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The Name Game: Discovering the Difference Between Toners, Astringents, Hydrosols, and More

by Rachel Dupree



The difference between moisturizing and cleansing products, and knowing which ones work best, can be confusing, as there are a myriad of products on the market listed as toners, astringents, mists, hydrosols, thermal waters, and, more recently, micellar cleansing water.

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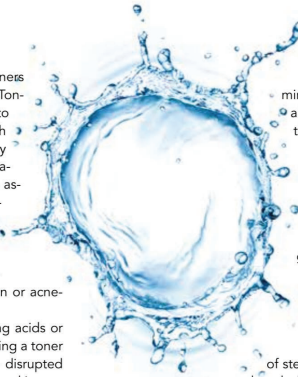
TONERS AND ASTRINGENTS

The main difference between toners and astringents is the alcohol content. Toners and astringents can both be used to improve the surface of the skin through various ingredients. Toners typically help to remove traces of oil, perspiration, or makeup from the skin, while an astringent may be alcohol- or chemically-based and is used to deep clean the skin and close pores. Herbal toners are best for clients with normal-to-sensitive skin, while standard astringents work best on oily-to-combination or acne-prone skin.

Many skin care products containing acids or SPF can disrupt normal pH balance. Using a toner after daily cleansing helps restore the disrupted acid mantle quickly. In addition, many skin toners help keep moisture locked in and can be used on-the-go when there is no time to wash the face. Facial toners and astringents also remove embedded oil and dirt, creating the appearance of smaller pores. Toners can reduce or remove harmful minerals and chlorine that may be present in tap water.

MISTS

While toners are generally used as an evening skin care step to deep clean skin and prepare for additional moisturizers or serums, facial mists can be used throughout the day to help



keep skin hydrated and refreshed. Some facial mists contain thermal or mineral water to deliver fortifying minerals that balance pH levels and protect the skin. Moisturizing or hydrating facial mists contain a water base and additional hydrating ingredients, such as essential oils, botanical extracts, or glycerin to help lock in moisture. Facial mists are good for all skin types and can be used to set makeup and give skin a dewy look. They are perfect on-the-go and ideal for keeping in a handbag or at work.

HYDROSOLS

Hydrosols are the condensate result of steam distillation of plants or flowers produced when creating a natural essential oil. The top floating layer of essential oil is removed and the remaining 90 percent of the water is considered hydrosol.

The terms floral water, herbal water, toilet water, and aqua vitae are commonly interchanged with hydrosol, but beware: the two products can differ vastly depending on the manufacturer. A pure hydrosol is solely plant-based and food grade, meaning it is edible. Typical floral waters found in supermarkets, drug stores, or ethnic food shops may contain non-organic ingredients such as alcohol, chemically produced fragrance, or man-made food dyes. Most often they are infused

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Hydrating Mist
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with essential oils and cannot be considered a true hydrosol. Pure hydrosols contain some of the same aromatic molecules as essential oils, but in a much lower concentration. They are typically clear and colorless and have a light, trace aroma of the original plant or flower.

Additionally, being organic, a true hydrosol does not have the extended shelf life of a formulated floral water and can turn rancid or lose its scent with time. It is always best practice to refrigerate any pure, natural skin care products and check frequently for color and scent changes.

THERMAL WATERS

Thermal water is steeped in skin-fortifying trace elements and minerals, like calcium and selenium (an antioxidant), and is an excellent anti-inflammatory treatment for very sensitive skin.

Fruit-based face mists are more complex than simple infused water. For mature skin, moisturizing blends of coconut milk and coconut water help feed clients' skin with potassium and vitamin C.

In hot weather, a moisturizing face spray with botanical extracts and essential oils can soothe and refresh heat-stressed skin of all types, including oily skin.

Do not let a mist or spray dry completely on the face if it does not contain a moisturizing ingredient. As water dries on the skin, it evaporates and draws out trace amounts of the skin's existing moisture. Unless they are applying moisturizer immediately afterward, inform clients that they should spritz the face, wait a few seconds, then pat off the excess.

MICELLAR CLEANSING WATER

The latest skin care trend is micellar cleansing water. A large number of skin care manufacturers have recently added this new product to their repertoire. Unlike toners or astringents, this cleansing water is made up of micelles – tiny balls of cleansing oil molecules – suspended in soft water. The concept is that micelles are attracted to dirt and oil, so they are able to draw out impurities without drying out the skin. Thus, micellar cleansing water is marketed as a face cleanser and makeup remover but is not a toner or astringent.

There are many products available on the market when it comes to moisturizing and cleansing. Professionals can better come to understand the difference between toners, astringents, mists, hydrosols, thermal waters, and micellar cleansing water by learning about the benefits, contraindications, and ingredients of each. This knowledge will then empower professionals to make the best choices when it comes to stocking their spas and recommending products to clients.



Rachelle Dupree has over 20 years of experience in marketing, media, and communications. She earned a bachelor's degree in communication arts and marketing and a second degree in graphic design. She studied with a Denver-based herbalist and naturapath for four years, combining her marketing knowledge with her love of natural remedies. She currently contracts as a marketing and communications director for Vivoderm Natural Skincare and various design clients.

Pump Me Up Hydrating Mist
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Cucumber Hydrating Toner
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