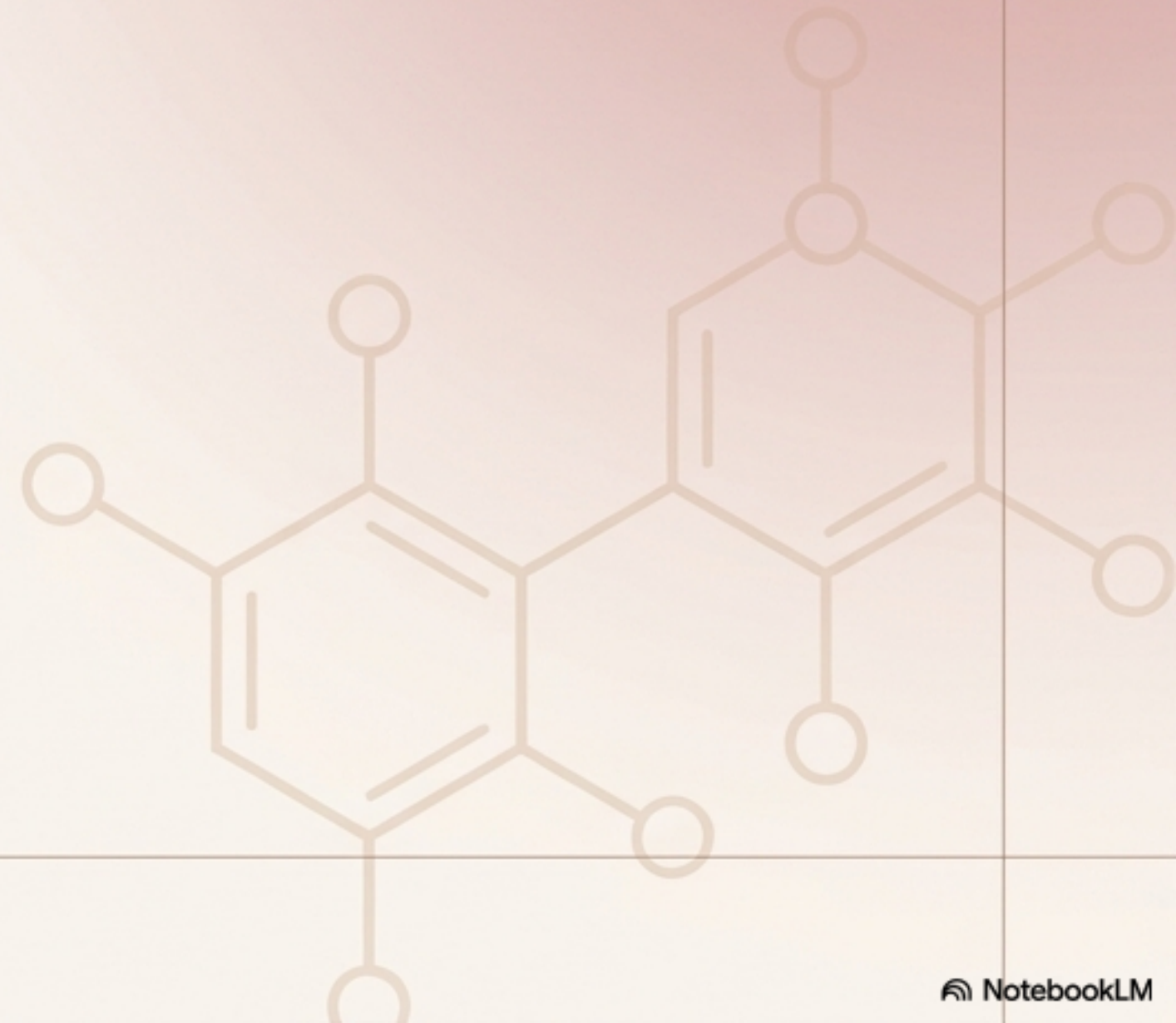


SkinOptimizer.com Premium Guide

The Master Guide to Chemical Exfoliants

A Dermatologist-Approved Framework
for AHAs, BHAs, and PHAs



The Over-Exfoliation Epidemic

Navigating the skincare aisle is overwhelming, leading many to mistakenly combine harsh weekly peels with daily acids.

In clinical testing, daily use of leave-on toners alongside weekly peels caused visible irritation in **67%** of participants within just 2 weeks.

Strategy matters more than strength.

67%

Ditch the Scrubs, Keep the Acids



The Old Way

Physical scrubs rely on abrasive particles. These can cause micro-tears in the delicate skin barrier, leading to irritation and uneven texture.

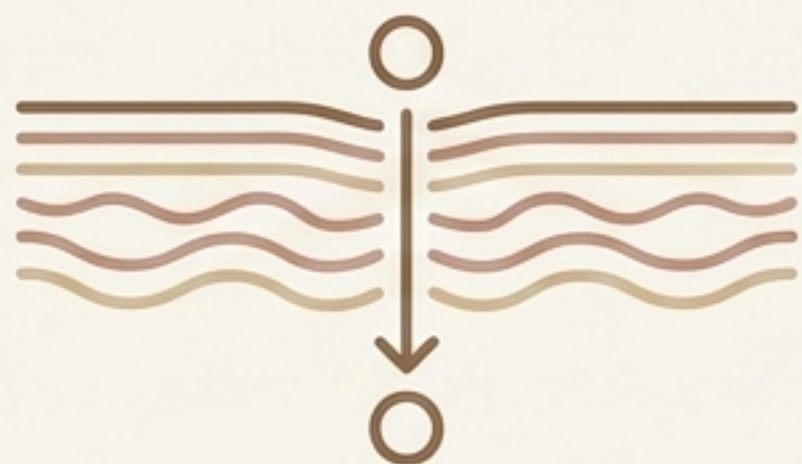


The Optimizer Way

Chemical exfoliants work invisibly. They gently dissolve the biological 'glue' holding dead skin cells together.

Chemical exfoliation is generally more effective, supports a refined texture, and may help improve overall radiance without abrasive physical damage.

The Alphabet of Acids: Defined by Molecule Size



AHA (Alpha Hydroxy Acids)

- **Type:** Water-soluble. Smallest molecule.
- **Mechanism:** Penetrates the deepest surface layers.
- **Best for:** Supporting an even tone and improving the look of fine lines.
- **Includes:** Glycolic, Lactic, Mandelic.



BHA (Beta Hydroxy Acids)

- **Type:** Oil-soluble. Medium molecule.
- **Mechanism:** Penetrates inside the pore to dissolve trapped sebum.
- **Best for:** Oily, blemish-prone skin.
- **Includes:** Salicylic Acid.



PHA (Polyhydroxy Acids)

- **Type:** Largest molecule.
- **Mechanism:** Works gently on the absolute surface while attracting moisture.
- **Best for:** Highly sensitive skin and rosacea.
- **Includes:** Gluconolactone, Lactobionic Acid.

How You Use It Matters As Much As What's In It

Gentlest

Intensive

Brief Contact
(Cleansers)

Intensity: Gentlest

Protocol: Massaged for 30-60 seconds, then immediately rinsed.

Best for: Beginners wanting minimal commitment.

Leave-On
(Toners/Serums)

Intensity: Moderate
(1-2% Concentration)

Protocol: Applied daily, never rinsed.

Best for: Gradual improvement and daily maintenance.

Rinse-Off
(Weekly Peels)

Intensity: Intensive
(20-35% Concentration)

Protocol: 5-10 minute maximum contact time.

Best for: Stubborn texture and rapid visible smoothing.



The Rule of One

The most critical mistake in exfoliation is stacking acids.

To protect your skin barrier, you must choose ONE path.

Option A: A gentle daily leave-on toner.

Option B: A strong rinse-off peel 1-2x a week.

Never use both simultaneously in the same routine.

The Optimizer Diagnostic Matrix

Primary Skin Concern	Recommended Acid	Product Format	Frequency
Aging & Fine Lines	AHA (Mandelic/Glycolic)	Rinse-Off Peel	1-2x Week
Clogged Pores & Oily	BHA (Salicylic)	Leave-On Liquid	Daily Maintenance
Sensitivity & Rosacea	PHA (Gluconolactone)	Leave-On Liquid	Daily
Dullness & Texture	AHA Blends	Leave-On Liquid	2-3x Week
Post-Acne Marks	BHA + Azelaic Acid	Leave-On Liquid	2-3x Week

Dermatologist-Approved: Intensive Peels (Rinse-Off)

The Ordinary AHA 30% + BHA 2% Peeling Solution

Best for: Texture & Stubborn Pores

Clinical Note: Pro-strength formula featuring Tasmanian pepperberry to counteract irritation.

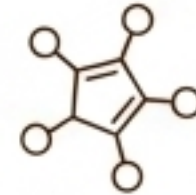


Caution: For experienced users only.
10-minute strict maximum.

Paula's Choice 25% AHA + 2% BHA Exfoliant Peel

Best for: Aging Skin & Sun Damage

Clinical Note: Utilizes larger-molecule Mandelic acid to provide powerful anti-aging benefits while remaining gentler on the skin barrier.



Caution: Rinse thoroughly after use.
Avoid sensitive areas.

Dermatologist-Approved: Daily Maintenance (Leave-Ons)

COSRX AHA/BHA Clarifying Treatment Toner

Best for: Absolute Beginners

Clinical Note: An ultra-gentle 0.1% AHA/BHA concentration formulated with an apple cider vinegar base. Low risk for over-exfoliation.

Naturium BHA Liquid Exfoliant 2%

Best for: Budget Oily Skin Care

Clinical Note: Formulated with natural Willow Bark (a salicylic acid source) plus soothing green tea to support clear pores and oil control.

Solutions for Specific Skin Pathways



BlissPro Liquid Exfoliant

Profile: Sensitive Skin

Notes: Features an 11.8% AHA+BHA+PHA blend. Clinically proven for nightly use without irritation, leveraging gentle Gluconolactone.



Glo Skin Beauty Beta-Clarity Pro 5

Profile: Breakouts +
Post-Acne Marks

Notes: Adds Azelaic acid to a 5-acid complex to simultaneously address blemishes and the residual hyperpigmentation left behind.



Glo Skin Beauty Hydra-Bright Pro 5

Profile: Dullness

Notes: An antioxidant-rich 5-acid blend rigorously tested to support brighter, more radiant-looking skin outcomes.

Critical Safety Protocols



Protocol 1: SPF is Non-Negotiable

AHAs remove the protective dead skin layer, increasing sun sensitivity by up to 50%. Broad-spectrum SPF 30+ daily is absolutely mandatory.



Protocol 2: Do Not Mix

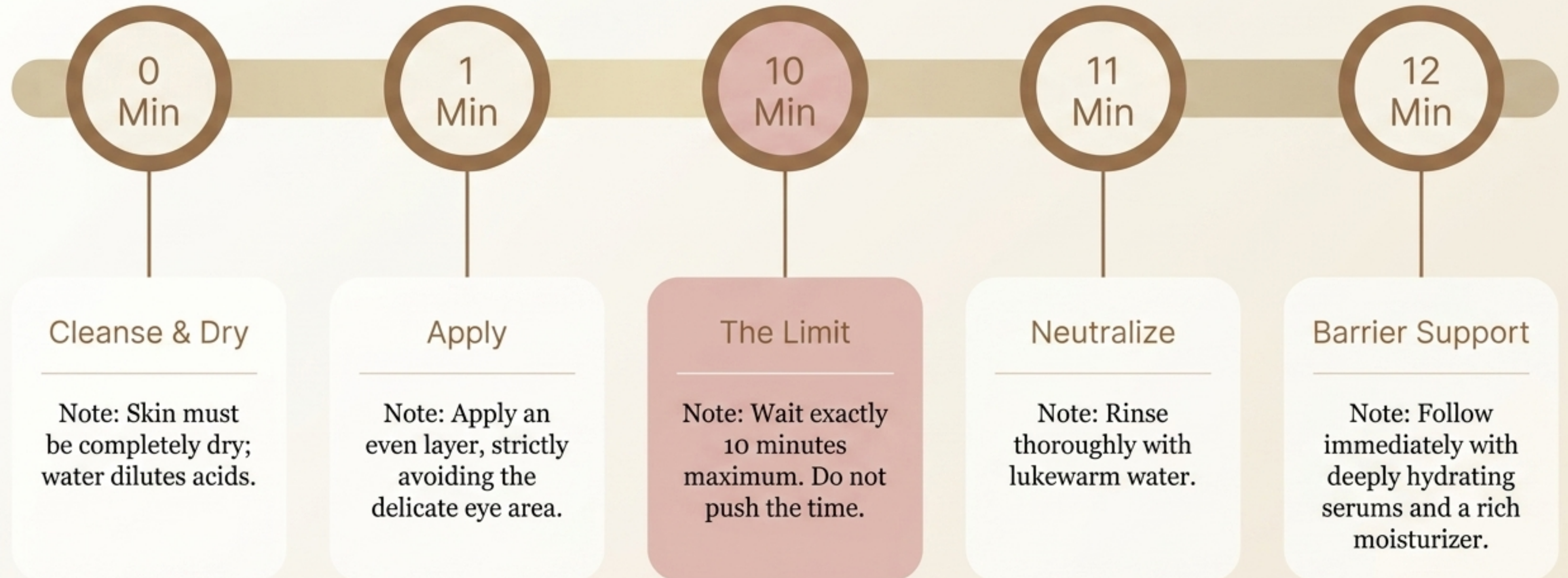
To prevent severe barrier damage, avoid combining acids in the same routine with Retinoids, Vitamin C, Peptides, or EUK 134.



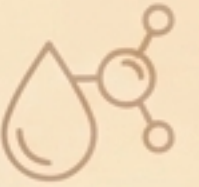
Protocol 3: Patch Test Always

Apply to the inner arm and wait 24 hours. If persistent redness or burning occurs, do not apply the formula to your face.

Action Protocol: Rinse-Off Peels



Action Protocol: Leave-On Liquids



Note: Wash face thoroughly and pat dry

Note: Sweep the liquid exfoliant over the face using clean fingers or a cotton pad.

The pH Pause

Note: Crucial step. Allow the acid to absorb fully and lower the skin's pH before applying other other products.

Note: Follow with your standard moisturizer



Beginners should start 2-3x per week, building up to daily use only if perfectly tolerated.

Rapid-Fire Clinical Clarifications

Combining Acids

Q: Can I use AHA and BHA together?

A: Yes, in professionally pre-formulated blends. Do not layer separate AHA and BHA products yourself. Alternate nights instead.

Timeline for Results

Q: How long until I see results?

A: Immediate smoothing. 2-4 weeks for visible texture/brightness. 8+ weeks for a reduced appearance of pores.

Physical Scrubs

Q: Do I still need a physical scrub?

A: No. Chemical exfoliants replace physical scrubs entirely. Ditch the particles.

Pregnancy Safety

Q: Are acids safe during pregnancy?

A: Most dermatologists advise avoiding BHA (Salicylic Acid). AHAs/PHAs are generally considered safer, but always consult your physician first.

Your Exfoliation Checklist

- ✓ I have identified my primary skin concern (texture, aging, acne, or sensitivity).
- ✓ I have chosen the correct acid family (AHA, BHA, or PHA).
- ✓ I have selected either a weekly peel or a daily leave-on—never both.
- ✓ I have removed physical scrubs from my routine.
- ✓ I have separated my acids from my retinoids and Vitamin C.
- ✓ I am committed to wearing broad-spectrum SPF 30+ daily.

Explore specific routines and deep-dives at SkinOptimizer.com