

THE LAB ARE IN! Turn the page for top-tested exfoliators.

EXFOLIATION, 3 WAYS

The process removes skin's outer layer of dead cells so its surface is smoother and clearer and reflects light (glows!). But all exfoliators aren't created equal. Find the right one for your skin:

WHAT THEY ARE PHYSICAL

CHEMICAL

СОМВО

A.k.a. mechanical exfoliators, these include products and treatments like face scrubs, polishes, cleansing brushes, microdermabrasion and dermaplaning that lift and remove dead cells and dirt with friction.

Treatments such as face peels (DIY and pro) and cleansers, toners, masks and leave-on products (lotions, serums) containing acids or enzymes that loosen the bonds between dead skin cells so they can be dislodged.

Rinse-off exfoliators that contain **physical** and chemical exfoliating ingredients in one product in balanced concentrations.

INGREDIENTS

Abrasive particles or granules such as fine sugar or salt, ground nut shells, cornmeal or beads made from a natural ingredient like silica or jojoba.

Alpha hydroxy acids (AHAs, like glycolic, lactic, citric and mandelic acids), beta hydroxy acids (BHAs, e.g., salicylic acid) or gentle enzymes such as those derived from fruits like papaya.

A mix of one or more physical and chemical exfoliant ingredients (see left).

BEST FOR

"I recommend them for **dry** or sensitive skin, to improve roughness and texture without inflaming," says Roberta Del Campo, M.D., a dermatologist in Miami.

Those with AHAs target antiaging (boosting radiance; evening tone and wrinkles). BHAs can help minimize breakouts (clogged pores, inflammation).

Due to the dual exfoliating effects from physical and chemical ingredients, "I reserve these for oily skin, which is more tolerant," Dr. Del Campo says.

APPLICATION TIPS

Use two to three times per week, sweeping onto damp skin in circular motions with very light pressure to prevent irritation and micro-tears, the Beauty Lab suggests.

Apply once a week for sensitive or dry skin and three times max for other skin types, according to package instructions, says Beauty Lab senior chemist Sabina Wizemann.

These can be used from once a week to daily, depending on the directions; follow them closely for the best results.



DIY VS. PRO

Through either a doctor or an aesthetician, "professional exfoliating treatments like peels and microdermabrasion are generally stronger." Dr. Del Campo says, so they can produce more noticeable results faster.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GLOW

How to avoid angry (and damaged) skin when exfoliating



It's generally best to incorporate one type of exfoliator at a time into your routine to avoid skin irritation and damage, the Beauty Lab recommends. For instance, if you're trying a peel one week, don't also use a scrub or a cleansing brush.



SHIELD FROM THE SUN.

When using any exfoliator (at any time of year), sun protection is nonnegotiable, since removing the top layer of dead skin cells makes the skin underneath more prone to sun damage, Wizemann says. Apply broad-spectrum SPF 30+ facial sunscreen every morning.



MIX CAUTIOUSLY.

On days you exfoliate, skip skincare made with ingredients that can sensitize skin, such as retinol, vitamin C and other products containing acids (like cleansers, toners, masks, creams and serums), Dr. Del Campo advises.