Skincare Abbreviations and Glossary

Term, Short for, Category, Definition, Notes

* AHA, Alpha Hydroxy Acid, Exfoliant, Water-soluble acid (e.g., glycolic, lactic) that exfoliates the skin surface, Increases sun sensitivity
* BHA, Beta Hydroxy Acid, Exfoliant, Oil-soluble acid (salicylic acid) that penetrates pores, Good for oily/acne-prone skin
* PHA, Polyhydroxy Acid, Exfoliant, Gentler AHA alternative that exfoliates outer skin layer, Safe for sensitive skin
* HA, Hyaluronic Acid, Humectant, Attracts and retains moisture up to 1000× weight, Hydrating, plumps skin
* Niacinamide, Vitamin B3, Antioxidant, Reduces redness, pigmentation, and sebum, Strengthens skin barrier
* CTM, Cleanse-Tone-Moisturize, Routine acronym, Basic skincare routine,
* YMMV, Your Mileage May Vary, Community slang, Results vary by person,
* HG, Holy Grail, Community slang, Exceptional favorite product,
* FA, Fungal Acne, Condition, Yeast-related acne-like bumps,
* PIH, Post-Inflammatory Hyperpigmentation, Pigmentation, Dark spots after acne,
* PIE, Post-Inflammatory Erythema, Redness, Red marks post acne,
* SPF, Sun Protection Factor, Sunscreen, Measure of UVB protection, Essential with exfoliants like AHA/BHA