

Microdermabrasion Revealed

Discover the Benefits

Chrissy Spehar

Holding back the sands of time is indeed an impossibility, and there is no such thing as the fountain of youth. Plastic surgery may be an option, but it's expensive, invasive, and may seem extreme. So perhaps now you are resigned to the fact that makeup is your only hope for hiding those inevitable wrinkles, fine lines, age spots, or even scars. But there are options.

Microdermabrasion is an exfoliating process that partially or completely clears the first layer of skin on the face and neck. First used in Europe in the 1980s, the technique has recently been adopted and popularized in the United States. With a wave of this magic wand, microdermabrasion can erase the

compare the process to moderate sandblasting of the skin.

According to Atlanta-based esthetician Alison O'Neil Andrew, "Within the last ten years this procedure has been found effective as a mild yet beneficial form of exfoliation. Although the equipment has the ability to ablate the skin when used in higher calibrations, it is generally used to enhance the efficacy of products used for treatment of the skin on a daily basis."

Is It Right for You?

Have you spent too much time in the sun? Do you have age spots and freckles you'd like to lose? Do you want to



Many are discovering the benefits of microdermabrasion to ease wrinkles and even skin tones.

complexion imperfections that come with time. This may just be the treatment of choice for you.

How It Works

In the most commonly used method of microdermabrasion, a wand sprays fine crystals across the skin while dead skin cells are vacuumed off by a small suction device attached to the wand. Some

reduce fine lines, wrinkles, or stretch marks? Are you looking to diminish raised scar tissue? Or are you just hoping to refresh your complexion? As you can see, almost anyone can benefit from microdermabrasion. Performed repeatedly and consistently, microdermabrasion can also be a successful

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acne treatment because it encourages the production of skin cells and collagen, helping to eliminate blackheads and oiliness. Because the technique uses no harsh chemicals, it is great for those with chemical sensitivities, and can be used on all skin colors and types.

Quick and Easy

Most clients do not find the procedure to be painful, and it requires no anesthetic. Since the procedure is non-invasive, little preparation is required; simply remove your makeup and come to the treatment room with a clean face.

While you lie back and relax, your esthetician will apply the wand to your face in a slow, methodical way. You can expect the treatment to take about thirty minutes to an hour. Side effects are rare, and your skin will look glowing and fresh almost immediately after the treatment.

Aggressive treatments may cause the skin to look slightly pink and tender for a few hours, so discuss this possibility with your skin care professional. Typically, you can resume normal activities and apply makeup and moisturizer soon after your microdermabrasion session.

As for the results? "After a microdermabrasion session, the skin feels smoother and there is an evident improvement in circulation due to the suction or vacuuming component of the treatment," O'Neil Andrew says. "The best results," she explains, "are found when microdermabrasion is used in conjunction with a facial treatment--the skin performs in a healthier manner than before the procedure. For instance, acne or small blemishes heal faster."

Follow-up Details

Once you've completed your session, maintaining your new, healthier skin depends on a solid home care regimen. According to O'Neil Andrew, "Nothing matters more than an effective daily home care plan. It is an essential reason for seeing a professional who knows you and your skin on an on-going basis."

Home care for skin that has undergone microdermabrasion is fairly simple. Because fresh skin has been newly

exposed, it is important to avoid direct sunlight to the treated area for twenty-four hours after your session. In addition, always use sunscreen as an antiaging and protective measure. And, avoid products containing harsh chemicals, dyes, or perfumes until the skin has fully healed.

After the first twenty-four hours, resume your normal skin care routine and follow any special considerations, as determined by your esthetician.

"From the first visit on, the professional taking care of your skin will evaluate your daily regimen and update it as required according to your skin care needs at the time," says O'Neil Andrew.

To see best results, additional sessions should be scheduled at regular intervals, with the maximum number of treatments ranging from five to twelve, spaced about three weeks apart. Once the initial grouping of sessions is completed, scheduling the occasional follow-up treatment is recommended.

One note: In some states, microdermabrasion can only be

performed by a physician or by estheticians who meet certain requirements and/or who are supervised by a physician. Ensure your skin care professional has the proper training and credentials.

Microdermabrasion is an effective technique to address skin issues long considered something you just have to live with. While the fountain of youth remains a piece of fiction, the magic wand of microdermabrasion can have profound effects on your complexion. Fine lines, wrinkles, an uneven tone, stretch marks, scarring, and acne can be addressed.



Lie back and relax while your practitioner applies her magic wand of microdermabrasion.

What is LED Therapy?

Carrie Patrick

LED therapy is a skin care treatment that uses light-emitting diodes (LEDs) of various colors, normally red, blue, and infrared, to maintain healthy skin. LEDs produce a low-powered glowing light, which is positioned to shine onto the face or other area being treated. No heat is produced by the LEDs, and it should not be confused with laser therapy.

The skin benefits of different colors of LED light have been identified through a broad array of studies. The most often cited study is the Whelan study, published in 2001 by NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center, which found that LED light helped speed up wound healing.

Red light is most often used for general skin improvement and to reduce the visible signs of aging. Blue light has been shown to destroy acne bacteria. Infrared light may have beneficial effects on the skin's natural supply of collagen and elastin, which are responsible for maintaining skin firmness and

resilience. A series of regular treatments will provide the best results.

WHAT CAN I EXPECT?

No special preparation is necessary. Simply arrive to your appointment on time, relax, and enjoy the treatment. Your skin care professional will cleanse your skin and may also apply a serum or other facial products to enhance the benefits of your session, depending on your goals and the range of treatments offered.

The LED device will be positioned on your skin, or up to a few inches away. Your eyes will be covered so that the light does not bother you. Relax and rest while the glow of the LEDs bathes your skin.

Typically, no sensation is felt. Some people may feel a slight tingling, or see flashes in their vision temporarily as a result of having a light source close to their face. Keeping your eyes closed and covered during the treatment will help

avoid this.



LED therapy can help maintain healthy skin.

Gifts of Green Tea

Jed Heneberry

Green tea, the most popular beverage in the world, has long been valued for its positive effects on a variety of health problems. WebMD cites a decade of research on green tea's benefits--fighting cancer and heart disease, lowering cholesterol, burning fat, preventing diabetes and stroke, and more.

Sourced from an Asian tea plant known as *Camellia sinensis*, green tea is processed less than other styles of tea, which results in less oxidation and therefore better retention of nutritional value. Much of the credit for green tea's track record is given to green tea's antioxidants, known as catechins, which can help prevent free-radical damage to our DNA. Blueberries, dark chocolate, red wine, spinach, and other fruits and vegetables are also known to be high in antioxidants.

Researchers in Japan have recently found a correlation between green tea drinking and a lower rate of "functional disability," classified as problems with daily activities such as bathing, housework, shopping, and other routine

tasks, in elderly subjects. The study also indicates that more cups per day might be better--those who drank five cups daily were the least likely to report problems. The study "Green Tea Consumption and the Risk of Incident Functional Disability in Elderly Japanese" was published in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*.

Steep green tea for shorter amounts of time at a temperature just below boiling to avoid a bitter brew. It is also customary to forego milk and sugar, though in Morocco, green tea is often served with mint. Once you've finished your cup, dry the leaves by squeezing out water and spreading them out on a paper towel. They'll then do double duty as a deodorizer in your house, or a nitrogen-rich fertilizer in your garden!

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