

# Enhancing Exfoliation with Electronics

by Carrie Garman (as seen in *Les Nouvelles Esthetiques & Spa*)

Exfoliation is a fundamental part of a professional skin treatment; it helps remove grime, surface debris, sebum and dead skin cells. It also softens impactions, prepares skin to receive active ingredients, and stimulates cell renewal and turnover. For clients, however, the ultimate motivation is the way the skin looks and feels afterwards! To help them achieve these results and keep coming back for more, it's important to utilize advanced modalities and devices to enhance exfoliation in the treatment room.



## Electric Brushes

A rotating, soft bristled brush can provide deep cleansing and mild physical exfoliation, enhancing the efficacy of cleansers and exfoliants used in the treatment room. A sponge attachment can also be helpful in the removal of setting masques. Rotating brushes can be cordless or attached to a multi-functional machine, and come in several shapes and sizes. Most skin types can benefit from the boost in exfoliation that electric brushes provide. However, avoid use on sensitive skin or inflamed acneic skin, as physical exfoliation can create more inflammation.

## Ultrasonic / Ultrasound

Therapeutic ultrasound can be a very gentle-yet-effective method of mechanical exfoliation in the treatment room. Sound waves create vibrations that gently slough or shake free dead skin cells in the outermost layers of the epidermis. Professional machines typically come equipped with a smooth, flat metal probe or blade (also called a skin scrubber). The blade provides more exfoliation benefits and is easily held with the curve facing the skin at a 45 degree angle. The movement should always be upward on the skin with a very light touch; no pressure required. This device serves to enhance the exfoliation benefit of the chosen product. Contraindications include metal implants, a pacemaker and medically prescribed exfoliants.

## Microdermabrasion

Microdermabrasion is a very popular mechanical form of exfoliation. As this technology has progressed, new variations on the traditional machine are available to provide more options in the treatment room. The traditional form incorporates tubing attached to a hand piece that simultaneously projects mineral crystals or other granules onto the skin, and provides variable levels of suction to remove the crystals along with dead skin cells from the top layer of the skin. The suction creates friction on the skin, resulting in physical exfoliation.

Other variations include:

- **Flower grains:** Offered as an alternative to the traditional aluminum oxide crystals, grains derived from crushed flower seeds are used to gently exfoliate the skin. Different varieties are used, depending on skin type.
- **Diamond tip:** This type of machine uses vacuum suction but no crystals. Instead, the tip is textured with various sizes of diamond grit (chosen based on client's skin).
- **Brush tip:** This is the same concept as the diamond tip, but the brush tip is designed to sweep away dead skin cells.
- **Wet / dry microdermabrasion:** This newer technology is intended to create less potential for damage to the skin when compared with traditional microdermabrasion. The use of gentle hydroxy acids and serums on the skin combined with a diamond tip handpiece allows not only for gentle exfoliation, but also increased hydration and penetration of actives.

Many machines also offer the flexibility to choose from more than one of the above mentioned options, which allows for more ways to customize treatments to clients' needs.

Contraindications for microdermabrasion include users of medically prescribed exfoliants and/or acne treatments, open or broken skin, and recently waxed skin. Microdermabrasion should also be avoided for those with highly sensitive skin and active inflamed acne.

## Galvanic and High Frequency

There are also some interesting and advanced ways to use galvanic and high frequency machines that you may already have in your treatment room. Using these modalities in an alternative way can amplify the effects of chemical exfoliants and deliver maximum results. Contraindications for galvanic and high frequency include metal implants, pacemakers, heart conditions, epilepsy, pregnancy and diabetes.

- **Galvanic Iontophoresis:** Traditionally, galvanic iontophoresis incorporates the use of a low level, direct current that travels from a positively charged, active electrode through the client's skin to a passive electrode that is negatively charged and held by the client. This method changes the pH of the skin by reacting with sodium salts in the body. The resulting acidic pH enables water-based products to penetrate further into the skin while creating a tightening and calming effect. Any water-based hydroxy acid exfoliant can be used in the same way for enhanced product penetration and a more progressive level of exfoliation. This allows you to customize treatments for clients who require more intense exfoliation.
- **Indirect High Frequency:** Most skin professionals are more familiar with the direct application of high frequency, which utilizes an alternating radio wave known as a Tesla current to create a drying, germicidal effect on the skin that is especially useful after extractions. The indirect method is less commonly used but certainly offers some attractive benefits. Indirect high frequency is recommended for dry, fragile, dull, or aging skin. Primarily used for massage, this modality stimulates circulation and sebum production while promoting relaxation for your client.

For the indirect method, a saturator electrode is held by the client as the therapist's hands complete the circuit while lightly manipulating an oil-based product on the skin. Traditionally, massage mediums are used with this modality, but lipid rich moisturizers can also be incorporated using the same technique. One of the most exciting ways to use this modality is with an oil-based exfoliant, ideally one rich in antioxidants. Incorporating a product like this with the technology of indirect high frequency can stimulate even more circulation, allowing for improved ingredient penetration resulting in enhanced exfoliation.

These electrical exfoliation options are all available to the professional in multiple forms. Depending on your environment and budget, invest in a multi-functional machine or create your own by purchasing components one at a time. Machines are designed to help make things easier and create greater results. If you're looking for ways to jump-start your creativity and excite your clients with amazing results, get started with one of these electrical exfoliation options today.