

Microneedling depth chart

Recommended needle depths by skin concern, facial zone, device speed, Fitzpatrick type and aftercare window. Use it as a chairside starting point, then adjust to the patient in front of you.

1. Depth by skin concern

Skin concern	Depth (mm)	Passes	Clinical notes
Fine lines and wrinkles	0.25-0.5	2-3	Targets the upper dermis. Minimal downtime.
General skin rejuvenation	0.5-1.0	2-4	Stimulates collagen production in the mid-dermis.
Hyperpigmentation	0.25-0.5	2-3	Shallower depth lowers PIH risk in darker skin types.
Acne scars (mild to moderate)	1.0-1.5	3-4	Reaches the mid-dermis to remodel scar tissue.
Pitted or atrophic scars	1.5-2.0	4-6	Deeper fibrosis needs dermal penetration. Professional use only.
Surgical scars	1.5-2.5	3-5	Professional use only. Avoid active scarring phases.
Stretch marks	1.5-2.0	3-5	Body areas. Often combined with topical serums.
Hair growth (scalp)	0.5-1.5	2-4	Emerging evidence. Combined with minoxidil or PRP where indicated.

Reference: the epidermis occupies roughly the first 0.1 to 0.2 mm. The dermis runs to approximately 2 mm depending on the body site, so collagen induction needs a pass that reaches at least 0.5 mm.

2. Depth by facial zone

Facial zone	Depth (mm)	Rationale
Forehead	0.5-1.0	Moderate skin thickness. Avoid deeper passes near the frontalis.
Temples	0.25-0.5	Thin skin with superficial vessels nearby.
Cheeks	0.5-1.5	Thicker dermis. Well tolerated at higher depths.
Perioral (upper lip)	0.25-0.5	Thin and sensitive. Avoid deeper passes.
Under-eye (periorbital)	0.1-0.25	Very thin skin. Highest caution zone, specialist experience required.
Nose	0.25-0.5	Cartilage proximity. Shallow passes only.
Neck	0.25-0.5	Thinner than the face. Lower speeds recommended.

3. Depth and speed settings

Depth (mm)	Speed (1-6 scale)	Typical application
0.1-0.25	1-2	Under-eye, perioral and other sensitive zones
0.25-0.5	2-3	Fine lines, hyperpigmentation, at-home ceiling
0.5-1.0	3-4	General rejuvenation, forehead, cheeks
1.0-1.5	3-4	Acne scars, mild atrophic scarring
1.5-2.0	4-5	Pitted scars, stretch marks, surgical scars
2.0-2.5	5-6	Deep body scarring, professional clinical settings only

Speed scales are not standardized across manufacturers. The values above assume a generalized 1 to 6 scale, so always confirm against your own device guidance.

4. Fitzpatrick adjustment

Fitzpatrick type	Adjustment	What to watch
I to II	No change	Standard chart values apply. Highest tolerance for deeper passes.
III	No change	Standard values, but reduce depth if redness runs long.
IV to VI	Reduce 0.25-0.5	Avoid passes above 1.5 mm on the face without documented prior tolerance. PIH risk rises with depth.

5. Aftercare by depth

Depth used	Expected downtime	Aftercare guidance
Under 0.5 mm	Minimal, 12 to 24 h redness	Gentle cleanser, SPF 50, no actives for 24 h
0.5-1.0 mm	24 to 48 h redness	Hydrating serum, SPF 50, no sun or exercise for 48 h
1.0-1.5 mm	48 to 72 h redness, possible pinpoint bleeding	No makeup for 48 h, no actives for 72 h
1.5-2.5 mm	3 to 5 days redness, possible peeling	Medical-grade aftercare, no sun exposure, review at 7 days

Before you set the depth: screen for contraindications. Active keloid scarring, open wounds or infection at the site, cystic or pustular acne, anticoagulant therapy without medical clearance and pregnancy are widely treated as absolute contraindications. Herpes simplex history, isotretinoin in the past six months, immunosuppression, very recent filler or toxin in the same area and a hypertrophic scar tendency all call for individual assessment first.

6. Session record

Patient		Date	
Fitzpatrick type		Practitioner	
Concern treated		Device / cartridge	
Depth used (mm)		Speed setting	
Passes per zone		Topicals applied	
Aftercare given		Review date	

Log depth, speed and pass count against the client record for every session, so the next practitioner can see what the skin has already tolerated.