

Decoding Gua sha

It is yet another trending beauty tool in the market. But is it worth the hype? Dermatologist Manasi Shirolikar tells us

BY RUHI GILDER



Dr. Manasi Shirolikar

Gua sha is the newest trend in the Indian beauty market. But what exactly is gua sha? It is a traditional Chinese healing method, which involves the use of a semi-precious stone tool. This half-moon shaped tool massages your face, cradling its structure. Similar tools are the jade roller, ice globes and the kansa wand.

Flooding the Indian beauty market, these elegant-looking, colourful Gua Sha tools are available in a range of stones, most commonly, Jade, Rose Quartz, Amethyst and Black Obsidian are also gaining popularity. The trend isn't new, it's an ancient, Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) technique that is now trending in the beauty industry.

LuxeBook gets an expert's opinion on the efficacy of these facial tools.

Head Dermatologist at Remedico, an online dermatology service Dr. Manasi Shirolikar separates facts from fiction, sharing her review of this beauty tool.

What is the purpose of facial massage tools like gua sha and jade rollers?

The claims are that they aid lymphatic drainage, minimising pores, boosting skin elasticity and collagen, which reduces signs of ageing. Have had Analysed each claim, Dr. Shirolikar says that the first one is true. The tools do aid lymphatic drainage and de-puffing, but this can also be achieved with a finger massage.

Secondly, these crystals are, by nature, cold to the touch, and must be ideally stored in the refrigerator. Hence, they do help in shrinking pores. Anything cold can have the same effect on your skin. Dr. Shirolikar questions the stone's ability to penetrate to the deeper layers of the skin to stimulate

collagen production and strengthen elastin. "Something that we do for 5-15 minutes on the skin, externally, can not stimulate collagen. Only retinoids and Vitamin C can do so. "In the case of de-puffing, the tool may provide relief, but it's temporary". Gua sha, nevertheless, does activates acupressure points along the 12 meridian lines of the face, and massaging with it can increase blood circulation, giving your face a nice glow. The massage also allows the skin to release toxins and reduce inflammation.

Is it safe to use at home?

According to Dr. Shirolikar, the tool is safe, though not essential by any means. If you have a face serum or a sheet mask and want to use it as a relaxing tool, go for it. "There is not a lot of damage that you can do while using the tool, even if you do it wrong," says Shirolikar.

Do not use it if...

"Online, you see a lot of people apply anti-acne serums, which contain Azelaic acid, Salicylic acid, and then they massage their faces with a jade roller. Do not do that. If you have active acne, it is terrible to massage over it and spread the puss," says the dermatologist.

Consumer's take

Many of her patients have tried several face tools. The consensus is that it feels really nice, but it hasn't done anything significant.

She recommends it as a relaxing procedure, but not as a treatment. Most of her patients interested in these facial massage tools are from the age group of 25 to late 40s. "At 25, suddenly this hyper awareness about skincare



Gua sha

sets," says the skin expert. The fear of ageing pushes one to experiment with various so called anti-ageing tools.

Why are these tools gaining popularity in India?

The marketing push affects consumer behaviour. International celebrities like Miranda Kerr, Jennifer Aniston and Meghan Markle have also created a buzz about these tools. There is a big culture of FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) in the beauty world, says Dr. Shirolikar. If your friend does it, you have to as well. Another factor could be the reassessment of priorities. The pandemic and work from home have given people enough time to try different methods of self-care.

Things to keep in mind

"If you are a beginner, I suggest you start with a jade roller. If you are more proficient, go for a Gua sha. But its claims of a tighter jaw line, fewer wrinkles haven't been backed by a scientific study," says Shirolikar. She reiterates that any seen positive signs are the result of the massaging effect and not the stone itself. Keep Gua sha in the refrigerator and use it with a facial oil or serum for best results. Dr. Shirolikar advises against its use as a primary mode of treatment, "If you are dealing with any severe skin conditions, which can't be controlled by over-the-counter medicine, go to a dermatologist and get yourself treated." [LE](#)

HOW TO USE A GUA SHA

- For neck, use the outward curved side of the tool, sweep up the side of the neck from the collarbone towards the jawline.
- For jaw, use the indented side to make sweeping motions along the jawline, upwards.
- For cheeks, use the longest side of the gua sha and pull upwards and to the side.