

pH and soap, May 2007

Soap

Almost everybody uses soap or shampoo. Without thinking about the acidity or alkalinity of this solution or bar. Most of the time we are looking at the brand or marketing behind such an article. That tells us if it is a good product and what it does for our skin or hair. Well we can tell you that it could be interesting to check the pH level of your shampoo or soap. This tells a lot about the product.

Acids and bases

Acids and bases are opposites. The scale starts with 1 this is the strongest acid and it ends at 14, this is the strongest base. For soap you must have a base solution. Most common solutions which are used to make our soap today is sodium hydroxide and potassium hydroxide. The exact pH value for soap is for everybody different. But normally a soap with pH value between 5pH and 8 pH should be OK for our skin. Our skin normally has a value from +/- 5.5 pH and it is better if you use a soap with an pH value as close to that number as possible. If you use for example soap with an higher pH value as 10 or higher it can give a burning feeling and you skin gets irritated.

How to measure the pH value or soap

You can test if you soap is acid or base with an 'litmus paper' or what is more accurate a pH test strip. Below a picture of the test strips we sell.



This is a special papers prepared with chemicals on it. The chemicals on the papers do have different colors these colors can change in to many different shades if it comes in contact with liquid which has an other pH value. If you compare this strip with the colors printed on the box where you keep the pH test strips in. Than you can read out the value of the liquid. To test a bar of soap, you have to wet the soap in water until you get some bubbles or it starts to get a bit soft. Than you have to wet your paper on the soap bar and after this you can compare your paper with the colors on the box of the test strips and read out what the pH value is.

Also the age counts

Also the pH of a soap changes if it gets older. If the soap bar gets older the pH will drop. So keep an eye on the pH of your soap bar to avoid an irritated skin.