

Microneedling Information

Microneedling (aka collagen-induction therapy) is a nonsurgical treatment that penetrates your skin's surface with tiny needles to improve its appearance. The procedure can help smooth lines and wrinkles, even skin tone (including stubborn melasma), refine enlarged pores, tighten skin, and fade scars and stretch marks.

What are the pros and cons of microneedling?

Pros

- The treatment is quick (15 minutes), comfortable (after topical numbing cream), and cost-effective.
- Microneedling provides both short- and long-term benefits. There is an immediate result that people describe as a 'glow' to their skin, which is mostly related to temporary swelling, but it serves as a nice interim benefit while the longer-term result of collagen production takes effect.
- The treatment can be customized to treat localized problem areas, such as scars, dark under eye circles, crow's feet, and neck or chest lines.
- Recovery time—usually just a few days.
- Microneedling does not involve the delivery of heat, so it is safe to use on all skin tones without the risk of pigmentation issues that can accompany laser and light procedures.
- Though it is mostly used on the face, neck, chest, and hands, microneedling can be done all over the body.
- It can be used by itself or as a complement to other treatments.
- It is a reasonably comfortable procedure when combined with topical numbing cream.

Cons

- There is a slight risk it can damage your skin and even leave scars, although rare, other complications include infection and hyperpigmentation.
- You will need a series of treatments to get the full benefits, and follow-up sessions are required to maintain them.
- While the treatment can help with sagging skin, particularly around the eyes and jawline, it cannot significantly lift and tighten.
- Skin will be sensitive to the sun post-treatment, and direct UV exposure should be avoided.
- It is not recommended for anyone with active skin conditions, like eczema or rosacea.
- Trauma to the skin can trigger cold sores.

Who makes a good candidate for microneedling?

Adults who are in good health (free from any infections, a fever, or a rash) and looking to help smooth fine lines and wrinkles, boost collagen production, or combat scars from acne or injuries are good candidates for microneedling. There are relatively few risks with the treatment, but it is not recommended for women who are pregnant or nursing. Additionally, if you have lupus or vitiligo, there can be unwanted side effects or lesions (called the Koebner phenomenon).

What are the benefits of microneedling?

By creating microscopic punctures in the skin, microneedling creates thousands of tiny injuries. This triggers a healing response that releases a cascade of growth factors, which in turn boosts production of the body's own collagen (the protein fibres that keep skin smooth and supple).

It is a form of fractional treatment, which means only a fraction of the skin's surface is affected. This means that recovery time is relatively short.

Microneedling also allows ingredients to penetrate dramatically better and work more effectively, by creating channels for topical products to be absorbed.

Does microneedling work?

The science behind microneedling, which dates back to the early 1900s, is stacking up. In a 2018 [study](#) on patients ages 35 to 75, researchers reported a noticeable improvement in lines and wrinkles, skin laxity, and skin texture three months after the first of four monthly microneedling treatments—and improvements continued for two more months.

The boost in [skin tightening](#), researchers noted, was largely due to the conversion of collagen III, the type found in older skin, to collagen I, the type found in younger skin—a process that can take as long as a year to complete. Results, however, are not permanent; they must be maintained with touch-up treatments.

Microneedling is also effective for scars, though the level of improvement depends on the type of scar. In a 2015 [study](#) on pitted [acne scars](#), bi-weekly treatments produced a good to very good response in rolling and boxcar scars, which are shallow, while ice-pick and deeper scars had a moderate to poor response.

Studies also show that [early and late stretch marks can be improved by microneedling](#), however, consistent and long-term treatment—often six or seven sessions—is needed to make them less noticeable.

In the study mentioned above, side effects (mainly redness) were minor and easily managed compared to other invasive technologies, such as laser ablation and radiofrequency.

Is microneedling safe?

Microneedling is considered safe, but it still has the potential to do long-term damage to your skin in inexperienced hands. That said, it can be very safe in the hands of an experienced provider, it is well tolerated with [limited to no side effects](#). Potential side effects may include swelling, redness/irritation, and/or bleeding in areas of needle penetration. Generally patients tolerate the procedure very well and are happy with the results.

What happens during a microneedling treatment?

Microneedling can be painful, so about 15mins prior to the procedure, a topical aesthetic cream will be applied to the target area. Once you are numb, your skin is cleansed and dried. The spring-loaded devices - a [Dermapen](#) is employed, using a stamp-like motion across the skin. Microneedling techniques vary; most devices have an adjustable needle head that customizes the depth of the needle pricks. When microneedling, we use different depths, depending on the skin type and the part of the face we are treating. Once the areas are even in redness, the treatment is done. You will leave looking a little bit red and have some pinpoint scabs. Skin will calm down in a day or two and look better within a week.

We recommend starting with a series of three to six treatments, spaced about a month apart. Microneedling can be combined with topical [platelet-rich plasma \(PRP\)](#) that's derived from your own blood, for a more potent treatment called a [Vampire Facial](#).

It is more expensive but delivers more of an anti-aging effect. The PRP adds to the efficacy of the treatment, making it approx. 20% better. PRP is packed with growth factors that encourage your cells to regenerate, so you will also get a larger boost of collagen.

Post-treatment, your skin will look like it has a bad sunburn. Fair skin tones may experience prolonged redness. You may see redness, swelling, crusting, tightness, and sensitivity for about three days, though it can last for up to 12 days if your skin was treated aggressively. Textural changes in skin and sensitivity to products will linger the longest, as these are related to a repairing skin barrier.

If your skin is fair, you will stay pink for a day or two longer than people with olive or brown skin. I would recommend to schedule treatment at least two weeks prior to an event. This will allow adequate time for healing.

Post Treatment Care

- Immediately after treatment skin may feel taut but avoid washing for at least 5hrs but preferably 12hrs if treated with PRP. If only microneedling without PRP skin can be rinsed in cool shower, pat dry with clean towel.

- Avoid touching face post procedure as it will be susceptible to bacteria.
- Avoid heat, hot showers, hot baths, or swimming for 24hrs.
- Avoid strenuous activity or sweating for 24hrs.
- Clean treated area gently with lukewarm water for 72hrs.
- Avoid makeup/sunscreen for at least 24hrs to 72hrs preferably, to avoid clogging pores, and use mineral makeup if applying after 24hrs.
- Ensure make-up brushes are clean, and clean pillowcase.
- Stay hydrated to restore dry skin.
- Avoid sun exposure for 3 days-7days where possible and use an SPF of at least 30 every 2-4hrs no sooner than 24hrs post treatment.
- You can restart regular skin care regimen in 48hrs and Retin-A in 72hrs.
- Avoid anti-inflammatory medications for 1 week post procedure, as they may interfere with the natural inflammatory process, use paracetamol if required.
- Hyaluronic Acid is an ideal ingredient to hydrate the skin and a restoring treatment for your skin.
- Collagen Stimulating Peptide creams may further assist with collagen production.
- Hypoallergenic moisturizer should be used once daily, or organic oils such as coconut oil may be used, avoid perfumed/fragranced products.
- Do not use products for exfoliation on your skin, only apply gentle products for comfort to your skin for at least 3 days.

How soon will you see microneedling results?

You should notice a difference in your skin texture a week after your first treatment—most patients first notice a reduction in pore size, and improvement on acne scars or deeper wrinkles after at least three treatments.

How long do microneedling results last?

It depends on your age and the state of your skin. Once you have completed your series, your clinician can determine what maintenance regimen will best suit you based on your overall skin care goals. It most likely will include microneedling maintenance treatments at some point, but if you continue to maintain an effective home care regimen, in addition to regular skin care treatments you should be good for six months to a year before you need a maintenance treatment.

Patients over 40 and those with heavily sun-damaged skin will need touch-ups every three to four month, the depth of microneedling and the use of PRP also guides the frequency of treatments."

Can you have fillers at the same time as microneedling?

To be safe, it is best to wait between the procedures to either let your skin heal from microneedling, or to let the fillers settle. If you chose to do microneedling first, wait about at least 7 days before getting fillers (or injectables). If filler is injected first, wait 2 weeks to do your microneedling. This will give the filler a chance to settle, and swelling should be gone by then.

Sources & studies

Ablon, Glynis. "Safety and Effectiveness of an Automated Microneedling Device in Improving the Signs of Aging Skin." *The Journal of Clinical and Aesthetic Dermatology*, Matrix Medical Communications, Aug. 2018.

El-Domyati, Moetaz, et al. "Microneedling Therapy for Atrophic Acne Scars: An Objective Evaluation." *The Journal of Clinical and Aesthetic Dermatology*, Matrix Medical Communications, July 2015.