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How Adding Salt Into Your Skin-Care Routine Can Be Good for Your Complexion
The tableside seasoning could be amazing for acne — yes, really.

BY DEVON ABELMAN FEBRUARY 6, 2019



Everything I've been told about how salt interacts with my body has led to my assumption that a salt facial, a trendy treatment at the moment, would be a terrible idea. We all know that salty food makes your face look puffy if you eat too much of it. So the idea of using salt on your skin just didn't add up. Even when I heard Luka Sabbat, who I consider one of Hollywood's coolest men, gets biweekly salt facials, I was still skeptical. My skin does look better, after going to the beach or sweating my ass off at a dance cardio class, though. Body scrubs and wave sprays often feature sea salt, too, so salt isn't completely off the table in the beauty world. Taking all this into account, I decided to indulge in a salt facial. The treatment involves an aesthetician running a special microdermabrasion-like tool all over your face that basically circulates fine crystals of Himalayan salt to help remove dead skin.

A couple of days after my appointment, a makeup artist told me I had beautiful skin and asked what I used to make it so glowy. Usually, makeup artists give me unsolicited advice about my acne. I started to believe that salt could be better for me in facial form than in fried-food form.

According to some dermatologists, I'm not wrong. A couple of derms told me the tableside seasoning, which is growing in popularity among Korean skin-care brands, is amazing for those with acne or dull skin. If you're still not convinced that salt is something you should be incorporating into your skin-care routine, here's a closer look at its benefits.

1. Major Exfoliation

Body scrubs are a pretty obvious indication that salt is a great natural exfoliant, much like sugar, cosmetic chemist Ginger King points out. In face scrubs, salt helps slough away dead skin to brighten dull complexions. Salt can leave skin "visibly smoother and improve skin texture over time," New York City-based dermatologist Arash Akhavan tells Allure.

This mechanical form of exfoliation comes with a warning, though: "One has to be cautious when using salt to scrub their face as each particle could cause minor abrasions of the skin," says [Anna Guanche](#), a Calabasas, California-based dermatologist.



Instead of mixing a scrub from scratch, Too Cool for School's Mineral Pink Salt Deep Cleansing Foam or the beloved Ocean Salt Scrub from Lush are safe bets. They're packed with ultrafine granules that are less likely to cause damage. For a more luxurious option, K-pop star Tiffany Young swears by the super luxe La Mer Replenishing Oil Exfoliator.

And for those who wish to take salt's exfoliating capabilities to the next level and leave them in the hands of professionals, salt facials are an amazing alternative and come recommended by Akhavan.

2. Deep Cleansing

Unlike sugar, salt has a "slight edge because of its antimicrobial properties," King says, and it's often added to cleansers.

Guanche compares washing your face with salt-spiked products to salted fish. The dry, preserved food doesn't have to be refrigerated because "bacteria does not grow as well in a high-salinity environment," she explains. The same applies to skin. When swiping on a cleansing water — like Blithe's Anti-Polluaging Himalayan Pink Salt Cleansing Water — the ingredient helps kill and stave off bacteria.



"Salt has absorbent properties and is, therefore, a good ingredient to look for if you wish to relieve congestion in your pores," Arash explains. So, if you have blackheads that just won't budge, something like the Tony Moly Egg Pore Blackhead Steam Balm might do the trick. You can also double cleanse with salt, starting by melting away your makeup with Too Cool for School's Mineral Pink Salt Deep Cleansing Oil. Then you can rinse away water-based impurities (like dirt and sweat) with K-beauty brand Innisfree's Purifying Facial Cleanser, which offers sea salt as its featured ingredient.

3. Powerful Balancing

When you combine salt's absorbent and antibacterial effects, Guanche says salt-infused-skin care could be helpful for those with acne. Not only does salt help absorb impurities, but it also soaks up sebum to help control and balance your skin's oil levels. Cleansing your face with a salt-infused product isn't the only way to put salt's blemish-busting powers to the test. Toners work well, too. If you already have products labeled as balancing in your skin-care routine, they may have good old sodium chloride or seawater on their ingredients list. The Laneige Fresh Calming Toner and Kora Balancing Rose Mist, for example, have salt in their formulas.

4. Impressively Moisturizing

It may seem as if salt only takes away nasties, but it can also give skin some goodies like hydration and nourishment. "Minerals, such as calcium, magnesium, and potassium [in salt], help moisturize and firm skin," Ashley Brown, Too Cool for School's director of education, explains.



Some months ago, my friend introduced me to the Daily Repair ATO Salt Cream from The Face Shop's Dr. Belmeur line. Initially, I was hesitant to slather it on because of the aforementioned reasons. (Also, ATO reminds me of the name of a fraternity from my college, but that's neither here nor there.) Luckily, I decided to try it and it was the one thing that saved my skin from being a flaky, irritated mess when I started using a potent retinol. And I just found out that Peach & Lily Matcha Pudding Antioxidant Cream (a moisturizer I go through so quickly that I never have a jar around for too long), has sea salt in it, too. The lesson: Salt is surprisingly sneaky (and unexpectedly effective) in skin-care products. It's been doing my skin favors all this time, and I didn't even know it.

<https://www.allure.com/story/salt-skin-care-ingredient-acne>