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Can You Use Lemon For Your Skin? Experts Agree: Not So Fast

Reported skin benefits of lemon.

According to some, lemon juice offers several theoretical benefits when used topically. However, don't just go slather on a lemon cocktail and hope for the best. As you'll read later in this article, the bad may outnumber the good—especially when used incorrectly. But, in case you're curious, here are some of those supposed benefits:

- **Exfoliates dead skin cells.** According to Neda Mehr, M.D., board-certified dermatologist and founder of Pure Dermatology Cosmetic & Hair Center, lemon juice contains alpha-hydroxy acids (AHA) such as glycolic acid. Such acids are commonly used in skin care, as they increase cell turnover and slough away dead skin cells. As a result, many folks use lemon juice in hopes of reducing dullness and brightening the skin.

- **Promotes even skin tone.** Due to the potential exfoliating properties of lemon juice, people use it to reduce hyperpigmentation. [Exfoliation](#), after all, can help remove pigmented cells and even out your skin tone. "Lemon juice [also] contains citric acid and vitamin C, which can lighten the skin," says Mehr.

Cautions about using lemon on the skin.

5. Increased hyperpigmentation

Although lemon juice is often used to reduce hyperpigmentation, it can actually worsen the issue. That's because the sunburns caused by lemon juice "can cause blistering, [leading] to months of hyperpigmentation and potentially permanent scarring," says Mehr.

How to safely use lemon in skin care.

Drink lemon water.

As Mehr notes, "What we consume has a direct effect on our skin." Thus, drinking lemon juice will boost your intake of vitamin C, ultimately helping your skin from the inside out. But remember, lemon juice is acidic, so you'll want to [dilute it in water](#) or [tea](#). Alternatively, you can use it on pasta and salad for a delicious dose of vitamin C.