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BREAKOUTS

Here's How 10 Dermatologists Deal With Their Own Blackheads

They're not exempt.



By Danielle Fontana Dooley, Senior Digital Editor and Olivia Wohlner, Editorial Assistant - Jan 19, 2021



Newsflash: Blackheads happen to everyone, even top-of-their-class dermatologists. So how do skin experts deal with their own pesky blackheads? Ahead, they share their methods and the **trusted tools** they rely on to do the trick.

“My medical aesthetician will perform a 20% salicylic acid peel on my entire face before extraction. This allows the removal of blackheads with less force and thus minimizes the potential risk of hyperpigmentation.”—Glenn Dale, MD dermatologist **Valerie Callender, MD**

“Blackheads are a mild form of acne caused by clogged hair follicles in your skin. Try not to manipulate your own blackheads or use a metal blackhead extractor as it can open up a Pandora’s box with many possibilities of other problems. Blackheads are open pores, which makes them less risky to pop than other kinds of pimples. Steam or a warm shower or bath can help your pores relax, and the clog in your pore will start to loosen on its own before extraction, which should be done with clean hands and plastic gloves. After extraction, cleanse with a mild astringent or toner such as witch hazel. You may want to try over-the-counter products such as cleansers with salicylic acid, topical retinoids, or pore clearing strips.” –Saddle Brook, NJ dermatologist **Fredric Haberman, MD**

“Every night I apply a retinoid followed by my **PSD Turnaround Cream** which contains 20-percent glycolic acid in a moisturizing base. This duo topical treatment is miraculous for preventing open (blackheads) and closed (whiteheads) comedones.” – New York dermatologist **Jody Levine, MD**

“Prevention is ideal, even when it comes to blackheads, so I do the preventative work with a nightly gentle retinol-AHA complex: Skinbetter **Science AlphaRet** (\$125). But, since there’s always one (or two) blackheads that may still arise, I usually gently extract those and immediately apply **SkinCeuticals Blemish + Age Defense** (\$92). – Miami dermatologist **Annie Gonzalez, MD**



“My approach is regular exfoliation to avoid getting blackheads to begin with. Being in my 50s, it’s not as much of an issue as it was in my 20s—one reason I say ‘older is better!’ To exfoliate, I use retinoids nightly and use my **Weekly Exfoliating Pads** (\$33) once a week. I also get regular HydraFacials with my nurse. –New York dermatologist **Doris Day, MD**

“**Extraction** followed by prevention! I actually wait until I’ve taken a very warm shower and use a metal comedone extractor. Then I apply my nightly retinol, **Skin Better’s AlphaRet** (\$125) and hyaluronic acid serum, **PCA’s Hyaluronic Acid Boosting Serum** (\$117).” – Chevy Chase, MD dermatologist **Rebecca Kazin, MD**

“I deal with my own blackheads by being religious with my retinoids, **glycolic acid** and doing a **HydraFacial!**” – New York dermatologist **Sapna Palep, MD**

“I get rid of my blackheads by using my **ScientificRx Exfoliator** (\$49) and by using an extractor when needed.” – West Palm Beach dermatologist **Kenneth Beer, MD**



“I’m a fan of hydrocolloid patches for whiteheads and blackheads as they make it easier not to pick. My favorites are from **Hero Cosmetics** (\$13).” – New York dermatologist **Mitalee Christman, MD**

“Blackheads are the worst! It is rare that I have a blackhead anymore because of my regular skincare and microdermabrasion with dermalinfusion treatments. When I do, I use a sterile needle that I will carefully poke the top of the blackhead with and then I use a comedone extractor or cotton-tipped applicator to gently express the blackhead. This is the same technique I use in the office with my patients when they have a large blackhead or dilated **pores**. Honestly though, if I see more than one or two on myself, I know it’s time for a microdermabrasion treatment in the office.” – Covington, LA dermatologist **Christel Malinski, MD**