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BEAUTY

At-Home vs. In-Office: Choosing the Best Chemical Peel for Your Skin

Janell Hickman

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IMAGE: IMAXTREE

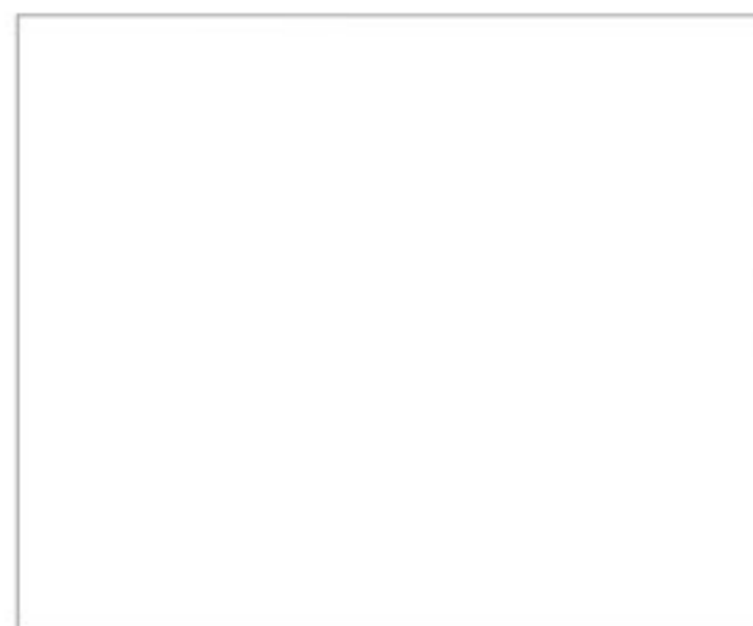
Next to clear skin, a glowing complexion ranks high on the holy grail of beauty wishes. Thanks to the change in season, dull, lackluster skin may have made its untimely (and unwanted) debut. Manual **exfoliants** (e.g., scrubs) don't always do the job, which makes using **chemical peels** alluring, but where does one start? Right here. Get glowing (safely) with these expert tips.

Benefits of chemical peels

"Chemical peels promote smooth skin, reduce fine lines and minimize pore size by breaking down the 'glue' between the superficial skin cells," explains board-certified cosmetic dermatologist Annie Chiu, MD. "They can effectively slough off and reveal fresh new skin. Regular use of peels can induce collagen production long-term in the dermis."

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Dr. Elizabeth Tanzi, founder and director of Capital Laser & Skin Care, advises certain skin types to embrace peels – and others to steer clear. "I love peels for **acne-prone skin**. My favorites are salicylic acid peels or a Vitalize peel (which combines both salicylic acid and Retin-A)," she says. "Patients with rosacea may need to avoid peels due to skin sensitivity."

In-office vs. at-home chemical peels

It's important to understand that there's a *big* difference between at-home and in-office peels. "At-home peels typically penetrate only the epidermis and are most commonly composed of lactic or glycolic acid," explains Chiu. "They tend to be milder in nature than in-office peels. On the other hand, in-office peels typically combine ingredients, including salicylic acid, trichloroacetic acid and retinols to penetrate into the upper dermis where induction of neocollagenesis can occur."

If you're not quite ready to book a dermatologist appointment, try one of these best at-home chemical peels based on consumer ratings: **Avon ANEW CLINICAL Advanced Retexturizing Peel**, **Philosophy Micro delivery Triple-Acid Peel Pads** and **Peter Thomas Roth Un-Wrinkle Peel Pads**.



Which chemical peel is right for your skin type?

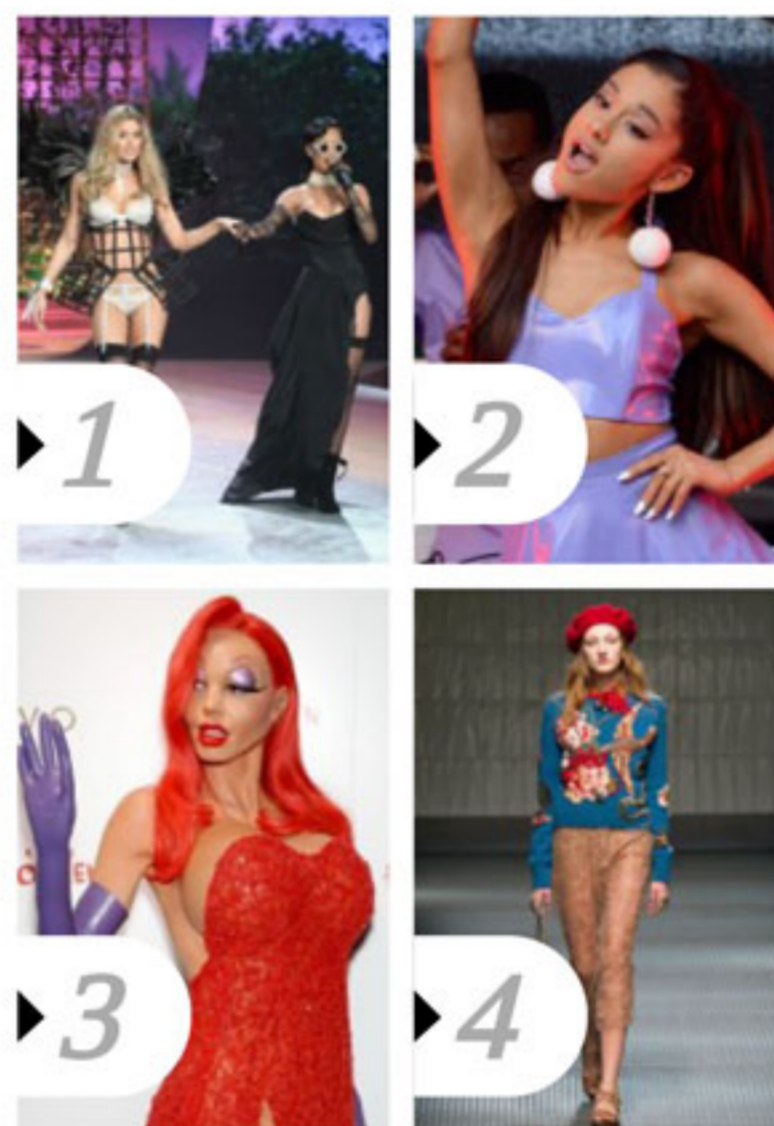
With so many versions on the market, it's tough to decipher which one will work best on your skin type. Tanzi says, while it depends on the condition of your skin, most people will respond best to glycolic peels. She elaborates further by explaining, "Glycolic peels are helpful for sun-damaged skin to even out skin tone and pigmentation. They also give the skin a nice, radiant glow. Salicylic acid and retinol peels are better for people with oily and/or acne-prone skin. These loosen blackheads, reduce oil and even out discoloration from old breakouts."

Skin tone is also an important factor when choosing a chemical peel. "The most common ingredient in at-home peels are glycolic acids, which can sometimes be unpredictable on darker skin types, especially Asian or African-American skin," warns Chiu. "I recommend sensitive or darker skin individuals seek a dermatologist's guidance when choosing the best peel for their skin type or skin condition."

How to prep skin for a chemical peel

Before you introduce peels into your current regimen, you have to prep your skin by making small tweaks to your daily routine. To start, try to avoid direct sunlight and retinol products for at least a week. "It is very important to hydrate the skin with a


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moisturizer and use an SPF of at least 30 post-peel," continues Tanzi. "Chemical peels can help the skin glow with health, but also render it slightly more sun sensitive – be sure to use a good SPF every day."

If you happen to have an adverse reaction, Chiu recommends using a mild, over-the-counter hydrocortisone twice a day to calm your skin and seeking the help of a dermatologist. "There is such as thing as 'too much' of a good thing – and over exfoliation with at-home peels can actually irritate or even break out the skin." Word to the wise? Always spot test an area first to see your initial reaction.

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Janell Hickman


Janell M. Hickman is a proud Minnesota native, Hampton University alum and freelance beauty writer. Currently residing in Brooklyn, Janell has experience working for companies including Victoria's Secret, *WWD*, *Essence*, *Ebony* and, most recently, Gilt Groupe.


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