

## 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."



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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*Reducing stress is one of the best pathways to better health and younger looking skin.*

-Judith Culp

#### Office Hours and Contact

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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.**

# Managing Arthritis

## Exercise and Bodywork Keep Joint Pain at Bay

The word arthritis strikes fear in the hearts of older adults. It often signifies aging, pain, inactivity, and disability. However, new research shows moderate physical exercise can actually ease arthritis symptoms by decreasing pain and increasing a person's likelihood of living a normal life.

### Understanding Arthritis

The most common form of arthritis--osteoarthritis, or also known as degenerative arthritis--affects more than twenty million Americans. Osteoarthritis (literally meaning "bone-joint inflammation") is caused by wear and tear on joint surfaces and most frequently involves the hips, knees, lower back, neck, and fingers. More than half of people over sixty-five have some evidence of osteoarthritis on X-rays, although it doesn't always manifest as symptoms.

Many problems arise from a sedentary lifestyle. Joints lose flexibility and muscles lose strength, feeding the cycle of pain, inactivity, and more pain.

### Exercise Offers Sweet Relief

Vigorous walking, swimming, and bicycling boost the release of powerful endorphins, the body's natural painkillers. When done four to five days a week, these aerobic activities improve general cardiovascular health and aid in weight management (obesity is the single biggest risk factor for osteoarthritis).

Strengthening and stretching exercises targeted at maintaining joint flexibility and muscle strength--especially for at-risk joints--slow the progression of degenerative arthritis. Yoga classes and moderate weight lifting programs are excellent ways to improve strength and flexibility. Bodywork can also provide relief.

If arthritis is slowing you down, get serious with your exercise plan. Consult your physician; work with a professional trainer, physical therapist, yoga instructor, or bodyworker; and start a gentle, progressive exercise program. Your joints will reward you for it, and you'll free yourself from arthritic pain.



Stretching can slow degenerative arthritis.

# Shea Butter

## For Your Complexion and More

*Shelley Burns, N.D.*

Shea butter comes from the nut of the shea tree (pronounced shay) found in the tropics of Africa, primarily West Africa. It offers many benefits as a topical moisturizer for skin and hair, and improves other skin problems and appearance.

As well as providing relief from minor dermatological conditions like eczema, lesser burns, and acne, shea butter can be used as a natural sunscreen and for stretch-mark prevention during pregnancy. Other benefits include the evening out of skin tone, reducing blemishes, and restoring skin elasticity.

Shea butter easily penetrates the skin, allowing skin to breathe without clogging pores. It contains high

concentrations of linoleic acid, which provide skin protection at a cellular level, as well as vitamins A, E, and F, which protect against premature wrinkles. Vitamin F in shea butter also soothes rough, dry, or chapped skin.

Healing though it may be, shea butter undergoes a rigorous path in its journey from overseas to the faces and bodies of your clients. The fruit from the shea tree is cultivated, cracked, grilled, pounded, and boiled. The shea butter is then scooped out of the nut and left to cool.

Properties of shea butter include unsaponifiables--substances that cannot decompose into acids, salts, or alcohol. For that reason, shea butter is extremely

absorbable, even more so than soybean and avocado oils.

There are three types of shea butter extraction and just two of the three end products of these extractions should be used. Unrefined shea butter in its pure form is yellow. Refined shea butter is processed but still contains many of its natural components. Either is fine to use. Highly refined shea butter may well have lost its healing properties and can include such solvents as hexane, which may cause nerve damage. It is pure white and should be avoided. Another note of caution: shea butter is not recommended for people with nut and latex allergies, and some experts also discourage its use by people with chocolate allergies.

*Kindness in  
words creates  
confidence.  
Kindness in  
thinking creates  
profoundness.  
Kindness in  
giving creates  
love.*

-Lao-Tzu

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