it's just what happens while the kettle boils. There was nothing to skip.

That's the only reason I made it past three weeks. Not grit. Just that the thing was easy.

My nails did something they hadn't done in years

Week four, roughly.

I was filing my nails and realized I was filing them because they'd grown, not because they'd split.

They'd stopped peeling. They were hard. Slightly annoyingly hard, actually, they'd gotten ahead of me.

Now, nobody's daydream is better fingernails. That's not why any of us buy this.

But I want to tell you what that moment actually felt like, because it wasn't about nails at all.

It was the first physical proof that something was happening inside my body that hadn't been happening a month before.

I sat there with the file in my hand and felt hope come back for the first time in about two years. Actual hope. It was almost embarrassing.

If it's doing this to my nails, I thought, what's it doing to my face?



My sister asked me what I'd done

I hadn't told her I was taking anything.

She came over on a Saturday, we were standing in the kitchen, and she looked at me.

Just a quick glance and then looked at something else.

But then she looked back and stared for a few extra seconds, and asked: "Did you do something?"

I said what do you mean.

She said, "I don't know. You look rested."

You look rested.

I have to tell you, I stood there holding a mug and had to actively work not to cry in front of my sister over the word rested.



Because that's it. That's the whole thing. I never wanted to look 25. I've never wanted that, not for one second, and every ad that promises it makes me feel like they're talking to somebody else's mother.

I wanted to look like me.

And somebody who has known me for 51 years looked at my face and saw me in it.

That woman in the comment section was right, by the way. It wasn't gradual. It was six weeks of nothing and then a week where several things seemed to show up at once.

And then something weird happened



This is the part I tell people about, because it's so strange that it's the sole reason they believe the rest of it.

I had my eyebrows microbladed about four years ago. They'd faded, the way they do. Patchy on the left one, especially, and I'd been penciling it in every morning without thinking about it.

Around week eight, I was doing my face and stopped, because the left one had come back.

Not all of it. But visibly more pigment than there had been.

I thought I was imagining it, so I found a photo from the spring. I wasn't imagining it.

I went looking online, half convinced I'd lost my mind, and found other women describing the same thing. Faded tattoo ink looking sharper. Microbladed brows darkening back up.

I have no idea what the mechanism is there, and I'm not going to pretend I do.

But that's when I stopped wondering whether it was working.

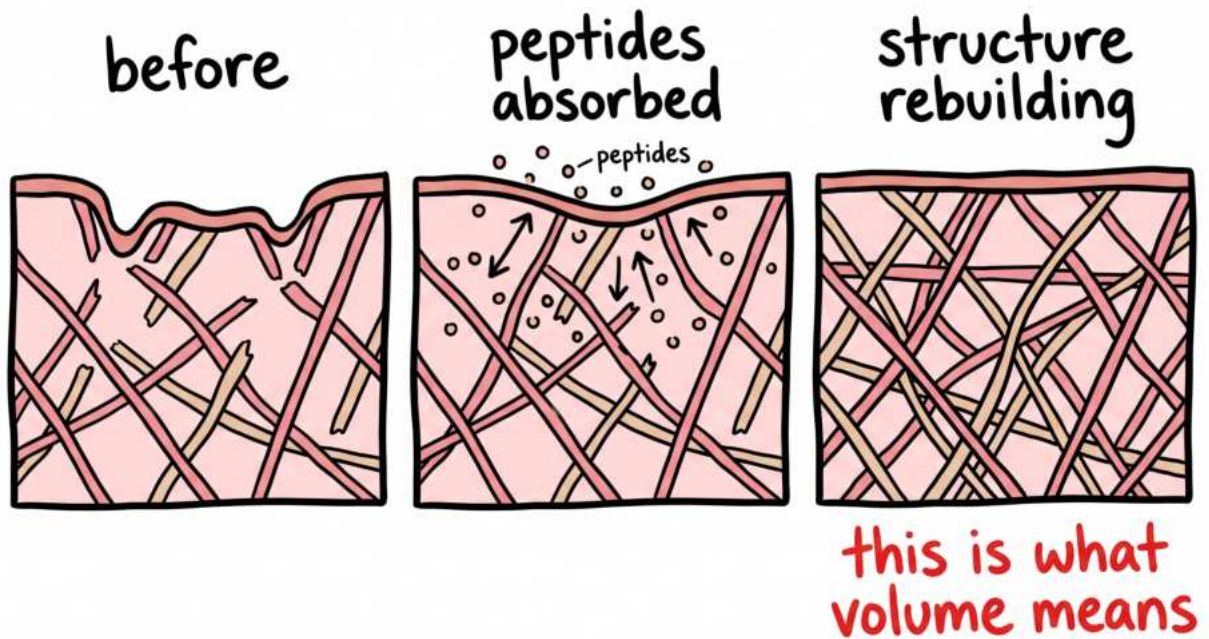
What actually happened to my face by month three

The nails were the first sign. The rested comment was the emotional one.

But the thing that mattered most took longer, and it's the thing I'd tell you to actually wait for.

Volume.

That word. That's the one.



Because deflated was the problem. It was never lines. It was that my face looked like something had been let out of it, and no cream sitting on top of my skin was ever going to put it back.

By month three, there was something under my cheeks again. My lips looked more like my lips. I don't mean plump, I'm not 30, and I don't want to look 30. I mean, they looked like they did before, which is all I ever wanted.



I'd taken a photo the first week, same window, same time, no filter, because someone told me to, and I nearly didn't bother.

Take the photo. You will not see this happening day to day. You only see it looking back.

Here's what it costs, and the math that decided for me

I'll be straight with you, it isn't cheap. Carrara is more than the tubs I'd been buying and abandoning.

Which used to be exactly the thing that stopped me. Not because I can't afford it, but because I'd already burned money three times and I couldn't face being the woman who did it a fourth.

That's the real thing, isn't it? It's never really the price. It's the fear of being that person again.

So here's the math that got me over it, and I actually think it's the smartest thing about the whole offer.

The threshold is around six weeks.

The money-back guarantee is 90 days.

Thirteen weeks.

Which means you can take it past three weeks, past the exact point where you quit last time, all the way to week six, and week eight, and past the part you have never once reached in your life, and if nothing happens at all, you send it back and you get your money.

You are not gambling on whether it works.

You're just finally, for the first time, going to find out.

I don't think I can overstate how different that felt from every other tub I've bought.



The two ways this goes from here, and you already know both of them

One. You close this, the cabinet stays as it is, and sometime around January, you buy a different brand because the packaging is nicer. Three weeks later, it clumps, or it smells, or it ruins your matcha, and you shove it to the back with the others.

You know how that one goes. You've run it three times. Maybe even more.

Two is different in exactly one way, and it isn't the brand.

It's that this time you actually get to week six.

Not because you finally got serious. Not because you found some discipline you didn't have before. Because it's one scoop into the cup that's already in your hand at seven in the morning, it tastes like vanilla and coconut, and there is genuinely nothing to skip.

Everything else follows from that. The nails. The photo you almost didn't take. Somebody who's known you your whole life is looking at you a beat too long in a kitchen.

You didn't read all the way down here by accident.

Something on this page named the cabinet, and you know exactly which cabinet I mean.

You're not trying to look twenty-five. Nobody is. I've never met a single woman who was.

You're trying to look like yourself.

And I promise you that's closer than three abandoned tubs would have you believe.



[BUTTON: [SEE CARRARA →](#)]

-Rachel Moore

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