



Should You Really Shave Your Face?

It's a popular trend, but does it really work?



photo: Huda Kattan

If you've perused Instagram at all in the past few weeks, you've probably noticed an uptick in women posting about shaving their faces and raving about the supposed benefits: a glowing complexion, those fine hairs gone, a smoother makeup application. (See a few examples below.)

It's true — shaving your face might really be the best thing you can do for your skin today. But before you panic, hear me out: I don't mean you should just wet your razor and rake it over your skin like you would your legs. What I'm talking about is dermaplaning, which is a specific, mechanical method of exfoliation, according to *New York* magazine. Here, six more things you should know before you decide whether it's right for you.

1. What is "mechanical exfoliation"? When most people think of exfoliation, they probably think of chemical peels, which are (as the name suggests) a form of chemical exfoliation that use different acids to peel off layers of skin. In contrast, mechanical exfoliation just involves taking a small blade, and scraping it very carefully over the skin, *New York* magazine reports.

2. So are you actually shaving your face? "You could call it that, since there's a blade involved," **Dara Levy**, Chicago-based spa owner, and creator of DermaFlash, an at-home dermaplaning kit, tells Vivala. **Rebecca Kazin, MD**, assistant professor in the department of dermatology at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, agrees, though she likens it more to the way you squeegee water off the windshield of your car.

3. But how does it give you such glowing skin? Because dermaplaning is a form of exfoliation, you're removing the outermost, oldest layers of skin and environmental debris from your face, Levy explains. Over time, those cells act as a barrier to your products, and they prevent your makeup from blending in with your skin fully, which can lead to dull, sallow-looking skin. Thus, removing that layer can reveal fresh, clear skin you didn't even know you had, Levy says.

4. Can you do this at home, or should you go to a pro? You can do either! You can purchase an at-home dermaplaning kit, such as Levy's DermaFlash, or you can DIY it. However, if you're going to try this at home *without* a kit, be careful. Dr. Kazin says you can use an old-fashioned straight-shave razor to very gently glide the blade over clean, dry skin. "I wouldn't do this over acne or cold sores," she says. Also, whether you have the treatment done at a spa or you do it yourself, you really only have to dermaplane about once a month to see results, and Dr. Kazin recommends doing it at most once a week.

If you do choose to leave this one to the pros, Levy says the cost will set you back anywhere from \$125 per treatment to \$400, depending on where you live and where you go.

5. Does it hurt? It shouldn't. Dr. Kazin says it will feel similar to dry-shaving your legs.

6. Does it make the hair on your face grow back faster? This is the million-dollar question. Both Levy and Dr. Kazin agree that this is an old wives' tale that needs to be retired, like, yesterday. "There is no medical reason the hair would grow back thicker or faster," Dr. Kazin says. "You're not doing anything to the hair follicle. You're simply scraping a layer of skin off your face."