

Astringents (toners)

What are astringents, and what are they used for?

- Other names: 'skin tonics', 'skin toners', 'aftershave'
- They are applied following skin cleansing
- Astringents are used to:
 1. Give the skin a 'taut', cool, refreshing feeling
 2. Constrict the skin pores
 3. remove the oil from skin surface

Composition of astringents:

1. Alcohol:

- gives a feeling of coolness
- antiseptic

2. Aluminum or zinc salts:

- constrict the skin pores following cleansing of the face in order to prevent the entry of dirt into the pores

Composition of astringents:

3. Menthol and/or camphor:

- give a cooling sensation

4. Witch Hazel extract:

- derived from plant
- give the skin a 'taut' and cool feeling

Witch hazel

- The main biologically active components in Witch Hazel are ***hamamelitannin*** (a potent astringent), ***catechins*** (anti-inflammatory and antioxidant) and ***gallic acid*** (antibacterial).
- When applied directly to the skin: might help reduce swelling, help repair broken skin, and fight bacteria.
- Concerns: different extracts and distillates can be made from different parts of the plant. Alcohol vs non alcohol. Sensitive skin. moderation is key??



Types of toner

1. Toners for oily skin:

- Is used after a milky or oily cleansers
- It is a solvent that may contain up to 70% alcohol and astringents such as witch hazel

2. Toners for normal or dry skin:

- Contain little or no alcohol
- Has humectant compounds such as glycerin

Hints:

- If you like using a milky cleanser or one that does not rinse well you will need a toner to remove the oily cleanser residue
- If your skin is oily and you want to quickly cleanse and refresh it before going out you can apply some toner
- When they are used for oily skin they will certainly remove grease, but **can't** stop your skin producing it
- Much is often claimed for toners, little of it possible

Hints

- Excessive use of the wrong toner can strip away the oils your skin needs to keep it healthy (same as over-cleansing)
- If your skin is very greasy, it will tolerate the use of 70% alcohol-based toners
- If it's dry, the alcohol could dissolve essential lipids causing the skin to become dehydrated
- Use toners cautiously and be guided by the reaction of your skin

Hints:

- Cleanse – tone- moisturize

Toners vs Astringent

- **Astringent** and **toner** are both water-based cleansers to remove skin residue and tighten pores, to be used after washing and before moisturizing the skin. Toners do not contain alcohol, so toners are milder and less irritating to the skin. This makes them a better choice for dry or sensitive skin. Oily and combination skin could use either, but an [acne-prone skin](#) can benefit more from an astringent

<http://www.diffen.com/difference/Astringent>



Astringent

Toner

What it is A water-based product used to cleanse the face of oil and residue.

A water-based product used to cleanse, give the skin an even tone and remove residue.

For skin type Oily, acne-prone, combination

Dry, sensitive, combination

Typical Ingredients Alcohol, salicylic acid, water, fragrance

Witch hazel, [humectants](#), water, fragrance

How to use With a cottonball; after face-wash and before moisturizing

With a cottonball; after face-wash and before moisturizing

Positive Effects Tingling feeling, temporary skin tightening, oil reduction, residue removal

Refreshed feeling, temporary skin tightening, residue removal, rebalance skin mantle

Negative Effects Drying, pulled skin, can irritate

Very mild, possibly of no use to some skin tones

http://www.diffen.com/difference/Astringent_vs_Toner

Background

Astringent and toner have the same history. They started out originally as eaus de toilette. In the early 20th century, beauticians touted the benefits of using skin tonic on the face. Skin tonics came in different formulas and were treated similarly to medicinal aids. For instance, a skin tonic could advertise that it not only firmed the skin but also whitened the skin and even soothed the nerves. Skin tonics typically had alcohol, witch hazel and borax in their mix. Eventually buyers began to prefer the cooling and tightening effects in the tonics. So, manufacturers created more tonics with these effects. After a while, they functioned as modern astringents. At the time, cold cream or hand soap was the method of washing the face. These often left a residue, so beauty manufacturers advertised astringents as a means to remove this residue. Astringents were also marketed to people with oily skin.

Eventually, manufacturers made too many claims about the medicinal capabilities of skin tonics and astringents. The [Food](#) and [Drug](#) Administration disallowed the claims. Likewise, the term "astringent" began to be associated with harshness. Therefore many companies renamed their astringent "toner," for its proposed toning quality on the skin. Today both astringents and toners are on the market. Astringents generally contain alcohol and are marketed for oily or combination skin. Toners generally contain witch hazel and are marketed for dry, sensitive or combination skin.

Skepticism

Estheticians, dermatologists and consumers debate about the necessity of using astringents and toners. Estheticians are big proponents, advising consumers on which type best suits their skin. Dermatologists generally deny the usefulness of astringents and toners, stating skin will return to its natural pH balance without them.

Consumers are divided. Many people swear by their favorite product while others are more skeptical, wondering if they even do anything.

However, there's a consensus on the opinion that using an alcohol-based product that's too harsh on the skin is eventually harmful.

Toners

In the 1940s, the American Food and Drug Administration (FDA) disallowed many of the claims made for astringents and skin tonics in the United States, particularly claims that astringents could improve skin elasticity or close pores. Outside of the United States, the idea that they ‘tightened pores’ and ‘stimulated surface circulation’ persisted, particularly in those countries without good consumer safeguards. For example, in 1960, Dorothy Gray was still advertising its toner in Australia as being essential because it “prevents open pores, stimulates circulation and removes all traces of cleansing cream” (Dorothy Gray advertisement, 1967) something it would not have been able to do in America.

Given the profitability associated with skin tonics and astringents, most cosmetic companies persisted with them, claiming that they restored the skin pH, removed remaining cleanser, left the skin feeling fresh and/or wiped off excess oil. However, after the Second World War the term astringent became associated with harshness, so many products were rebadged as toners.

<http://www.cosmeticsandskin.com/bcb/skin-tonics.php>

By the 1960s, the introduction of the moisturiser meant that most cosmetic companies had settled on some form of a 'cleanse, tone and moisturise' routine with toners being used to 'clarify' and 'refine' the skin – terms that were vague enough to avoid trouble with regulators. The rise of post-war youth culture also saw a greater use of medicated astringents and toners. As these were generally classified as pharmaceutical products, rather than cosmetics, they generally had to pass a higher level of regulatory testing, but it also meant they could make more explicit claims to improving the skin.

<http://www.cosmeticsandskin.com/bcb/skin-tonics.php>

Astringents and toners today

Although not as prominent as they were in the past, astringents and toners are still used today. Compared to most of the early products, modern astringents and toners are complex formulations. They are often alcohol free and include humectants such as propylene glycol or sorbitol to help reduce dehydration, pH adjusters like citric acid to help in the tightening effect on keratin, soothing agents to calm the skin, and antiseptic or antimicrobial agents to help blemished skins.

Updated: 14th August 2015

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