

Editing the AI Draft

Two revisions for a luxury beauty and wellness readership

The brief asked for AI-drafted content for a luxury beauty and wellness readership, an article and the opening of a short book, to be revised until it read as if a person had written it. The structure and intent of each draft were to stay as they were.

Each example below shows the draft as supplied, my revision, and a log of what changed. This was spec work: the drafts are representative examples written for the exercise, and nothing here has been published.

1. Article excerpt

From a piece on evening skincare and barrier repair.

THE DRAFT AS SUPPLIED

In today's fast-paced world, your skin faces countless challenges — pollution, stress, and the simple passage of time. That's why your evening routine isn't just a ritual — it's an investment in your skin's future. While you sleep, your skin enters repair mode, working tirelessly to restore its natural barrier. By choosing products that support this process, you can unlock your skin's full potential and wake up to a complexion that looks refreshed, radiant, and renewed. Studies show that overnight cell turnover increases by up to 300%, making nighttime the perfect opportunity to nourish, protect, and rejuvenate. The result? Skin that doesn't just look healthier — it truly is healthier, from the inside out.

MY REVISION

Skin keeps different hours from the rest of you. Through the day it plays defence, against weather and city air and the low hum of stress. Its real work begins after dark, when barrier repair starts in earnest. An evening routine earns its place for that reason alone, and the reason is timing: the right formulation, applied when the skin is most receptive to it. Cell renewal quickens considerably overnight. The figure varies by age and by study, which is why we won't pin a number on it, but what you apply in the last few minutes before sleep keeps working for hours. By morning the difference is quiet but legible. Skin that has been allowed to do its job, and looks like it.

WHAT CHANGED

- Cut the stock opening. Nobody reading a premium title needs telling that the world is fast-paced.
- Took out both “isn't just X, it's Y” constructions and all three em-dashes.
- Dropped the stock triplets (“refreshed, radiant, and renewed”; “nourish, protect, and rejuvenate”) and the rhetorical “The result?”.
- Let sentence length vary, from five words to thirty-three. Apart from “The result?”, every sentence in the draft ran between fifteen and twenty-six.
- Queried the 300% figure. The draft states it with more confidence than its sourcing supports, so the revision names the uncertainty instead. On a live job I'd ask for the client's source before settling that sentence.
- Kept the draft's five moves in their original order: what skin is up against, night as repair time, the case for a routine, overnight renewal, and the result by morning.

2. Book chapter opening

The first page of a chapter on sleep, from a short book on rest and skin health.

THE DRAFT AS SUPPLIED

Sleep is the foundation of true beauty. When we sleep, our bodies undergo a remarkable transformation — cells regenerate, muscles repair, and the mind processes the events of the day. Yet in our modern society, sleep is often the first thing we sacrifice. We stay up late scrolling, working, and worrying, then wonder why we feel depleted. The truth is simple: no serum, supplement, or treatment can replace the restorative power of a good night's sleep. In this chapter, we will explore the science of sleep, discover practical strategies for improving sleep quality, and learn how to transform your bedroom into a sanctuary of rest. Your journey to better sleep — and better skin — starts tonight.

MY REVISION

Every treatment in this book works better on a rested body, and most of them barely work at all on an exhausted one. That makes sleep the place to begin, reluctantly perhaps, since it is the one thing in these pages that cannot be bought. What happens between lights-out and waking is ordinary and a little astonishing: the skin turns from defence to repair, growth hormone rises, the day's small damage is quietly undone. None of it asks anything of you except the hours. This chapter is about protecting those hours. Some of what follows is science, some of it is furniture, and one or two suggestions may sound almost too small to matter. Try them anyway. The whole chapter, honestly, is a case for going to bed.

WHAT CHANGED

- Replaced “In this chapter, we will explore” with a promise in the author's own voice: “This chapter is about protecting those hours.”
- Cut “the foundation of true beauty”, “sanctuary of rest” and “journey”.
- Dropped the lament about modern life. The reader already knows what she does at 11pm.
- Kept the draft's itinerary (the science, the practical changes, the bedroom itself) but folded it into one sentence: “Some of what follows is science, some of it is furniture.”
- Added what machine drafts rarely risk: an admission (“reluctantly perhaps”) and a little humour.
- Moved the opening claim, that no product replaces sleep, to the front and made it concrete: every treatment in the book works better on a rested body.

How I work on AI drafts

WHAT STAYS

The structure and intent of a draft belong to the client. A revision that redecorates everything has failed as surely as one that changes nothing, so I keep the order of the argument and change the register.

WHAT I LOOK FOR

The habits of machine prose are well known: the dash used as all-purpose punctuation, the “isn't just X, it's Y” reflex, stock triplets, sentences of identical weight, and claims stated with more confidence than their sourcing supports. Finding them is the easy part. The work is deciding what each sentence should say instead.

WHAT COMES BACK

Clean copy, every change marked against the original, and a short list of claims to check before publication. The edit follows the register the brand has chosen, which here was refined, warm and precise.