

SKIN

# From AHA To BHA, All You Need To Know About Exfoliating With Acids



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Skincare enthusiasts and beauty industry insiders have long been reaping the glow-boosting benefits of chemical exfoliants, bulk-buying the cult formulations of Biologique Recherche, Alpha-H and Paula's Choice among others. Now though, with the arrival of Glossier Solution and Ren Ready Steady Glow, a new generation of acid exfoliators have hit the mainstream. This, along with **the arrival of the long-awaited ban on microbeads**, makes acids the best route to a smooth skin surface and a healthy glow. First, let's break down the acids you need to know.

**AHAs** – alpha hydroxy acids - work on the surface of the skin, gently dissolving the bonds between dead skin cells so that they can be easily removed, making way for a softer and smoother surface. They're water-soluble, so they don't penetrate deep below the surface of the skin, but are capable of reducing the appearance of fine lines, acne scars and dark spots. Basically, a dream for pretty much all skin types. The most famous AHA is probably glycolic acid, whilst citric, mandelic and lactic acids are other key examples.



### Skincare Alphabet: A Is For AHAs

SKINCARE ALPHABET | 02 Feb 2017

There is only one **BHA** – beta hydroxy acid – more commonly known as salicylic acid. Because it is oil-soluble it can penetrate beneath the skin's surface, cleaning out excess sebum from the pores and reducing oiliness. Basically, if you have blemish-prone skin and you aren't already using BHA, you'd better start now.

PHAs – polyhydroxic acids – are the least well-known of the skincare acids, similar to AHAs but with larger molecules. This means that they penetrate the skin less thoroughly, and therefore are less likely to induce side effects. Suffer from super sensitive skin? PHAs may well be the answer for you. Look out for gluconolactone and lactobionic acid on your product labels.



**Skincare Alphabet: B Is For BHA**

SKINCARE ALPHABET | 19 Jan 2017

The next issue to tackle is how to introduce acids to your regime. Many of the formulas – Glossier’s and Ren’s in particular – are designed to be used daily, but it’s wise to build up usage if you’re new to the chemical exfoliator game. Start out applying once a week – in the evenings, following cleansing – and the build up to every other day when your skin is ready. Just soak a cotton pad in the solution and sweep over clean skin, avoiding the eye area. And the golden rule? Always use an SPF, year-round, when you’re using acids on your skin (and even if you aren’t remember what UVA and UVB rays do to your skin!) as they can increase your sensitivity to the sun.

Now we’re done with the science, here are some of the best chemical exfoliators to get you started.



## Biologique Recherche

The most famous of all of the chemical exfoliators, Biologique's comes in four different formulations - Lotion P50, Lotion P50V, Lotion P50W and Lotion P50 PIGM400 - for different skin types. Each has a combination of AHA, BHA and PHA exfoliants and is pretty potent - we'd recommend using it three times per week for a truly radiant glow.

Biologique Recherche, £89.95. Find stockists at [Biologiquerechercheuk.co.uk](http://Biologiquerechercheuk.co.uk).