

# SELF

## 9 Dark Spot Treatments That Really Work, According to Dermatologists

When it comes to [dark spot treatments](#), there are so many options out there that it can be hard to know where to start. What ingredients should you look for? And most importantly, which ones will get rid of dark spots for good?

To answer these questions, SELF talked to several dermatologists to find out how they treat dark spots on the face. Because, as a beauty editor, my ultimate quest is to achieve flawless skin. You know, the I-don't-even-need-any-makeup type of complexion we all desire. But I'm not quite there yet.

The number one thing keeping me from my no-makeup goal? Dark spots. [Uneven skin tone](#) keeps me reaching for my makeup bag again and again. With that said, keep reading to learn what causes dark spots in the first place, plus nine dark spot treatments that dermatologists recommend.

### What causes dark spots?

“Dark spots or hyperpigmentation are due to the overproduction of melanin in the skin by melanocytes,” plastic surgeon [Melissa Doft, M.D.](#) tells SELF. This extra melanin can be triggered by a lot of different things. “Hormones—both estrogen and progesterone—can increase the level of melanin (why [pregnant](#) women see [dark spots that often lighten following birth](#)); the sun can increase the level of melanin (why we have more dark spots after the summer); and age can increase the size of the melanocytes (why we see dark age spots in older patients),” Dr. Doft says.

Other factors, like skin irritation as a result of acne, waxing, and harsh scrubs, can also cause dark spots. Now that you know where dark spots come from, keep reading to discover how to get rid of dark spots.

## 9. Microneedling

Consider this a treatment not for the faint of heart. Performed using a medical-grade, stainless steel roller covered with hundreds of tiny spikes, the tool creates a series of micro-injuries in effort to rebuild the skin collagen production along with elasticity. While many at-home versions exist, Dr. Doft recommends having your physician control the level of penetration—think half a millimeter to 2.5 millimeters.

For best results, **microneedling** is often combined with topical treatments. “Once the skin barrier is opened, it is also possible to infuse ingredients known to lighten the skin like vitamin C,” says Doft. Dermatologists might also use a wound-healing serum, or a hyaluronic acid-vitamin C compound to help with hyperpigmentation, especially in darker skin tones. She does note there is a potential risk of scarring from microneedling services if they are performed too aggressively. “Darker skinned patients may also find that they become more pigmented,” she adds. “But [when done correctly] you will see a brighter complexion by the next week after treatment.”

Direct link: <https://www.self.com/story/dark-spot-treatments>