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# PHYSICAL OR CHEMICAL?

## HOW TO EXFOLIATE FOR DIFFERENT SKIN TYPES

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It's estimated the skin sheds, on average, almost one million skin cells a day. However, the skin's natural desquamation process is one that can easily be disrupted by a number of internal and external factors. When skin is unable to shed dead cells sufficiently, a host of issues may occur, including skin disease, dull complexion, asphyxiation, acne, uneven tone and texture, and aging.

This is why exfoliation has long been considered as an essential step to achieving optimal skin health.

However, using the wrong exfoliating modality or over exfoliating can have adverse effects. How do you choose the most effective exfoliation method for your client? First, it requires a thorough understanding of mechanical and chemical exfoliators.

### Physical vs. Chemical

Proper exfoliation stimulates the skin and cell turnover, lifts dead cells, and begins the regenerating process. There are two primary exfoliating methods — mechanical and chemical — both of which work in very different ways.

### Physical Exfoliators and Suitable Skin Types

Physical exfoliators like scrubs use an abrasive ingredient to buff and polish skin, soften and lift dead skin cells, and provide a second-phase deep cleanse. These tend to be most suitable for oiler, thicker and more acne-prone skin.

There are a number of different types used for varying purposes, including:

**Jojoba Beads** :: one of the gentlest exfoliators, it is essentially jojoba oil made into beads that naturally

melt into the skin to soften sebum and skin cells without stressing or tearing the skin.

**Diatomaceous Earth** :: a naturally occurring, soft rock with an abrasive feel similar to pumice powder. It is a purified form of algae in a fine grain. Excellent for acne and congested skin.



**Bamboo** :: derived from bamboo stems, this powder contains the richest source of silica, a silicon and oxygen compound also found in many rocks and the earth's crust.

**Pearl Powder** :: finely milled from freshwater pearls, which are rich in minerals and provide antibacterial, detoxification and skin-nourishing properties.

**Pumice** :: a highly porous, very light stone created from lava, it is a more abrasive granular.

Scrubs are a tremendous asset in the treatment room and can be helpful in a home care regimen, but it's important to educate clients on proper use otherwise

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they run the risk of over exfoliation, dryness, post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation (PIH), and surface demarcations.

## Chemical exfoliators and suitable skin types

Chemical exfoliators disrupt the stratum corneum, breaking down surface cells, and stimulating dermal cells into action. This affects collagen and elastin and induces cell renewal.

Types of chemical exfoliators include:

**Enzymes** :: enzymes are derived from fruit, vegetable, dairy or other animal origins and produce a chemical change in the skin by way of digesting the stratum corneum. Enzymes formulated with acids can be a great combination to bring gentle exfoliation.

**AHAs** :: naturally occurring, nontoxic organic acids. The most commonly used include glycolic (from sugar cane) and lactic (from milk). Others include malic (apples), tartaric (grapes) and citric (citrus) acid. AHAs can be used on a variety of skin types just don't over-use and keep them away from rosacea skin.

**Azelaic Acid (up to 15%)** :: created by oxygenating oleic acid, an unsaturated fatty acid found in milk fats. This is used as a lightening, lifting and antibacterial agent. Azelaic acid is best for skins with pigmentation concerns.

**Salicylic Acid** :: a beta-hydroxy acid extracted from wintergreen and birch. It is a relatively safe, low-risk acid, as it is self-neutralizing and produces a drying and lifting effect. Salicylic acid may be used on many skin however best suited for acne and rosacea.

**Flower Acids** :: obtained from hibiscus chalice, flower acids have the ability to increase cell turnover without irritating the skin, and provide cellular support. Flower acids provide extra support for acne, rosacea, sensitive and reduce pigmentation concerns.

**Retinol** :: a vitamin A derivative that converts to retinoic acid and is a DNA regulator. It assists in the synthesis of collagen, aids in the formation of blood vessels and encourages healthy cell formation. Retinol peels and finishers to peels are essential in fibroblast support for every skin.

**Jessner** :: Jessner is a combination of acids, which synergize to produce an efficient exfoliating agent, which addresses scarring and thick textures.

**Red Wine Vinegar Acid (Acetic Acid)** :: Red wine vinegar is an all-natural acid with high antioxidant and tightening capabilities. Excellent for pro youth skin.

While exfoliation is key to healthy skin, there are a number of precautions that must be taken prior to prescribing a regimen to a client or performing a treatment — and this mainly hinges on knowing what works best for each different skin type. When administered properly and safely however, the results should be a bright, luminous tone, even texture, and plump, healthy, youthful appearance.



For more information about the types of exfoliation, visit [rhondaallison.com](http://rhondaallison.com)