

What is considered a mixture?

Selecting is possible only when there is a mixture, while there is no prohibition of Selecting in a situation where there is no mixture. To elaborate:

1. **Large pieces in liquid** – This is not considered a mixture, and does not constitute Selecting. Therefore, it is permitted to remove eggs from water, fish from gravy, water from pickles, oil from sardines, or the like. Even when removing waste from food there is no prohibition, as it is not considered a mixture.
2. **Small pieces in liquid** – It is considered a mixture, and there is a prohibition of Selecting. Therefore, it is prohibited to remove water from olives, though it is permitted to remove the olives for immediate use; and it is prohibited to remove oil from tuna, water from cans of corn or peas, or the like.
3. **Two types that are in contact with each other** – When the two types are not intermingled, but they touch in one place, only the point of contact is considered a mixture, and there is no prohibition of Selecting with regard to what is beyond that point. Therefore, it is permitted to remove fat floating on the surface of milk, provided that one does not remove the milkfat that is touching the milk, or provided that all of the milkfat is removed together with some of the milk (*Mishna Berura* 319:62).
4. **Discernible and easily separated** – An item that is recognizably distinct is not subject to the prohibition of Selecting. Therefore, it is permitted to remove books standing in a bookcase when it

is possible to read the title of the book, even if it is for use the next day. Likewise, it is permitted to pour off melon seeds or seeds at the top of the watermelon that pour off easily and are not considered intermingled. Similarly, it is permitted to pour out the water that collects on top of congealed cultured milk.

5. **A mixture in layers** – Items that are not actually intermingled but are stacked in layers, e.g., a pile of clothes or Torah leaflets, are subject to the prohibition of Selecting, and it is prohibited to sort them or to remove one item from the pile for later use. Nevertheless, it is permitted to take the item at the top of the pile for later use, and it is permitted to remove the top item in order to reach the bottom item for use, even if it is for later use (pp. 817–827).

Guidance for selecting on Shabbat

One can pour or scatter the entire mixture so that the items constituting the mixture will no longer be considered intermingled, and then it would be permitted to sort them or to remove the waste from the food. *Iggerot Moshe* (*Orah Hayim* 4:74, *Borer* 11) writes: “It is good advice,” and Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach concurs (*Shemirat Shabbat KeHilkhata* (3, note 6, and in *Tikunim UMiluim* there) (p. 828).

Is it permitted to remove waste with a small part of the food?

The *Taz* (319:13) writes that if a fly fell into a liquid, it is prohibited to remove the fly by itself, but it is permitted to remove it with some of the liquid. The *Mishna Berura* (319:61) expands upon that notion and writes that in every mixture it is permitted to remove the waste with a small amount of food. By contrast, the *Hazon Ish* (53:16) writes that since the person’s intent in performing the action is to render the food fit for consumption and to remove the waste, it is a full-fledged act of Selecting and it is prohibited. The *Hazon Ish* places the emphasis on **rendering the mixture fit** for consumption, and therefore he prohibits Selecting even when performed in that manner.

By contrast, the *Mishna Berura* places the emphasis on **removing the waste** (or separating the food from the waste); therefore, he holds that as long as one is not removing the waste alone, it is permitted.

In practice the *Hazon Ish* (53:16) rules that it is permitted to remove a fly from liquid because the fly is not considered intermingled with all the liquid in the cup, only with the **liquid in contact with the body of the fly** alone. By removing the fly with the surrounding liquid, one **removes the area of the entire mixture**, and there is no act of Selecting. But in a situation where the waste is intermingled with the food, e.g., meat and bones, then according to the *Hazon Ish* one may not remove the waste with a small amount of food.

It seems that the accepted practice is to be lenient in accordance with the opinion of the *Mishna Berura* (see *Shevitat HaShabbat, Borer, Be'er Rehovot* 20). Optimally, one should select in the manner permitted even by the *Hazon Ish* and eat some of the food attached to the waste that one removed, or to remove a relatively large amount of food with the waste. Likewise, when **waste is stuck to food in one place**, like a **tag stuck to a loaf of bread**, everyone agrees that one may remove the waste with a small amount of food, because that removes the place of the entire mixture and is not selecting (pp. 833–839).

In what manner is it possible to peel fruit and vegetables?

Ostensibly, peeling fruit and vegetables should be prohibited on Shabbat, as that is selecting the **waste** (the peel) from the **food**. Nevertheless, *Rishonim* and *Aḥaronim* permitted peeling fruit, and offered several reasons: (1) Since there is no other way to reach the fruit, it is considered a manner of eating (*Beur Halakha*). (2) A peel that is attached is not included in the prohibition of Selecting (*Rabbeinu Hananel*). (3) The peel is not intermingled with the fruit (*Arukh HaShulḥan*). (4) Peels that are fit for consumption are considered the same type as the fruit (*Peri Megadim, Mishna Berura, Eglei Tal*). (5) Often, some of the fruit is removed with the peel. According to reason (1), one must make certain to peel only by hand and for immediate consumption, while according to the other reasons, one may be lenient in that regard.

In practice, a peel that is **typically eaten** may be removed **even for non-immediate use** and even by means of a **peeler**, and that is the ruling of *Shemirat Shabbat KeHilkhata* (3:30). With regard to a peel that is **not typically eaten**, one should be stringent in accordance with the opinion of the *Beur Halakha*, and it may be peeled only **by hand** or with a **knife** or the like (but not with a peeler), **and only for the purpose of immediate consumption**.

Therefore, one who wishes to peel **oranges** or **eggs** should do so by hand or with a knife, and should do so just before eating or just before the meal (as will be explained below in defining the term “immediate”), as those peels are not eaten. The same applies to **carrots**, as today most people do not eat the carrot peel. It may be peeled with a knife but not with a peeler, and only just before the meal.

By contrast, with regard to a **cucumber** and an **apple**, since today most people eat them with their peels, there is no prohibition of Selecting at all, and it is permitted to remove the peel with a peeler, and even to do so at night for the morning meal (pp. 841–847).

What can a person do if he does not want the skin of the chicken?

The *halakha* concerning peeling fruit applies also to the skin of a **chicken**, as many people today remove it and do not eat it. The skin is considered waste for one who does not want it, but since removal of the skin is like peeling fruit, one may be lenient and remove the skin for the purpose of eating the chicken immediately. That too is the opinion of **Rav Elyashiv** (cited in *Eil Meshulash* 6, note 55), **Rav Zilber** (*Az Nidberu* 7:16), and others (pp. 804–805).