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5 signs that a pimple is OK to pop

By: Chelsea Greenwood | June 25, 2018



You probably shouldn't be popping pimples, but if you're going to do it anyway, may as well do it at the right time.

- Although popping pimples isn't the best idea, most of us are guilty of doing it. So it's good to know when a pimple is ready to pop or not.
- Generally, waiting for a pimple to develop a head is a good idea. Whiteheads and blackheads are fair game, too.
- Avoid blemishes that are deep under the skin or that hurt to the touch.

To pop or not to pop? That is the question. While most dermatologists advise leaving your acne alone, it's hard to resist giving a pimple a good squeeze every now and again, whether it's on your face or your body. So, if you're going to give into temptation, it pays to know when exactly is the ideal time to get your pop on. Here are five important things to consider.

Whiteheads and blackheads are fair game.

When assessing which blemishes to attack, whiteheads and blackheads are almost always OK, dermatologist **William Kwan**, M.D., told Men's Health.

"These are acne tissue that are almost ready to pop on their own," he said. Plus, it's good to catch these types of blemishes early on because they typically develop into red pimples, which can be more problematic.

You've waited for one to two days before trying to pop a pimple.



Be patient.

It takes one or two days — sometimes more — for a new pimple to become a pustule-type blemish, which is the kind that is easiest to squeeze, according to Teen Vogue.

Only pop pimples that have a "head."

A pimple is ready to squeeze when it has developed a white or yellow "head" on top, Dr. Pimple Popper Sandra Lee told Marie Claire. "If the pimple has a head, at that point it is the easiest to extract, with the least risk of scarring because the bump is very superficial to the surface of the skin," she said.

It's important to wait for a head to form on the pimple because this means that the pus inside the pimple is close to the surface and ready to be drained, dermatologist Cynthia Bailey, M.D., told WebMD.

If a pimple with a head doesn't pop easily, stop.



If it's ready it should pop easily

Dermatologist Dr. Allison Arthur told INSIDER that, when you go to squeeze a pimple that looks ready and it doesn't drain with gentle pressure, stop immediately. Forcing things will only make it worse.

If a pimple hurts or is under the skin, it's not ready.

If your pimple is deep under the skin or is sensitive to the touch, like cystic acne, leave it alone, Dr. Lee told Marie Claire. "It's pretty impossible to pop it at that point. Usually if the pimple doesn't have a head yet and is still under the skin, trying to extract it can not only be very painful, but you can cause irritation and even infection that will make it harder for the pimple to heal. Worse yet, if you really traumatize the skin, you risk scarring and that is likely permanent."

Give it time to develop a head, or try treating with a topical acne product instead.

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