

DO PEEL-OFF MASKS DO MORE HARM THAN GOOD?

Peel-off masks are all the rage among skincare bloggers. Are they painful? Most certainly, but as these bloggers promise, the pain is worth the gain



AUTHOR:
Dr Janine Ellenberger -
GR8SKN Skincare

Peel-off masks cause inflammation, aggressively remove essential hair, skin, healthy oils, and sebaceous filaments, and leave your pores open to bacteria and other complications



Peel-off masks promise to eradicate blackheads in one fell swoop and give you the smooth, poreless skin of a baby. But wait. Before you go see for yourself what these masks are all about, take it from us: these masks do more harm than good.


To get a better understanding, let's first examine how these masks work. Peel-off masks are largely comprised of glue, which firmly binds to skin cells and all the tiny hairs on your skin. When removed, it effectively peels off every single hair and the entire stratum corneum, which is the top layer of the epidermis. The stratum corneum is there for a reason and is meant to protect your skin by keeping bacteria out and moisture in.

When you strip your skin in this manner, not only are you removing hair and skin, but you're also removing natural oils, which protect the skin and keep moisture in by preventing transepidermal water loss.

Septics might argue, "But you can actually see

the blackheads on the mask after it has been peeled off." Probably not. The fact is it's more likely those tiny little towers are actually sebaceous filaments, not blackheads. So, what are sebaceous filaments then? They are formations in the pores that direct the flow of the skin's natural oils. Sebaceous filaments are good, necessary, and come back after 30 days or so anyway. Removing them is fruitless.

Rather than fulfilling the promises of removing blackheads, curing acne, and giving you the best skin of your life, peel-off masks cause inflammation, aggressively remove essential hair, skin, healthy oils, and sebaceous filaments, and leave your pores open to bacteria and other complications.

Short term, quick fixes typically don't deliver the lofty promises they claim. When caring for skin, it's always best to play the long game. The smart skincare guru knows that the best way to keep skin healthy is by regular cleansing, toning, gentle exfoliation, moisturising, and applying skin-essential vitamins. 

SO, WHAT'S THE BEST WAY TO ACTUALLY KEEP YOUR SKIN CLEAR, SMOOTH, AND BLACKHEAD-FREE?

- Use a gentle, non-stripping, low-pH cleanser twice daily.
- Use a natural, fruit acid toner as often as your skin requires (**Oily skin:** use daily. **Normal skin:** use every other day. **Dry skin:** use weekly.)
- Use a vitamin C serum in the morning to keep skin supple and glowing.
- Use a vitamin A serum at night to regulate sebum production and cellular turnover.
- Use a gentle, non-drying, clay-based mask that won't peel off skin. Look for one that also has natural oils (like hemp seed) to moisturise. Use weekly.