

# Health

## The Best Glycolic Acid Pads For Quick and Easy At-Home Exfoliation

By Bella Gerard | August 31, 2017

Glycolic acid can help brighten skin, improve uneven skin tone, erase acne and fine lines, and more.



Some people are willing to go to extremes to achieve perfect skin, and it's not uncommon to scroll through your Instagram feed and see celebs opting for beauty treatments that range from intriguing to seriously bizarre (we're looking at you, vampire facials). But most people can't book an expensive facial or chemical peel at the drop of a hat.

Enter glycolic acid pads. Many dermatologists offer in-office glycolic acid peels as a service, but you can also find over-the-counter pads that are pre-soaked in a glycolic acid formula to help brighten and improve skin tone. In other words, they offer many of the same benefits you'd get from a pricey facial condensed into a portable pad that can be easily swiped over your face for instant results.

"Glycolic acid is a time-tested exfoliator," says **William Kwan, MD**, a San Francisco-based dermatologist. "It's been used for decades and is helpful for treating acne, as well as fine lines and wrinkles."

Debra Jaliman, MD, a dermatologist based in New York City, tells Health that these little pads can be incredibly helpful for people who struggle with uneven skin texture. "Someone who has bumpy skin, oily skin, or someone who is acne-prone would want to use glycolic pads to exfoliate and unclog their pores for clearer skin," she says.

One jar of these powerful pads should last you a long time; S. Manjula Jegasothy, MD, CEO and founder of Miami Skin Institute, recommends using them no more than twice a week to reap the benefits without irritating skin.

Below, dermatologists recommend their favorite over-the-counter glycolic acid pads for clearer, glowy skin in just one swipe.

### 1. Dr. Dennis Gross Skincare Alpha Beta Universal Daily Peel

"These peels are excellent in terms of at-home use for brightening your skin and decreasing dark marks left after acne."

—Jeanine Downie, MD, a dermatologist based in New Jersey

To buy: \$88 for 35 pads; [sephora.com](http://sephora.com)



Photo: Sephora

### 2. L'Oréal Revitalift Bright Reveal Peel Pads

"The formulation of this product is effective and gentle. These textured pads allow for deeper exfoliation without irritating the skin."

—Dr. Jegasothy

To buy: \$16 for 30 pads; [amazon.com](http://amazon.com)



Photo: Walgreens

### 3. Pixi by Petra Glow Peel Pads

"These pads contain 20% glycolic acid, which is a strong exfoliator, so make sure to wash the residue off after three minutes. They also contain rose water, which is a natural moisturizer."

—Dr. Kwan

To buy: \$22 for 60 pads; [target.com](http://target.com)



Photo: Target

#### 4. Glycolix Elite Treatment Pads 10%

"I love these pads for use in the morning after gently cleansing skin. After several minutes, splash with water, pat dry, and continue with antioxidants (vitamin C) and sunscreen moisturizer. Never use glycolic acid peel pads directly before applying retinol or retin-A, as this can lead to significant irritation. Since retinoids are used at night, I have patients use their glycolic pads in the morning to avoid over-irritating sensitive skin."

—Jennifer MacGregor, MD, a dermatologist based in New York City

To buy: \$29 for 60 pads; [dermstore.com](http://dermstore.com)



Photo: Dermstore

#### 5. Peter Thomas Roth Max Complexion Correction Pads

"These pads help exfoliate and slough off dead skin cells and unclog pores. They also contain antioxidants to inactivate free radicals, which are known to damage your collagen and elastic tissue."

—Dr. Jaliman

To buy: \$40 for 60 pads; [sephora.com](http://sephora.com)



Photo: Sephora

## 6. Nip + Fab Glycolic Fix Daily Cleansing Pads

"These pads contain a low level of glycolic acid to gently exfoliate blemish-prone skin. I often recommend them to my patients with ethnic skin who are prone to dry skin and acne generated hyperpigmentation."

—Dr. Kwan

To buy: \$13 for 60 pads; walgreens.com



Photo: Walgreens

## 7. HydroPeptide 5X Power Peel

"In addition to glycolic acid, these pads also contain lactic acid and salicylic acid to further exfoliate the skin. They also contain red and green tea polyphenols to reduce any potential redness and irritation."

—Dr. Jegasothy

To buy: \$68 for 30 pads; dermstore.com

<http://www.health.com/beauty/best-glycolic-acid-peel-pads>