If you’re viewing our website, perhaps you’re trying to find out if there is a better way to shave. Perhaps it’s because you’ve found wet shaving and love the experience you receive from an excellent, smooth, and pain-free shave using our tried-and-true methods of shave cream, hot water, a brush, and a fine razor. James Wood, an entrepreneur and Air Force veteran, was introduced to a shaving system over 20 years ago that worked: Lab Series Maximum Comfort Shave Cream. The thing that set this cream apart from the rest was its use of benzocaine, a mild numbing agent. This formulation helped its users achieve pain-free shaves, albeit synthetically, with a high degree of customer satisfaction. Jim was a loyal customer until a few years ago when Lab Series changed the formulation and took out the benzocaine. Customer reviews on the Lab Series website filled with expressions of dissatisfaction with the new “advanced” formula. With 90 reviews of the shave cream to date, it only averages a two-star rating out of five. Frustrated, Jim sought alternatives to his favorite cream, and when nothing comparable was found, he did what any successful entrepreneur would do: he made his own.

After a period of research and development, Face Skin Care launched in the summer of 2013 as a Lab Series alternative, and it has been making a steady name for itself ever since. The shave cream comes in a simple, no-nonsense 3.4 oz. white tube or 8 oz. jar. It boasts several ingredients to aid in the comfort of shaving, including coconut oil, shea oil, aloe, oatmeal extract, chamomile, and eucalyptus, in addition to being fragrance and paraben-free. To the wet
shaving community, though, the most controversial of ingredients will be the inclusion of lidocaine, a slightly safer benzocaine alternative, which appears way down on the list of ingredients. Most wet shaving enthusiasts hold the pillars of wet shaving I listed at the beginning of this article to be enough for someone to avoid the pain of shaving. Chemicals like lidocaine are viewed with suspicion at the least, and treated like wet shaving heresy at the most. I contend, however, that a product like Face has a place in the wet shaving gamut. Remember, when Lab Series was made with benzocaine, it was an extremely successful product. In other words, many men, traditional wet shavers or not, enjoyed their shaves as a result of using it. That is essentially what the traditional wet shaving community is trying to achieve as well: more enjoyable shaves. Secondly, for men like Jim and me, who have endured long periods of mandatory daily shaving, shaves can get painful, especially if you have sensitive skin. Even now that I am out of the service and a wet shaving convert, if I have to shave a few days in a row, it can be a bit rough on that last day. If I had been introduced to something like Face when I was still in the Marines, my apprehension to shaving daily might have been drastically curbed (and the time I was caught with a weekend shadow by an MP might have been avoided).

At first, my shaves with Face were a bit underwhelming. The cream came out of the tube very thick, and it took a bit to figure out how much would achieve a good shave. A hazelnut-size amount seemed to be just right. I rinsed my face thoroughly with hot water, making sure to leave it very wet, and spread the cream around with my hands. Avid brush users will unfortunately hate this cream, as my Silvertip was no help in creating lather. The brush soaked it all up and never gave it back, so using this as a brush cream is definitely not advised. With a very wet face, the cream applies easily and evenly, creating a thin, nearly transparent barrier; good for those shaving around facial hair. Jim recommends that the cream stays on the face for about thirty seconds prior to shaving to allow the lidocaine to take effect. Although the cream will not create a thick lather, I found it no less protective, and was able to achieve close, against-the-grain shaves on a number of occasions. It is not the slickest cream I have used, but was still an adequate lubricant. Lubrication can be slightly increased by mixing in more water directly onto the face, which is what I would do on successive passes, but adding too much water will have you running the risk of accidentally rinsing the cream off your face entirely.

I experimented with both a good double-edge razor and a cheap cartridge razor, and found that the lidocaine took the sting out of the cartridge razor and did not deaden my skin to such a degree where I could not feel when I was applying too much pressure or shaving at a bad angle. Most of my shaves were comfortable and bloodless, although I began to miss a rich, thick lather from a brush or the bloom of a fragrance while mixing. The cream rinsed easily from the razor and my skin, and my face felt no less hydrated than from any of the more traditional creams I use.

Many traditional wet shavers may not have a place in their medicine cabinet for Face, and that
is ok. If you are in need of a no-frills brushless shave cream, this is your product. The lidocaine is just enough to take the edge off of an otherwise painful shave, and it doesn't make it to where you aren't aware you still have a face. Experienced shavers should be able to adjust to the ever-so-slight loss of sensitivity with no problems. Jim has even graciously designed the cream to be able to be used waterless, which may make our guys in the field especially grateful.

Face Skin Care Ultimate Comfort Shave Cream can be found at [skincarebyface.com](http://skincarebyface.com) as a tube for $15.99, or as a larger jar for $29.99. The website also includes a helpful blog, videos, information on the cream, and good shaving tips that may help you achieve what we and Jim Wood are all trying to achieve: a better shave.

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