

Erase The Evidence Of Acne

by Megan Segura



Growing up, I was an accident-prone child; almost all of my injuries were on my face and required a lot of stitches. My mom always worried the injuries would leave permanent scars, but it turned out my pubescent breakouts are what really left a mark.

Today consumers are flooded with peels, scrubs, serums – all which come with the promise of getting rid of stubborn acne-related dark spots and scars. But how real is that promise? Cosmetic Dermatologist **Dr. Paul Jarrod Frank** says, “Often (dermatologists) can improve scars by 40 to 85 percent, but true removal of a scar is very difficult.”

In truth, my acne was never severe, which is why it surprises me that my skin has such an uneven texture today. When asked why only some people are left with acne scars, Dr. Frank listed three factors:

Sunlight

While being out in the sun may temporarily clear up your skin, it turns out it will also cause your acne to scar. “You should avoid exposure to the sun as sun exposure causes additional skin damage and delays healing,” says Dr. Frank.

Picking

Dr. Frank also advises against touching existing pimples if you want to avoid scarring. “Once acne scabs have formed, you must refrain from picking at the scabs, as this will worsen the scarring.”

Genetics

Quite possibly the worst thing a person can hear: “In some cases it is a matter of genetics and no amount of care can prevent scars from forming.”

So how do I make my skin look better now? Turns out the answer isn't exactly good news.

“A lot of women shy away from in-office treatments because they don't want to shell out a lot of money, but the biggest waste of money is the attempt to use several over-the-counter or at-home options before seeing me,” says Dr. Frank, who is the founder and director of **5th Avenue Dermatology Surgery and Laser Center**. “Unfortunately, there is no effective topical or at-home treatments that will help scars.”

For indented scars (the ones that leave pockmarks on the skin), Dr. Frank uses medical grade **Microdroplet Silicone Injections**, which helps skin build up tissue to fill the scars. Dr. Frank says the treatment is “permanent and very effective,” which beats trying disappointing product after disappointing product.

More commonly used on acne scars, though, is **Fraxel Laser Resurfacing**, which helps build up collagen and fix scars in a more generalized fashion. The non-invasive technique uses a machine that emits a laser over your skin. It works by creating tiny wounds in the inner layer of skin where collagen is produced, and as the dermis heals, old cells turn over to reveal improved skin tone. The pain involved is compared to a rubber band snapping against your skin, but the cost might hurt you more. The treatment is upward of \$1,000 and is also determined by how many sessions you need.

While actual scars are more difficult to get rid of, it's still possible to change the appearance of skin, like fading dark spots. I personally saw my spots of discoloration fade when I tried **Dr. Dennis Gross Extra Strength Alpha Beta Peel** (\$88, dgskin.com) and **Kiehl's Clearly Corrective Dark Spot Solution** (\$49.50, kiehls.com).

What have you tried in the battle against acne and acne scars?