

## Everything you need to know about exfoliating

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Have we been doing it  
all wrong?!

By now, we've given you the rundown on [serums](#), [cleansers](#), and even [eyelashes](#)—but the exfoliation step in your beauty routine is just as crucial. And while some find this part of the process rather tedious (or worse, optional), others (like myself) consider it the best part. Nothing excites me more than sloughing away dead skin cells from my face. So just to make sure I'm doing this right, I decided to speak with [Dr. Jody Levine](#), NYC-based dermatologist and AOB Med Spa National Director, on how to properly exfoliate, the pros and cons of exfoliating, and which exfoliators I should be using now.

My experience with exfoliators has had ups and downs. Some of them dry out my skin so badly it feels like I'm a rattlesnake, whereas others give me such a glow you'd think I was pregnant.

I stopped using my Clarisonic, for example, when my dermatologist told me studies showed it creates micro-tears in your skin every time you use it. But sometimes even those top shelf microdermabrasion tools don't even do the trick, which can be quite the paradox (and make quite the dent in the wallet).

When I talked to [Dr. Levine](#), I learned the exfoliation process is more complicated than I thought. "Cleansing beforehand will prevent you from scrubbing oil, dirt, and residue into your pores. As skin renews itself when you sleep, I recommend exfoliating in the morning to help slough away dead skin cells that accumulated overnight. Always moisturize after exfoliation, as it can strip the skin of its natural oils," Levine explained. When we cheat our skin of its natural moisture, that can cause overcompensation, which means excessive amounts of sebum that can clog our pores we just tried ever-so-earnestly to refine.

And unfortunately, over-exfoliation is another consequence of improper skin renewing techniques that's an easy crime to commit. It's important to remember that exfoliation actually happens naturally as our skin cells are born in the lowest layer of our epidermis and work their way up. As we age, though, this process tends to slow down—hence the transition from "youth preservation" products to "anti-aging" products. The negative effects of over-exfoliating are pretty daunting:

"Vigorous exfoliation can cause irritation and redness, driving bacteria and fungus into your pores. At home, daily chemical exfoliation with a gentle exfoliating acid is

