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# Skincare guide: How to choose the right chemical exfoliant

Before entering the world of acids and exfoliants, it is highly recommended one uses only one acid at a time, which in turn, targets a particular skin concern

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What does your skincare regime look like? (Photo: Pixabay)

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Skincare routines have evolved over time. From using **walnut scrubs** (which cause micro-tears) to basic face washes, people have now advanced to chemical exfoliation. “Chemical exfoliants are acid toners that go deep inside to make skin fresh and radiant. These acids are used to remove the built-up layer of dead skin cells and treat issues like hyperpigmentation, blemishes, texture, and dullness, allowing regenerated skin to show through,” Ritika Sharma, founder and CEO of House of Beauty said.

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In simple words, as per *Healthline*, “chemical exfoliants are acids that get rid of dead skin cells. They come in various concentrations.” Chemical exfoliants are known to carefully remove the thin layer of dead skin cells for a brighter appearance and also stimulate the production of collagen, revealing fresher skin after every use.

However, Sharma said: “While **chemical exfoliants are a great way to prep the skin** as they help clear skin congestion and make it easier to absorb benefits of other skincare products, acids should be the last addition to any skincare routine. Skincare should begin with cleansers, moisturizers, and sunscreen, and then as we grow, serums get added to the routine. While exfoliation is one of the most important parts of skincare, it must be the last product in the regime.”



Getty/indianexpress.com

AHAs or BHAs — what is your pick? (Photo: Getty)

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## **What are the various kinds of chemical exfoliants and how to choose the right one for yourself?**

There are AHA (alpha-hydroxy acids) and BHA (beta-hydroxy acids.). While AHA is obtained from lactic acid, i.e derived from milk, BHA has salicylic acid, which works great for those with oily or acne-prone skin.

But before anything else, it is important to understand one's skin type and issues. In addition, understanding the product, its ingredients, and the benefits is equally crucial. Sharma said, “the smaller the acid molecules are, the deeper they penetrate the skin. For skin of colour, you want to use bigger molecule acids because they take longer to penetrate and are gentler.”

Smaller molecules, such as glycolic acid, are rather harsh and tend to deeply enter your epidermis and often leave signs of pigmentation. Thus, she suggested chemical exfoliants such as AHA and Mandelic acid as they are gentle on the skin and promote cell renewal.

“However, for anyone who is a beginner, it is highly recommended to begin with the mildest percentage of the acid and increase the composition slowly once the skin is acquainted with the product,” she said. Not only that, but she also added that it is important to carefully create the acid combinations to avoid reactions.

“While acids are suggested to be used during a night regime, some combinations are recommended to be used on alternate days to avoid mixing. It is recommended to do a patch test on the arm (before the face) for a few days to avoid allergic reactions,” she told [indianexpress.com](https://www.indianexpress.com)