

SKIN CARE

A Guide to Treating Uneven Skin Texture, According to Dermatologists

Uneven skin texture “is probably one of the most challenging and difficult problems to treat,” but we have expert-backed solutions.

By Allie Hogan, Senior Beauty Editor · Published: Mar 19, 2024



Uneven skin tone is frustrating, but it can usually be patched up with some good concealer. On the other hand, uneven texture is nearly impossible to hide, and it only becomes more prevalent as we age. “As we get older, our skin loses its elasticity due to the breakdown of collagen and elastin fibers,” explains New York dermatologist Marina Peredo, MD. “Also, as the skin cells get older, they are only partially able to repair damaged DNA, which leads to uneven skin texture, skin laxity, sagginess and creepiness.”

Aging isn’t the only culprit of uneven skin texture. Dr. Peredo notes that it can also be a result of “depressed acne scars either from severe cystic acne or picking at your skin.” She feels that uneven skin texture “is probably one of the most challenging and difficult problems to treat.” While it can be challenging, “treatment is vitally important mainly due to the negative impact on quality of life,” says Glenn Dale, MD dermatologist Valerie Callender, MD. We asked the experts what the best options are, from over-the-counter products to in-office treatments.

Featured Experts

- Marina Peredo, MD is a dermatologist based in New York
- Valerie Callender, MD is a dermatologist based in Glenn Dale, MD
- **Jody A. Levine, MD** is a dermatologist based in New York

In-office treatments for uneven skin texture

“When our skin holds on to dead skin cells, we’re left with a dull appearance, uneven tone and uneven texture,” says New York dermatologist **Jody Levine, MD**. “Multiple in-office treatments can help improve skin tone and texture.” Before deciding which treatment is best for an individual Dr. Peredo considers the patient’s age and the condition of their skin.

Ablative lasers

Ablative laser treatments remove the outer layer of the skin thereby promoting cell renewal and collagen production, explains **Dr. Levine**. For younger patients Dr. Peredo leans into more preventative options like Fraxel or Clear + Brilliant, which she calls “Baby Fraxel,” noting that both are great for boosting collagen production. In addition to Clear + Brilliant **Dr. Levine** points to MicroLaser peel and Laser Genesis.

Non-ablative lasers

If you’re looking for less downtime, non-ablative lasers are a better option than their fully ablative counterparts. Dr. Peredo loves the new MIRIA treatment. “It’s so different from anything else I’ve used—the newest technology meets AI. It’s great for patients with sun damage, acne scarring, skin laxity...you name it.” Its biggest perk is that it works on all skin types and colors without the risk of hyperpigmentation.

Microneedling

In-office microneedling done by a professional helps stimulate collagen and elastin production resulting in smoother skin, says **Dr. Levine**. For leveled-up microneedling Dr. Peredo commonly uses Morpheus 8, which is really microneedling combined with radio frequency technology to improve skin texture. “It uses the trauma of needle wounding combined with the heat of radio frequency.”

Chemical peels

Dr. Levine says that in-office chemical peels like those using glycolic or salicylic acid help exfoliate dead skin cells and improve smoothness.

Exosomes

If you haven’t heard, exosomes are spiking in popularity right now, so be prepared to see more of them very soon. “Exosomes contain high concentrations of different growth factors that reduce inflammation and promote regeneration,” explains Dr. Peredo. She calls them “the cherry on top of in-office procedures.”

“My absolute favorite thing to use after non-ablative lasers or microneedling procedures are Exovex exosomes,” says Dr. Peredo. “They are a great accompaniment to any kind of laser treatment because they are frozen at application and they ‘put out the fire that the laser created.’ It also cuts downtime and discomfort in half.”

Topical products for uneven skin texture

Whether you got an in-office treatment and want to seal in results or you're simply sticking to topicals, Dr. Peredo stresses the importance of great skin care. "Obviously, after the great in-office treatments, we give patients their homework to ensure that they will get the best possible results," she says. "An anti-aging skin-care routine to improve skin texture is essential and it does not have to be complicated."

Retinoids

Dr. Peredo notes that retinol, also known as vitamin A, is essential for combating aging and uneven skin texture alike. **There are heavy-duty options like prescription Tretinoin and other retinoids that help boost cell turnover and collagen production thereby smoothing the skin's surface, says Dr. Levine.** There are also plenty of powerful over-the-counter topical products with retinol that can help even skin out.

AHAs, BHAs and urea

Dr. Levine suggests looking for products with alpha-hydroxy acids (AHAs) , beta-hydroxy acids (BHAs) and urea. "AHAs like lactic and glycolic acids are chemical exfoliants that dissolve dead skin cells. BHAs like salicylic acid unclog pores and reduce inflammation, improving skin tone and texture. Urea is also a very moisturizing ingredient that promotes smoother, supple skin."

Vitamin C

"Vitamin C offers protection and repair from environmental damage. It evens skin tone and texture by stimulating collagen production," explains Dr. Peredo. Her two favorite vitamin C products are her own Skinfluence Vitamin C Serum (\$148) and Alastin C-Radical Defense Antioxidant Serum (\$196).

Lifestyle changes to help prevent uneven skin texture from occurring or worsening

It's integral to make sun protection a priority when trying to improve skin's texture, says **Dr. Levine.** Applying sunscreen daily will help protect skin from UV radiation that can damage its appearance and texture, she explains. "All patients should be using a broad-spectrum sunscreen daily with re-application throughout the day," says Dr. Callender.

"Combining the above-mentioned treatments with lifestyle choices such as a diet high in nutrients and antioxidants, proper hydration, exercise and sleep will support improved skin texture," says **Dr. Levine.** Dr. Peredo also advises against smoking and consuming large quantities of alcohol. Additionally, "If you suffer from severe cystic acne, see your dermatologist ASAP, get them treated before they form scars, and don't pick," as this could create or worsen texture.