

Get Your Sleek On

Polish your skin for the season ahead with the latest in spa-based skincare.

By *Andrea Dawn Clark*

GIVE YOURSELF the upper hand before warm weather strikes and get ready to show off summer sleek skin—from head to toe—with these spa-based how-tos for polishing skin. And as good as these exfoliants are, remember, they only go skin deep. Prolong their effect by nurturing the core of your skin, your health.

Take It Off

Skin exfoliants come in two forms: physical (think salt and sugar scrubs, dry brushing, and microdermabrasion) and

biochemical or liquid (this includes enzyme and acid treatments). "Physical exfoliators, like a paste with walnut shells in it, work because the rubbing action moves the granules over the skin, sloughing off dry surface cells," says Krista Kiley, Aveda global educator for Skin and Bodycare Education. Liquid exfoliators, such as fruit enzymes or acid peels, work without manual friction. "Enzymes break things down and make change happen more quickly," says Kiley. "When an enzyme from a fruit like papaya or pineapple is used, it immediately eats away the dead skin."

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And sloughing off dead skin not only feels good and gets you glowing, it's actually healthy, too. Susan Ciminelli, creator of the Susan Ciminelli Day Spa at Bergdorf Goodman and East Hampton, New York, says "You expel waste and absorb nutrients through the skin. So if you don't exfoliate, your skin can't breathe."

The tempting thing—once you've found a product you really like—is to use it daily, but that could lead to disastrous results. Excessive exfoliation causes a condition known as the Hayflick limit, when skin cells become sluggish and unresponsive, producing fragile, blotchy skin. Exfoliating is best done only once or twice a week at most. Afterward, be sure to moisturize, because you're not only stripping away a layer of dead skin cells, you're also removing natural oils.

Physical exfoliation treatments help your skin on the inside as well as the outside. "When you're rubbing the skin, you're increasing

blood circulation," says April Amstutz, massage manager at Canyon Ranch Health Resort in Tucson, Arizona. "That blood both nourishes and re-oxygenates the skin."

A good rub isn't the only way to get your skin healthy from the inside out; what you eat and drink has an immediate effect, too. And the results you get from scrubbing and polishing the outside will last a lot longer if the inside is well.

Inside Out

Water, fresh fruits and vegetables, and exercise are the foundation for glowing skin. And the good news is summer weather makes

all of these components easy to integrate into even the most hectic lifestyles.

Water is our essential element, which is why dehydrated skin looks lifeless. Drinking eight glasses of water a day is one of the easiest and most effective ways of improving your skin's glow. Spas take some of the monotony out of drinking water by infusing it with fresh, organic ingredients that add delicate flavor and additional vitamins. Indian Springs Resort & Spa in Calistoga, California, recharges spa-goers with a hydrating blend of sliced oranges and peeled cucumber added to their omnipresent water pitchers. A squeeze of lemon is also an easy enhancer and an excellent purifier for troublesome skin or finicky digestive systems.

Seasonal produce is always the healthiest for its high nutrient content. There are loads of vitamin A to be had in summer-fresh apricots, cantaloupe, watermelon, and peaches, and vitamin C in

strawberries, blueberries, and raspberries. Phytochemicals, acting as antioxidants for your skin, are plentiful in peaches, nectarines, and plums.

Waxing Poetically

The finishing touch for summer sleek legs is hair removal, and while no one method works for everyone, waxing is one of the best, according to Rita Ukis, esthetician at Avon Spa in New York City. "The hair becomes very fine with each treatment, and because the hairs are pulled out at the root, the smoothness lasts for two to six weeks," she adds. And, according to Audra Senkus-Iemma, co-owner of Haven in Manhattan, "of all the hair removal methods, waxing gives your skin the sleekest post-treatment surface."

For an optimal and less painful wax treatment, it's best to exfoliate before you get waxed. "It's difficult to wax dry skin. You end up pulling off a lot of skin instead of hair," says Kiley. If you exfoliate before you wax, either at home or at the spa, your skin will be less irritated afterward. And one final waxing note: "Anyone who is using Accutane should not wax," says Dr. Arielle Kauvar, dermatologist at the Laser & Skin Surgery Center of New York. "The drug is made to help accelerate skin turnover, so when you wax you'll end up stripping off too much skin."

Super Sleek

Whether you take the spa or do-it-yourself route to polishing your skin, the day you show it off you may want to do some easy refreshing with super-sleeking moisturizers or body oils. Turn to Nivea's Silky Shimmer Lotion, Christian Dior's Shimmering Body Lotion, or Davies Gate Fleurs de Pearl Lotion for a wash of shine. ●

A Head-to-Toe Guide to Spa-Sleek Skin

HANDS OFF

HANDS ON

FACE

The Golden Door, Escondido, CA: Signature Pineapple Facial
This facial refreshes every skin type with a granulated fruit enzyme scrub, followed by a hydrating mist of orange flower water.

Avon Salon & Spa, NYC: Microdermabrasion
Ultrafine aluminum crystals uncover new, healthy skin in one hour with no "down time."

Start with Golden Door Pineapple Scrub or **Benefit Pineapple Facial Polish**; finish with **Naturopathica's Orange Blossom Hydrolat** or **Kerstin Florian Facial Spa Kur Aromaalka Neroli Water**.

Dermanew Personal Microdermabrasion System comes with a handheld buffing tool and special microdermabrasion cream.

DECOLLETAGE

The Spa at Equinox, NYC: Décolleté Boost
To smooth out fine lines and sun damage, the treatment for this delicate skin is customized with beta hydroxy acids, glycolic peels, or physical exfoliates to start, followed by a skin-nourishing mask and moisturizing cream.

Wash with Peter Thomas Roth AHA/BHA Face & Body Polish, then apply a gentle exfoliating mask like **Astara's Green Papaya Nutrient Mask**. Finish with **Bio Jouvance Bust cream**.

FULL BODY

Bacara, Santa Barbara, CA: Citrus Avocado Body Polish
The treatment begins with a gentle yet effective citrus-scented scrub. The skin's moist glow is then restored with an application of warm avocado and almond oil.

Greenhouse Spa, nationwide: Exotic Coconut Rub and Milk Ritual Wrap
Take the exotic route with a Balinese coconut-spice scrub to polish the skin and fragrant oils to replenish it. Dip into a milk bath before a full-body wrap for the complete treatment.

Soho Sanctuary, NYC: Body Gloss
The pleasure of a massage extends into a full-body salt scrub and a hydrating shea butter and oil wrap.

Start with Bath Petals Key West Citrus Salt Scrub or **BlissLabs Lemon Peel scrub cream**; then moisturize with **Caswell-Massey Body & Massage Avocado Oil**.

Jamu Thai Body Elixir packages a coconut body scrub with Thai body oil to replicate the experience at home. Soak in **Aida Thibiant Tahitian Milk Bath** and seal in moisture with the **Body Shop Coconut Body Butter**.

Start with Origins Pomegranate Polish Luscious Body Buffer, then lavish your skin with their shea butter-rich **Perfect World Intensely Hydrating Body Cream**.

BACK

Spa Nordstrom, nationwide: Comfort Zone Back Treatment
Bare your back with confidence. A relaxing massage is followed by a deep cleansing treatment, exfoliation, and a seaweed mask.

Phytomer Seaweed Soap gently removes dead skin cells; **Sothy's Hydroptimale Masque** with seaweed polishes it off.

LEGS

Haven, NYC: Microdermabrasion Leg Treatment
Fine crystals "sand blast" away dead skin along with nicks from shaving mishaps and small scars. The feeling is more tingling than pleasurable, but the smooth, even-toned results are worth it.

At-home microdermabrasion versions are gentler, but no less effective when used regularly. Try **Philosophy's the Greatest Love hydrating microdermabrasion scrub** or **Joey New York Microdermabrasion Facial Peel**.

FEET

New Age Health Spa, Neversink, NY: Spa Pedicure with Mint Mask An alpha-hydroxy scrub exfoliates and softens feet. Afterward, a moisturizing mint mask nourishes and soothes.

Creative Nail Design Spa Pedicure Mini Tote packages a great soak, sea salt glow crystals, marine mask, and massage oil for incredibly soft peds on the go.