

How To Use A Pumice Stone, From The Pros + What Not To Do



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You don't have to love feet to know that it's important to take care of them. Not only should you schedule a daily walk and wear [high-quality shoes](#) while you do so, but the skin on your feet could probably use some T.L.C., too.

One key to optimizing your foot skin care routine (yes, it's a thing) is exfoliation. You may have a pumice stone lying around the house somewhere, but do you actually know how to use it? Keep reading if the answer is *no*, *maybe*, or *I thought so*.

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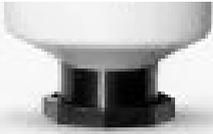
What is a pumice stone?

postbiotic hand cream

Rich yet fast-absorbing formula that nourishes your microbiome

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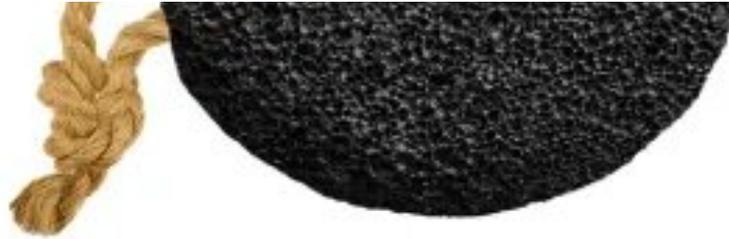
Pumice stones form when lava and water mix together—when the lava cools rapidly, it creates a porous, foamy-looking texture that happens to be great for removing dry and dead skin.

And because of their natural makeup, no surprise pumice stones have been used as an ancient remedy for exfoliation—even [as far back as 100 B.C.](#) There's a good reason pumice stones have left their mark for more than 2,000 years; they're super light yet abrasive enough to lift dead skin and smooth out the texture.

You won't want to use pumice stones on your face, though, as they're far too abrasive. For facial exfoliation, opt for a gentle scrub, enzymes, or chemical exfoliants like AHAs and BHAs. These stones are reserved for calloused areas or the feet.

Best pumice stones





Pumice Valley

Natural Earth Lava Pumice Stone Black

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How to use a pumice stone:

Now you know where to use them, but *how* you do so will make all the difference. See these powerful exfoliators aren't something to mess around with, and using them improperly can literally rub your skin raw—so remember these tips.

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1. Soak your feet or hands before.

Again, you can follow these steps for feet or hand callouses—but that's it. Before you start, dip your designated area in warm water. "You will see better results if you soak your feet before using a pumice stone," medical aesthetician and founder of JTAV Clinical Skincare [Joie Tavernise](#) tells mbg.

"Your skin should be moist and soft to the touch, but not wrinkly from long exposure to water," she clarifies. Be sure to make your foot bath a medium to warm temperature, as burning hot water will only irritate the skin.

About five minutes will do, board-certified dermatologist and founder of [Visha Skincare, Purvisha Patel, M.D.](#) notes. After your foot soak is finished, you'll go in with the pumice stone on clean, damp skin (read: skip the towel dry).

2. Exfoliate.

Now it's time to use your stone. Rub the stone in circular motions over the area; a medium pressure is more than enough to remove the dead skin. If you're working on your hands, Tavernise recommends using very light pressure, as this area is more sensitive than the feet.

When you're exfoliating, you might even see dead skin visibly accumulate on the stone (gross but strangely satisfying). Because this can get messy, it's best to complete this step over a bath or while you're in the shower (just don't fall when balancing on one leg).

Be sure to stop when you've reached a desired smoothness (about two to three

minutes does the trick, board-certified dermatologist and founder of [MMSkincare Ellen Marmur, M.D.](#) says), or when the dead skin stops clinging to the pumice stone's pores.

If you're working on callouses, proceed with caution and don't eliminate them completely "Callouses exist to protect our feet in areas of high friction, so use moderation when attempting to file them down," board-certified dermatologist [Rebecca Marcus, M.D., FAAD](#) tells mbg.

Some people may be able to use a pumice stone every other day, while plenty of others can only tolerate it once a week or once every other week—it all depends on how sensitive your skin is. Start with weekly use and see how you feel—if your skin is sore, dial it back. If your skin continues to dry out or you build callouses quickly, use it every few days, and so on.

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3. Dry and moisturize.

After all that exfoliating, you'll want to add moisture back into the skin. After towel-drying your skin, apply a [thick cream](#) to seal in any micro-cracks. "Since the manual exfoliation of the stone can cause microabrasions on the skin, it's important to apply moisturizer to help repair the small cracks in the skin from the pumice exfoliation," explains Patel.

Look for a body lotion or foot cream with barrier-loving ingredients, like some of these:

- [Ceramides](#)
- Peptides
- [Shea butter](#)
- Aloe vera
- [Hyaluronic acid](#)

- Botanical oils
- Mango seed butter
- Avocado butter
- Coconut oil

Pro tip:

Don't want to get a foot cream? No problem, your go-to [hand cream](#) can easily play double-duty.

postbiotic hand cream

Rich yet fast-absorbing formula that nourishes your microbiome

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Pumice stone don'ts.

Again, pumice stones are not a harmless tool, and they should be used with caution. Keep these no-nos in mind:

- Don't use it anywhere besides hand callouses and on the feet.
- Don't use an exfoliating serum afterward.
- Don't use pumice stones on dry skin.
- Don't share your pumice stone with another person.
- Don't forget to moisturize after.
- Don't use your pumice stone on already sore feet.
- Don't continue use if your feet turn red or itchy.

Pro tip

Here's a do: Apply your lotion or cream to damp skin for even better absorption. Then, cover your feet in clean socks—think of it like “[slugging](#)” but for the feet. This way, the cloth of your sock will hold the moisture in rather than letting it evaporate off the skin.

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How to clean a pumice stone:

“You want to make sure to keep the pumice stone clean because the built-up skin cells can act as a fomite and harbor bacteria that can be passed back to your skin or other areas on the body during its next use,” board-certified dermatologist [Nava Greenfield, M.D.](#) explains.

To do so, pop your pumice stone in a bowl of warm water and antibacterial soap, Greenfield says. You can add a bristle brush to your cleaning routine if you find your pumice stone has larger holes that catch more dead skin.

“Another alternative would be to soak the stone in a dilute bleach or vinegar solution to kill bacteria,” Marcus notes. She recommends doing this soak once every few weeks if you regularly use your pumice stone. If it’s an occasional tool you pull out, then just be sure to clean it after every use.

Why your feet get cracked & dry

If you’re using this tool regularly and want to know why your feet just won’t stay smooth, scan these possible causes or [check out this deep dive for more information](#):

- Eczema or psoriasis.
- Extra hot showers.
- Walking barefoot.
- Harsh soaps.
- Aging skin.
- Diabetes.
- Overall dehydration.
- Lack of topical hydration.
- Vitamin deficiencies.

FAQ

Do you use a pumice stone wet or dry?



Where should you not use a pumice stone?



How often should you use a pumice stone on your feet?



The takeaway.

Foot care is often overlooked, but still an important part of a full-body self care routine. If you tend to get callouses or notice dead skin building up on your feet, a pumice stone can work wonders to reveal fresh new skin within a few minutes. Remember to only use this tool on hand callouses or on the feet and never rub too hard. Want more ideas to slough off dead skin from your feet? Consider a DIY foot scrub—[here's the how-to](#).



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