

Chemical Peel Basics

Freshen Your Look Once and For All

Chrissy Spehar

Maybe you've noticed a few too many wrinkles for your liking. Maybe those years of sun bathing without protection have caught up to you. Or maybe you're just ready to freshen your look in a serious way. Whatever the case, a chemical peel might be the answer.

A Chemical What?

Chemical peels, otherwise known as chemexfoliation or derma-peels, are used to remove the outermost layer of the skin and reveal the fresh, less-wrinkled layer below. In these procedures, a chemical formula is placed on the skin, which then blisters and peels off. Depending on the depth of the peel--meaning the strength of the

"Egyptians write of using fruits (glycolic acid) and milk (lactic acid) to help keep the skin bright. The destruction caused by chemical exfoliation is recognized by the depth of its impact." According to O'Neil Andrew, the different levels of chemical peels include light, which exfoliates surface cells; medium, which removes the epidermis to the top of the dermis; and deep, in which the dermis is destroyed and scarring can occur. "Deep peels are used to correct acne scarring and deep wrinkles and to re-texturize the skin in total," O'Neil Andrew says. "These deep peels, known as phenolic acid peels, are only performed by licensed physicians, preferably a dermatologist or plastic surgeon."

*As a white
candle in a
Holy place, So
is the Beauty of
an aged face.*

-Joseph Campbell



Chemical peels can ease the fine lines and blemishes that often develop over time.

acid applied to the skin--the blistering process can take three to fourteen days.

Alison O'Neil Andrew, a licensed esthetician and founder of the Atlanta-based Beauty Becomes You Foundation, an esthetic nonprofit organization for seniors, explains the process. "Chemical peels have been used since the beginning of time," she says.

Is Peeling for You?

Chemical peels effectively improve the feel and appearance of the skin by reducing fine lines and wrinkles caused by sun exposure, aging, and genetics. They can also treat age spots, freckles, mild scarring, and other blemishes,

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including those caused by certain types of acne. "If you are trying to brighten your skin, rid yourself of light wrinkles, or control acne, then light- to medium-depth chemical peels may do the trick," says O'Neil Andrew.

All skin colors and types can benefit from chemical peels, though it's necessary to check with your skin care professional about which peel might be right for you. If you're taking acne medication, such as Retin A or Accutane, talk to your clinician about stopping the medication before and during treatment to avoid side effects or complications.

What to Expect

Once you've decided to receive a peel, here's what you can expect: The skin is cleansed thoroughly with an oil-reducing solution, and protective materials are placed on the eyes and hair. One or more chemical mixtures--such as glycolic acid, trichloroacetic acid, salicylic acid, lactic acid, or carbolic acid (phenol)--are dabbed onto the areas of the skin to be treated. The chemicals then react with the skin to produce a "controlled wound," allowing new cells to regenerate and emerge.

A warming or stinging sensation will occur for most patients during the treatment, and it will last about five or ten minutes. Soothing compresses may be applied to help with the discomfort. After most chemical peels, the skin will look as though it has been sunburned. Then it will begin to peel and look scaly, a process that lasts several days. Once the skin heals, it will look fresher, softer, and younger.

Depending on the depth of your peel, you may want to repeat the procedure in a few weeks or months. "Generally, a light peel can be given safely every one to two weeks if desired, a medium peel every three, six, or nine months, and a deep peel only once in a lifetime, perhaps twice," says O'Neil Andrew.

Before committing to a chemical peel, be sure to check with your skin care professional or doctor about any current medications that might interfere with the treatment. Also, determine with your practitioner if there's a need to take any antibiotics or antiviral

medications during treatment to avoid infection to the newly exposed, more vulnerable skin.

Recovery Requirements

Recovery time varies depending on the intensity of the peel you elect, a choice your practitioner will help you determine. A light peel generally takes a few days to heal. A medium peel will cause the skin to darken and take on what is considered a "brown paper bag" appearance, which, over the course of five to seven days, usually peels away, exposing lovely, fresh, pink skin. And a deep peel may take six weeks or more to fully recover.

For very deep peels, post-treatment bandages might be necessary. Your practitioner will provide you with a full explanation of how to best care for your bandages until the skin is fully restored.

Your practitioner will provide a complete consultation on the specific home care practices that best suit your individual peel to ensure you get the most from the treatment. However, you can generally count on the following:

-Avoid sun exposure until all blistering has subsided and the skin has regained its normal color.

-Avoid applying moisturizers or other products to your skin until it has completely recovered. Check with your skin care professional about which products are safe to use while the skin is healing.

Chemical peels are oftentimes a great solution to old skin problems, providing a fresher, younger-looking complexion free of lines and blemishes you may have considered permanent. Discuss the option with your skin care professional.



Your skin care practitioner will work with you to determine which type of peel is best for you.

De-stressing the Commute

Turning Road Rage into Road Sage

The average American commuter spends an hour a day driving to and from work. During this stressful, stop-and-go time, it's likely that blood pressure increases, adrenaline begins pumping, and muscles constrict and tighten. By the time you get home, you're wiped out and grumpy, and you have less to offer to those you come home to. If this sounds familiar, recognize that you have the power to reduce commuter stress. Here are a few tips to make your commuter time contribute to -- rather than detract from -- your life.

- Employ adjustable back cushions, pillows, wedges, and lumbar supports for a more comfortable commute. For more information, check out www.relaxtheback.com.

- To successfully sidestep the late-afternoon slump often caused by the stress hormone cortisol, keep some healthy snacks within arms reach. Celery, string cheese, water, and nuts -- especially almonds -- are good options for the drive home.

- Borrow books-on-tape/CD from the library. Consider purely entertaining novels to ease the intensity of your drive.

- Learn a foreign language. Libraries also loan out these types of tapes and CD, too.

- Use your commute as an opportunity for spiritual or emotional growth. When stressing about a traffic jam, remind yourself that it's completely out of your control. Remember, attitude is everything.

- Practice breathing. When stress occurs, breathing becomes shallow and constricted. Taking full, deep breaths gives the body more oxygen, helping to regulate physical and mental function. Exhaling fully releases tension and built up toxins.

For more ideas on achieving calm in a busy world, consider reading *Serenity to Go: Calming Techniques for Your Hectic Life* (New Harbinger Publications, 2001) by Mina Hamilton.



Creativity goes a long way on your commute.

Tips for an Even Complexion

Diminishing Freckles and Age Spots

While freckles tend to develop in people with fair skin, red or blonde hair, and blue or green eyes, age spots happen later in life regardless of skin type. But both are caused by an accumulation of melanin in the skin, the pigment that makes us tan. Both will also likely darken in the summer with sun exposure and fade in the winter months.

A PREVENTION PLAN

The best way to avoid these unsightly spots is with a prevention plan. Use a sunscreen with at least a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15 as a part of your daily skin care regimen, and wear protective clothing when outside. Age spots will concentrate on the backs of the hands, so be sure to apply sunscreen there, as well as your face.

When you do notice freckles or age spots gaining ground, the following options may be beneficial.

LIGHTEN NATURALLY

Lemon juice is a natural lightener. Used twice a day, it will help fade age spots and freckles. Apply fresh lemon juice to skin with a cotton ball and allow it to dry before applying sunscreen and makeup.

EXFOLIATE

Human skin constantly sloughs old dead cells as new ones are produced. With aging, the skin tends to lose some of its ability to eliminate these skin cells. Alpha hydroxy acid (AHA) loosens the glue that holds old skin cells in place. When used regularly, AHA helps eliminate old cells and excess melanin.

Many skin care products contain AHAs, but they can also be found in fruits and milk. Apply a mask of sour milk and allow it to dry before rinsing, or, for a more aromatic option, make a fruit mask of pureed ripe papaya. This fruit contains papain, an enzyme that helps dissolve dead skin cells.

SUPPLEMENT WITH C

Taking a vitamin C supplement helps reduce skin's sensitivity to the sun and can prevent melanin buildup.

TALK TO A SKIN CARE PROFESSIONAL

Estheticians can provide products and treatments to help reduce or eliminate skin spots. Discuss your spots with a skin care professional to determine the best options for you.

*Practice random
beauty and
senseless acts of
love.*

-Anonymous

Stop Aging Effects With Anti-Oxidants Nadiya

Time: isn't as much of an enemy to our skin as the dangerous free radicals caused by sun exposure, cigarette smoking, excess alcohol, environmental toxins, stress, and poor diet. These free radicals can break down skins collagen and elastin causing lines, wrinkles, and sagging of the skin. Free-radical damage is part of the cause of aging.

We desperately need powerful anti-oxidants to fight, neutralize and prevent damaging effects of free radicals. Anti-oxidants (vitamins, amino acids, and other natural substances) are effective treatments for the skin, and can help prevent wrinkles, promote skin healing, and reduce the formation of scar tissue. Know the ingredients when purchasing products to help your skin condition, if not you may be wasting your time and money.

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