

beauty advice, skin

## We Tried This Easy Beauty Hack for Smoother Feet (and It Really Works)

BY ANNE BAUSO, ASSISTANT DIGITAL EDITOR, SEPTEMBER 28, 2015, 10:00:00 AM



The Internet is full of questionable-at-best beauty tips. But a DIY pedicure idea in honest-to-goodness print (Jane Buckingham's mammoth be-an-all-around-better-human book, *The Modern Girl's Guide to Modern Life*, to be precise) seems more likely to be legit. So when I came across Buckingham's three-ingredient recipe for a make-at-home foot-smoothing treatment, I was intrigued. And when I saw that it involved supersimple ingredients I already had in my medicine cabinet and fridge, I was all the more game to try it out.

Buckingham's soak stars, of all things, aspirin. "You know it works for headaches, but it also softens calluses on your feet," she writes. (Editor's note: *Say what?*) "This solution will soften the callus and make it easier to remove with a pumice stone." Now, most beauty DIY-ers knows that crushed aspirin mixed with water forms a paste that can act as an blemish fighter for acne in a pinch. (Aspirin contains the same ingredient that's in spot treatments.) But even the most experienced beauty hack-er might not think to spread aspirin all over her feet. In the name of journalism—and softer feet, obviously—I decided to give it a try. Here are Buckingham's steps:

1. Crush five or six aspirin pills (I broke out my supercool mortar and pestle—which, yes, I actually own—but you could also toss them in a plastic ziplock bag and mash with a spoon).
2. Mix the crushed pills in a bowl with a half-teaspoon each of water and lemon juice.
3. Coat your feet—focusing on any particularly callused areas—with the mixture, and then and cover with a warm cloth for ten minutes.

Let me start by saying that things got awkward right away. The powdered aspirin, water, and lemon juice never really gelled to become an easy-to-apply paste; I was dealing with more of a gritty, runny solution. My vision of smoothing it on my feet in a seamless, spalike application (complete with scented candles and soft music) was abandoned straightaway, because no way was that happening with this liquid-y mess. Instead, I plopped on the kitchen floor with a dish towel under my feet, and dumped the solution over my toes and heels, dabbing the excess run-off over my roughest patches. As for that warm cloth that you're supposed to use to envelop your marinating feet? If you have a clothes dryer, microwave, or (even better!) one of those nail-salon towel-warming things, cool. I lack those appliances, so I had to warm a washcloth by draping it over a pot of boiling water, which worked great...for two seconds. Then the cloth cooled, and I was too lazy to continuously reheat it while my feet were all wet and gravelly. The point is, I didn't properly pull off step three. But when I showered, I buffed the callused skin gently with a pumice stone. After rinsing and patting dry, my feet felt noticeably softer and smoother than usual.

There's some science to back this up: "Aspirin contains aminosalicic acid, a relative to salicylic acid. Dissolving it in water and applying to the skin can offer some skin exfoliation, removing dry, dead skin cells from the bottom of the feet," says Joshua Zeichner, the director of cosmetic and clinical research at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York City. "Lemon juice contains natural acids that can not only separate clumped dead cells but also help enhance penetration of the aminosalicic acid." The lemon juice also acts as an irritant, according to Gary Goldenberg, a dermatologist in New York City and medical director of Mount Sinai Dermatology Faculty Practice. "It can irritate the skin in a superficial way so it can slough off." In fact, Goldenberg suspects the lemon juice is doing most of the heavy lifting here. "Aspirin does have salicylic acid, but a few crushed aspirin probably have a low concentration, and I'd worry about it not penetrating. I'd recommend using something with a known concentration of skin-smoothing lactic acid or salicylic acid." He suggests body products from Aqua Glycolic or AmLactin, such as the **Moisturizing Body Lotion**.

Want to leave your foot-softening to the store-bought (or salon-employed) professionals? This DIY remedy is just one of the roughly 8 gazillion tips in Buckingham's updated lifestyle tome, which hits shelves tomorrow. And the tips don't just cover beauty. You could even learn how to deal with a micromanaging boss or drive a stick shift.