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## ASK THE EXPERT: WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SALT SCRUBS AND SUGAR SCRUBS?



Have you ever wondered what the difference between a salt scrub and sugar scrub is, or when— and where— you should use these mechanical exfoliants? Us, too. That's why we spoke with ethnic skin expert, founder of Kwan Dermatology, and Skincare.com consultant Dr. **William Kwan**. He breaks down the difference between salt scrubs and sugar scrubs, below!

### THE BENEFITS OF EXFOLIATION

Before we get into the difference between salt and sugar scrubs, it's important to understand the reason we use these products in the first place. The purpose of mechanical exfoliants (when used in skin care) is just that—to *exfoliate the skin*. This process involves sloughing away the buildup on dead skin cells on the surface which can cause a rough texture and dulled complexion. By removing these surface cells through regular exfoliation, you are not only helping your skin absorb subsequent products better (think: serums,

SPF, and moisturizers), but are also making way for healthy- and brighter-looking skin!



### THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN EXFOLIATING WITH SALT SCRUBS VS. SUGAR SCRUBS

So, what exactly is the difference between salt and sugar scrubs? Turns out, there's a big one: "Salt scrubs tend to boast larger particles that are grittier," Dr. Kwan says. "Sugar scrubs are smaller particles and tend to be gentler on the skin. [They] are less drying and less abrasive than salt scrubs." This is important to know, especially when taking your skin type into account. Both salt and sugar scrubs work effectively to remove dead skin cells, but your decision on which one to use should take into account your specific skin type and the part of the body you're looking to exfoliate. For instance, Dr. Kwan suggests using a sugar scrub for both sensitive and dry skin types, since they are gentler on the skin and less likely to cause irritation. Ahead, Dr.

Kwan breaks down different areas of skin along with his recommendation on whether to use a salt scrub or a sugar scrub.

**Body:** The skin on the body tends to be thicker—and often times drier—so Dr. Kwan suggests turning to a salt scrub.

**Décolletage:** The skin on your décolletage is sensitive. Approach this area just like you would with your face—with a gentle touch. The best option? Dr. Kwan suggests turning to sugar scrubs since the smaller particles are less abrasive on the skin.

**Face:** Similar to your décolletage, the skin on your face can be more sensitive to abrasive exfoliants, like salt. When it comes to the skin on your face, stick to a gentle sugar scrub that can slough off dead skin and provide the complexion with moisture.

**Feet & elbows:** Your skin is the thickest on your feet and elbows. As such, it can likely handle an exfoliator with a bit more grit. Dr. Kwan recommends turning to salt scrubs in these areas.

#### HOW OFTEN YOU SHOULD EXFOLIATE YOUR SKIN

Exfoliating regularly is key to sloughing off dead skin cells and achieving a smooth, glowing complexion. But just how often is considered 'regular'? The answer is not so straightforward, and will vary based on who you ask. Most experts would agree, however, that exfoliating daily is not necessary, and may even cause unwanted dryness. Dr. Kwan recommends exfoliating only one once per week.

#### HOW TO EXFOLIATE YOUR BODY

**Step #1:** Use the right tools.

Make the most of body exfoliation by incorporating tools that can help make the process more efficient. Keep a mildly abrasive loofah or sponge on deck in your shower, as they can help kick dead skin cells to the curb.

**Step #2:** Be gentle.

The key to successful exfoliation is approaching it with a gentle touch. You never want to rub too harshly, as doing so can wreak havoc on the surface. The American Academy of Dermatology (AAD), suggests applying a scrub in small and circular motions and rinsing off with lukewarm water.

**Step #3:** Be diligent.

Pay attention to where you're exfoliating! Remember, your skin is thicker in some areas compared to others. Areas where the skin is thick—i.e. the knees and ankles—specifically could use a little extra attention.

**Step #4:** Know when to stop.

If any irritation occurs while exfoliating, take that as your cue to stop what you're doing. Give your skin a break, and talk to your dermatologist if symptoms persist.

**Step #5:** Follow up with lotion.

As mentioned above, one of the reasons we love exfoliating is that it creates a soft, smooth canvas upon which to apply the remainder of products in your skin care routine. After sloughing away dead cells, follow up with a hydrating body cream or lotion. For best results, make sure to do so within 5 or 10 minutes of getting out of the shower.

## HOW TO EXFOLIATE YOUR FACE

**Step #1:** Cleanse the skin.

Exfoliating can help remove dirt and impurities from your skin's surface, but it shouldn't take the place of daily cleansing. Before reaching for your facial exfoliator of choice, take the time to properly cleanse your skin.

**Step #2:** Apply your scrub.

Now that your canvas is prepped, it's time to get to sloughing! The key to proper facial exfoliation is to approach it with a gentle touch. As mentioned above, exfoliating too harshly can wreak havoc on your precious facial skin, so be sure to use light strokes in circular motions.

**Step #3:** Rinse with lukewarm water.

After massaging your skin with a face scrub, rinse with lukewarm water and pat dry.

**Step #4:** Moisturize your skin.

As mentioned above, moisturizing should always follow exfoliating. Reach for your favorite facial moisturizer and apply it onto your skin—ideally while your skin is slightly damp for better moisture absorption.

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