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The Important Reason Why You Should Treat Acne Scars in Your 20s

BY KRISTIE DASH, DIGITAL BEAUTY EDITOR, APRIL 19, 2016, 8:00:00 AM



Sure, you're still years away from the two-day hangover, but if you're feeling invincible in your late teens and 20s, you shouldn't. At least not when it comes to acne scars, says Doris Day, a clinical associate professor of dermatology at NYU Langone Medical Center in New York City. "Acne scars that seem very mild in my younger patients turn into deep scars as they approach their 50s because their skin loses elasticity and collagen. For this reason, I'm more aggressive about treating even mild acne scars in my younger patients," she says. If you're acne-prone and about to have a panic attack, don't freak out quite yet. But definitely keep reading to find out what you can, and should, be doing.

How do you know whether a scar is bad enough to need treating? "A scar, by definition, is a change in texture of the skin. Any scar is worth treating."

What is the best way to treat an acne scar topically? "Retinols are important—they can be prescription or over-the-counter or a combination of both. For other topicals, besides retinols, growth factors and antioxidants are good. [Skin Medica TNS Essential Serum](#) is my favorite example. It has an outstanding combination of growth factors, peptides, and brighteners, and I've seen excellent results when it's used in combination with my scar treatments."

What about in-office treatments? "I use fractional lasers, and I also like the [Endymed](#) device, which uses microneedling with radio frequency, and the eMatrix, which uses sublative radio frequency and is great for all skin tones."

How do you know which treatment is right for you? "There are lasers and devices. Many people group everything as a laser, but many of the treatments I use, like **Endymed** and eMatrix, are devices that use radio frequency or other energy rather than light energy, which is what lasers use. There are many excellent options, and there is more than one right way to treat most scars, but it's also important to know that what we call 'ice pick scars,' which are small but deep, don't do well with lasers or devices. For these, I very carefully use a high concentration of trichloroacetic acid (TCA) in a controlled way to try to improve them."

How do you know whether you can just use a topical rather than doing an in-office treatment? "Treat with topicals to help minimize or avoid a scar and to strengthen the skin. Once the scar is formed, though, you'll need to restore your skin as much as possible with a treatment. But continue to use the topicals to make it even more effective and heal quicker."