

Bags, Dark Circles, or Puffiness

Exfoliation is the body's natural process of flaking away the outer skin cells, revealing a new layer of skin underneath. As we get older, the exfoliation process tends to slow down.

Some people's dark circles are caused by melanin deposits in the layers of skin that can be peeled away. The key here is to speed up the exfoliation process so that the skin renews itself much quicker and reveals the fresher, clearer, smoother skin underneath. This can be accomplished by the following methods:

1. Alpha and beta hydroxy acids. These are widely available over-the-counter and are the mildest form of fruit acids used to create a peeling of the skin. They work slowly over time to speed up the exfoliation process.

Alpha and beta hydroxy acids are usually pretty inexpensive and give good results in about 6-8 weeks. The over-the-counter ones range in strength from 5% up to 10%. I recommend the best ones in my book. The stronger ranges (20% and higher) are reserved for more intensive peeling under a doctor's care.

2. Microdermabrasion. Microdermabrasion improves mild to moderate sun damage, wrinkles, dark circles and other superficial skin problems. A gentle stream of tiny particles exfoliates the outer layer of skin. The particles scrape away the surface layer of skin, which is then brushed off with the microdermabrasion vacuum tool with no need for anesthesia.

Many celebrities who don't want the downtime of an acid peel get microdermabrasion. The drawback is this treatment has been widely reported to create a shine on the skin that is hard to cover up--and it's expensive.

3. Peels. Peels should be administered by trained and licensed professionals because there are risks of infection as you remove several layers of skin, revealing healthy new "raw" skin underneath. Peels are generally safe for the skin around your eyes, but should always be administered by a medical professional to be safe.

4. Glycolic Acid Peel - This is a very strong version of the alpha hydroxy fruit acid mixture. It works by loosening the dead skin cells. It does not damage or burn any live cells and removes only the outermost layers. It leaves the skin softer, smoother and more even toned and usually takes 2-3 treatments over a period of a month to be noticeable.

5. TCA Peel. This treatment does burn the outer layers of skin and carries with it some discomfort and risk of infection. It all but removes the outer layers of skin and there is a healing time of about one and a half to two weeks.

This peel has varying strengths and time frames and should only be performed by a certified professional. These peels can give good results but are painful and can be costly. You will, however, get almost immediate results... as soon as the old skin peels off you have very even skin tone and reduction of spots,

wrinkles and dark circles.

All of these options are forms of exfoliation. If melanin deposits are the cause of your dark circles, then exfoliation is key to getting rid of them.

Poor diet, including sugar, the wrong kinds of fats, highly processed foods, and low-nutrient foods cause chronic inflammation in the body. This breaks down collagen and elastin--the fibers in the skin that support it and keep it young looking--causing skin to age faster, wrinkle, get thinner, and show the blood vessels and purple muscle under the eyes, causing dark circles. But this effect isn't permanent. We can reverse these effects both by making crucial changes in our diet, and by using certain products that will thicken the skin under the eyes again, reversing the collagen-elastin breakdown. Once we thicken the under-eye skin, it's essentially younger, and our dark circles disappear.

Vitamin C is responsible for the skin's overall functional and most importantly, its ability to repair itself and produce/maintain collagen. You can take Vitamin C easily enough, but you should try to add foods containing high levels of Vitamin C to your diet.

Some examples include spinach and broccoli (both also rich in Iron), citrus fruits such as oranges, lemons, and limes (I like to put a slice in my water), and even potatoes which have 25 mgs of Vitamin C.

You can find out exactly how much Vitamin C I recommend for you to take daily by getting my book, but everyone should at a minimum be getting the RDA amount of 60 mgs to avoid deficiency problems like scurvy.

Drinking plenty of water on a daily basis helps to maintain the skin's elasticity, and is simply just essential to the health of your body and skin. One of the main activities of the body's self-healing system is to filter the blood, a job performed mostly by the kidneys, with help from the skin in the form of perspiration.

This self-healing system removes the toxic wastes of metabolizing food and of other harmful substances that get into our bodies one way or another. This purification system operates efficiently only if the volume of water flowing through it is sufficient to carry away the wastes.

Drinking 8 to 10 glasses (64 fluid ounces) of water a day is the recommendation. To reach your quota, carry bottled water with you in your car, your purse, your briefcase -- wherever you go.

Tailor made medical products which are usually available on prescription from Tinkable can carefully chosen to address the individual needs to eliminate dark circles.

Allergies cause dark circles--or make the dark circles you have worse--by blocking your sinus passages and putting increased pressure on the circulation under your eyes. Many people don't even realize they have allergies, whether to pollens, dust mites or foods, and go around futilely trying to treat their dark circles with creams when really they need to be removing the source of their allergies from their environments. The treatment of dark circles is often not simple, but excluding allergies can be a big step in the right direction.