

# How to Finally Get Rid of Those Stubborn Stretch Marks for Good

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What causes stretch marks, exactly? Fun fact: Stretch marks are a type of scar. When skin is stretched or wounded, new collagen fibers form at the stressed spots as part of the healing process, leaving marks behind.

There's no surefire way to prevent stretch marks and other scars, and they're difficult to get rid of entirely, says [Rebecca Baxt, MD](#), board-certified dermatologist at [Baxt Cosmedical](#) in Paramus, New Jersey.

Some stretch mark treatments, however, promise to reduce their size or appearance or to erase them altogether. We've fleshed out how well these actually work.

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## Topical stretch mark treatments

**What they are:** Available online and in drugstores, creams, body oils, serums, and silicone gel sheets claim that their active ingredients will shrink scars or prevent and fade stretch marks.

**What we know:** The data is inconclusive, and study results are mixed. "Research has failed to support the claim that products containing cocoa butter, vitamin E, or olive oil improve stretch marks," says [Meghan Feely, MD](#), a board-certified dermatologist in New Jersey and New York City who serves as a clinical instructor at Mount Sinai. But those containing retinoids or [hyaluronic acid](#) may repair damaged collagen or stimulate the production of new collagen, Dr. Feely says, adding that the extract of a medicinal herb, centella asiatica, also shows promise.

**Should you try them?** Sure, but discuss it with a dermatologist first, especially if you're pregnant or breastfeeding. Topical stretch mark treatments are generally safe, but likely won't deliver huge results. Try them when stretch marks are still pink or red, since making them fade is even harder once they mature, says Dr. Feely.

**Brands to consider:** [Mederma gels, creams, and oils](#) (\$9 to \$30), [Bio-Oil Skincare Oil](#) (\$6 to \$28), [ScarAway Silicone Scar Sheets](#) (\$16 to \$27).

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## In-office procedures for stretch marks

**What they are:** A dermatologist can administer laser therapy, microneedling, and dermal fillers to get rid of stretch marks. Laser therapy shines beams of light on skin to target inflammation and collagen. Microneedling delivers tiny punctures, the healing of which is said to rejuvenate skin. Dermal filler injections aim to even out indented scars or bumpy skin.

**What we know:** These stretch mark treatments work. With laser therapy, the light is absorbed by the skin, prompting remodeling of collagen and reducing inflammation that can make blemishes more apparent. Microneedling works, says Dr. Feely, because the "wound healing cascade" prompts collagen and elastin generation. Injections containing hyaluronic acid fill in pitted scars, and raised scars can be shrunk with corticosteroid injections, says Dr. Baxt.

**Should you try them?** Yes, but they're pricey. Expect to pay \$200 to \$700 per session, and you may need multiple visits to see results.

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## Surgery for prominent scars

**What it is:** A plastic surgeon cuts out an old scar, leaving a new, neater scar that can be faded with a treatment like laser therapy, explains Dr. Baxt.

**What we know:** There's no surgical option for removing stretch marks, but people with large, raised, or jagged scars may prefer the smaller scars that remain after surgery.

**Should you try it?** Only if your scars are severe and you're clear that this likely won't provide a perfect result.

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