

Topic of Discussion: The Keratin layer When we are children and our skin is naturally beautiful, we do not realize what is happening to make it that way. It is the turn over of skin cells. When we are children the turn over of cells occurs about every 28 days. The top layer dies and is sloughed off which stimulates the body to make a new layer in the subcutaneous tissue. That layer is full of plump keratinocytes, new cells that will migrate up to the surface quickly enough to still be living and beautiful. As we age, our skin no longer has the benefits of childhood. As adults when the top layer dies it does not automatically slough off. We begin to secrete a cellular glue that matts down the top layers as they die and prevents them from leaving. Our turn over of new cells slows way down. This then becomes the Keratin layer. The Keratin layer creates a two fold problem. (1) We no longer get to see the fresh living cells on the surface and (2) Because the dead cells are not sloughing off there is little to stimulate the production of new cells. The body says, oh, I am not down any layers I don't need to make a new layer. So now we have the same skin on the surface, thickening up, dead layer after dead layer, no longer being sloughed off. Instead of sloughing off every 28 days it becomes every 85 and more.

Common sense says, why not just use a good scrub and get rid of all that dead skin. Unfortunately scrubs, exfoliants and facial brushes only remove very little. The Keratin layer is too thick. Even micro-dermabrasion is not the best answer. We need something that will turn back the clock and make our skin behave as it once did when we were children. The best tool we have right now are glycolic peels. The only draw back is glycolics work the best on fresh cells. If the keratin layer is too thick we need to remove it first then proceed to glycolic peels. Glycolic peels make our skin behave like a young skin. Glycolic is not a self timed acid. It will descend into the skin as deeply as we allow. This becomes a very useful tool. We begin by allowing the glycolic to descend for 2 minutes only. This means that 2 minutes worth of skin has been dissolved on the surface. This then stimulates the body to replace it. After which it is very important to leave the skin alone, allow it to rebuild its lost tissue. This is the problem with daily use of stronger skin replacements like retinols. Retinols eventually do cause a thinning of the skin because they never allow the body to replace the skin cells. The natural turnover for the cells is 28 days. After 28 days we come back with another glycolic peel. This time we leave it on for 3 minutes and that stimulates the body to make a little more keratinocytes. This is the same concept as working out with weights at the gym. If your goal is to lift 50 pounds you cannot do that in the beginning. You must first start out lifting 5 pounds and then 10 and so forth. The same with glycolics used properly. After a while you will have a very strong deep peel every 28 days, but there will be no fall out; no thinning of the skin because we have taught the body to keep up by slowly building the cell renewal process. There you have it, all you ever needed to know about the keratin layer and how to take it away and keep it away forever.