



BEAUTY

At-Home Facials Are the New Face Masks, and Here's What You Need to Know About Them

BY RACHEL NUSSBAUM JUNE 7, 2017 11:00 AM



"Instant facial" sounds like a buzzword—like a fun but gimmicky product made for the old cucumber-eyes girls'-night-in "let's do a face mask and watch a movie" routine (no shade, it's the best routine). So, suffice to say, when a bunch of new products touting the claim started popping up on our desks and rolling into stores recently, we took a look at them with a heavy side eye. Exactly how are these different from face masks? we questioned. And can they do the dirty work of a derm?

We had Q's, and we needed answers, so we went straight to the pros. The takeaway? Beyond the marketing, there's actually a ton of science to back up the fact that these products follow through. We'll say it: At-home facials are the new masks. Here's a breakdown of why you'll definitely want one in your life.

How Instant Facials Work:

To address the intimidating in the room, products like Drunk Elephant's Babyfacial and Clinique's Turnaround Revitalizing Instant Facial do rely on acids; the terminology is a nice way of saying mini peel. Just to us personally, those will never shake the mental image of a burned-red Samantha Jones. But chemical peels have come leaps and bounds over the past few years, and they're now a safe-for-home way to bring so fresh, so clean "baby" cells to the surface, says Manhattan-based dermatologist [Gary Goldenberg, M.D.](#)



Why They're So Effective:

Ingredients like alpha hydroxy acids (AHA) and beta hydroxy acids (BHA) instantly exfoliate your skin, bringing out the healthy-looking, glowing layer underneath your seen-some-shit top layer, says Hadley King, M.D., dermatologist at Skinney Medspa in New York (we're paraphrasing). All of the good things, especially if your skin tends toward acne or oil central, says Dr. Goldenberg; Dr. King adds that they're great for helping with uneven skin texture. The oomph comes from high levels of AHA and BHA. If you've been using an acid-based toner like Pixi Glow Tonic, it's that brightening effect amped up for immediate, instantaneous gratification.

Because we love instant gratification, that speaks deeply to our souls. Add in the fact that all these instant facials are crazy speedy—we're talking 10 minutes tops—and it's enough to have us craving the glow-makers for any quick skin boost. But Dr. Goldenberg also points out that as bright and fresh as your face looks in the aftermath, thanks to your skin's shedding cycle, it actually takes about two weeks to see full results, and going above and beyond on usage can lead to irritation. Fair enough—stick to directed use for your best bet.



The Best Facial for Your Skin Type:

So how do you choose your dull-skin Swiffer? Here's the breakdown by skin type: If you're acne-prone, Dr. Goldberg says to look for water-based exfoliators, like First Aid Beauty's FAB Skin Lab Resurfacing Liquid 10% AHA, because there's less skin-clogging potential. Sensitive and dry-skinned friends benefit from mini peels with moisturizers like glycerin on the ingredient list—they'll suck in water to balance any exfoliation-derived irritation.



To know what you're getting going in, some products (like The Ordinary's AHA 30% + BHA 2% Peeling Solution) list their acid percentages, while others sound off on included exfoliators, à la Pixi Beauty's Peel and Polish. In those cases, Dr. King says, the more acid sources listed, the lower strength you can generally assume each acid will be—i.e., it'll likely be a gentler experience overall. Common-sense moment: If you can't shake the Samantha fear, Dr. King recommends easing into things with a twice-weekly peel pared down to weekly fun.

And, because we had to ask, what happens if you leave one of these instant facials on too long and everything goes to hell? Cue your best "I've made a huge mistake" face, and then, Dr. King says, stop everything, wash your face with a nonstripping soap substitute like Dove, and add moisture back with an ultra-gentle moisturizing cream. Lie low for a few days, and you should be back in fighting shape, wiser and glowier than ever.