



◆ A COMPLETE GUIDE TO ◆

THE SKIN DEEP METHOD™



PROTOCOL · RECOVERY · RESULTS

A Progressive 4-Level DIY Microneedling System

The science behind the protocols. The reasons behind the results.

			
INFUSE	STIMULATE	REFINE	REPAIR
<i>Hydrate & Glow</i>	<i>Build & Firm</i>	<i>Smooth & Refine</i>	<i>Restore & Remodel</i>

By Nikki Mayne

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Beauty goes beyond the surface.

Hi, I'm Nikki.

Founder of Skin Deep Nikki & Creator of THE SKIN DEEP METHOD™

Welcome to SKIN DEEP beauty by Nikki — where we know that beauty goes beyond the surface.

My Story

I'm a skincare enthusiast who spent 20 years as a single mom learning how to make every dollar count. That same determination to find smarter, more affordable solutions—without sacrificing quality—led me to DIY skincare and ultimately to creating **The Skin Deep Method™**.

Why I Started

In 2021, I dove deep into researching DIY beauty treatments because I was tired of paying thousands of dollars each year at med spas. What I uncovered was an entire underground world of DIY-ers. I discovered where to source the best South Korean beauty products and professional-grade devices, began testing every beauty innovation I could find, and started sharing everything with my growing DIY community.

Why I'm Credible

I hold a B.A. degree in Fashion from California State University, Long Beach, and spent much of my career in the Biotech Industry. That combination — an eye for aesthetics and a foundation in science — turned out to be exactly the right background for understanding skin at a deeper level. I'm not a dermatologist. But I am someone who has spent the last five years rigorously researching, testing, documenting, and refining DIY protocols — backed by peer-reviewed science — and sharing the results honestly with my community.

This E-Book Is My Gift to You

The Skin Deep Method™ is the result of everything I've learned. It's the guide I wish had existed when I started — structured, science-backed, and written in plain language for real people. The only thing I ask in return is that you consider using my affiliate codes and links included in this booklet.

"Join me on this journey as we encourage one another to SHINE from the inside out."

— Nikki ♦ skindeepnikki.com

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A Progressive DIY Microneedling System — Education Guide

What Makes THE SKIN DEEP METHOD™ Unique to DIY

Microneedling isn't just about the device you use—it's about choosing the right treatment, the right products, and the right recovery plan for your skin. **THE SKIN DEEP METHOD™** was created to make that process simple, helping you needle with confidence while supporting healthier, more predictable results.

The Method is a complete, structured system — not just a technique. Every element has been deliberately designed to work together: the right cartridge, the right serum, the right depth, the right recovery protocol, and the right frequency. Nothing is random.

The Core Philosophy

"Start where your skin is — not where you want to be." Rather than pushing everyone to the deepest, most aggressive setting from day one, The Skin Deep Method™ meets your skin at its current tolerance and experience level. You earn the right to go deeper by proving your skin heals well first.

"Your skin doesn't improve during the treatment — it improves during the healing phase." This single principle separates The Method from the average DIY guide. The treatment is the trigger. The aftercare is where results are built or lost.

Why This is Different From Generic DIY Advice

Four distinct levels — each with its own cartridge type, depth range, serum, and frequency. One protocol does not serve all skin goals.

Progressive prerequisites — you cannot skip to Level 4 without demonstrated healing at Level 2 or 3 first.

Serum matching by goal — the serum is chosen for what you are trying to achieve (hydration, collagen stimulation, or deep scar repair), not based on what's trending.

Dual-serum approach (Levels 2–4) — the Treatment Serum is what gets into the skin; the Slip Serum (HA) is how the needle moves. These are two separate jobs.

A full Recovery System — aftercare is not an afterthought. It is a structured, phase-based protocol specific to each level.

Explicit "what not to do" guidance — common mistakes are named and explained (wrong cartridge for scars, nano misidentified as collagen-building, skipping aftercare protocol).

Fitzpatrick skin type awareness — conservative depth adjustments and extended healing timelines built in for deeper skin tones (Types IV–VI) to protect against PIH.

Monthly schedule structure — built-in rest weeks prevent over-treatment and allow the skin to complete its natural collagen cycle before the next session.

The 4 Levels at a Glance

Each level is a complete, self-contained protocol — cartridge, depth, serum, aftercare, and frequency all work together toward one specific skin goal.

	LEVEL 1 INFUSE ✨	LEVEL 2 STIMULATE 🔥	LEVEL 3 REFINE 💎	LEVEL 4 REPAIR 🛠️
Goal	Hydrate + Glow	Collagen Building	Improve Texture	Correct Damage
Cartridge	Nano Pin	12-Pin	36-Pin	12-Pin
Depth	0.15–0.25 mm	0.25–1.0 mm	0.25–0.75 mm Face 1.0–1.5 mm Body (2.0 mm Advanced)	0.25–2.0 mm Beginner Max Depth: 1.5 mm Advanced Max Depth: 2.0 mm. Acne Scars + Stretch Marks: 1.5 - 2.0 mm
Speed	2	4	4	5
Frequency	Weekly	Every 4–6 weeks	Every 4–6 weeks	Every 4–6 weeks
Downtime	0–24 hours	1–3 days	2–4 days	3–7 days
Best For	Beginners / Sensitive Skin / Maintenance	Early Aging / Loss of Firmness	Texture / Pores / Body	Acne Scars / Deep Wrinkles / Stretch Marks

The Levels — Why Each Protocol Is Built the Way It Is

Every decision in The Skin Deep Method™ — the cartridge chosen, the depth set, the serum used, the speed selected — has a specific reason rooted in skin biology. Understanding the "why" behind each level helps you use it correctly and get the results it was designed to deliver.

✨ Level 1 — INFUSE: Hydrate • Nourish • Glow

Who It Is For

Beginners. Sensitive skin. Anyone using a microneedling pen for the first time. Also ideal as a maintenance or "in between" protocol while resting from deeper levels.

Why the Nano Cartridge?

The nano cartridge does not penetrate the dermis. Its pins create superficial micro-channels in the outer epidermal layer only. This is important for two reasons:

It does not trigger the collagen-induction cascade — which is why Level 1 cannot build collagen no matter how many times you do it. That is not its job.

It is safe for weekly use because the epidermis heals within hours. There is no prolonged inflammation or deep tissue disruption.

The nano cartridge's sole purpose is to create a pathway for ingredients to absorb far more effectively than topical application alone — **up to 1,000x deeper absorption.**

Why 0.15–0.25 mm Depth?

This shallow range keeps penetration entirely within the epidermis. It is enough to open micro-channels for serum infusion without reaching the dermis where collagen-producing fibroblasts live. Going deeper with a nano cartridge does not increase collagen stimulation — it only increases risk.

Why Speed 2?

Lower speed means more control. For beginners learning how to hold and move the device correctly, speed 2 allows slow, deliberate passes and reduces the risk of dragging or over-treating sensitive areas.

Why Ronas Stem Cell Solution as the Serum?

Level 1 is a hydration and nourishment protocol. Ronas Stem Cell Solution delivers plant stem cell technology directly into the freshly opened nano channels — supporting skin renewal, deep hydration, and radiance. It does not contain actives that could irritate a barrier that has just been opened. The serum is chosen specifically for the goal: infusion of hydration, not stimulation of collagen.

Level 1 Key Insight

- Nano DOES NOT build collagen. If collagen stimulation is your goal, you need to advance to Level 2.
- Nano channels close quickly — which is why Level 1 can be done weekly.
- Results: fresher, dewier, more radiant skin with improved product absorption.

Level 2 — STIMULATE: Build • Strengthen • Renew

Who It Is For

Intermediate users noticing early signs of aging — fine lines, mild loss of firmness, or skin that is starting to look less resilient. You have used Level 1 and your skin heals easily.

Why the 12-Pin Cartridge?

The 12-pin cartridge delivers concentrated, focused penetration. The needles reach the dermis — specifically the papillary dermis — where fibroblasts live. Fibroblasts are the cells responsible for producing collagen and elastin. Creating controlled micro-injuries at this depth triggers the skin's natural wound-healing cascade: the release of growth factors, the recruitment of fibroblasts, and ultimately the production of new, organized collagen.

Why 0.25–1.0 mm Depth?

This range targets the dermis without going so deep that it risks unnecessary trauma or extended recovery. Different zones of the face require different depths — delicate areas like around the eyes and nose are treated at 0.25 mm while the thicker cheek and chin areas can handle 0.75–1.0 mm. The protocol map specifies depth per zone intentionally so that treatment is precise, not uniform.

Why Speed 4?

At Level 2 we are working deeper and covering the dermis, which has more thickness and resilience than the epidermis. Speed 4 allows an efficient, controlled treatment that creates an even response across each zone without over-treating. It is still not the fastest setting — precision remains priority.

Why PDRN/Exosomes or Velatox GF11?

Now that the needles are reaching the dermis, the serum has a very different job. We are not just infusing hydration — we are delivering regenerative signals directly to the cells being stimulated.

PDRN (Polydeoxyribonucleotide): Derived from salmon DNA, PDRN supports cellular repair and tissue regeneration by activating adenosine receptors. It communicates with fibroblasts to enhance collagen synthesis and accelerate recovery.

Exosomes: Tiny vesicles containing growth factors, peptides, and signaling proteins. They amplify the skin's repair response and support the collagen-induction cascade triggered by the needling.

Velatox GF11: An advanced growth factor blend that signals fibroblasts to produce new collagen and elastin, enhancing the remodeling that Level 2 is designed to trigger.

These are not generic serums — they are **precision tools matched to the biological event happening in the skin.**

Why Every 4–6 Weeks?

Collagen production is not immediate. After a Level 2 session, the skin's collagen cycle takes approximately 4–6 weeks to complete. Treating too soon — before this cycle finishes — disrupts the process and can prevent the full result from forming. The frequency is built around skin biology, not convenience.

Level 2 Key Insight

- This is where real collagen induction begins. Doing Level 1 weekly is not a substitute.
- The serum switch (from Ronas Stem Cell to PDRN/Exosomes) is intentional — the goal has changed from infusion to stimulation.
- Result: firmer, more resilient skin with improved fine lines over consistent sessions.

Level 3 — REFINE: Smooth • Refine • Perfect

Who It Is For

Intermediate-to-advanced users with uneven texture, enlarged pores, dull or rough skin, or those who want to treat body areas efficiently. Also suitable for anyone who has completed Level 2 consistently and is ready to progress.

Why the 36-Pin Cartridge?

The 36-pin cartridge is a **coverage tool, not a depth tool.** Its 36 needles arranged in a wide configuration treat a larger surface area in each pass — making it the right choice for texture, pore refinement, and body areas where efficiency of coverage matters more than targeted depth.

This is a critical distinction: the 36-pin is **NOT the right cartridge for acne scars.** Scars require the concentrated, precise penetration of a 12-pin to break down fibrotic tissue. Using a 36-pin for scars is **one of the most common DIY mistakes.**

Why 0.25–0.75 mm on the Face, 1.0–2.0 mm on the Body?

Facial skin is thinner and more vascular than body skin. The goal on the face is to improve surface texture and pore appearance, which sits in the upper dermis — achievable at shallower depths. Body skin (e.g., arms, legs, abdomen) is significantly thicker and the target conditions (rough texture, stretch marks in early stages) require deeper penetration to reach the reticular dermis where structural remodeling can occur.

Why Speed 4 Again?

Coverage efficiency at Level 3 benefits from maintaining speed 4. The 36-pin's wider footprint means each pass covers more ground. Combined with speed 4, this creates an effective, even treatment across larger zones without dragging or over-concentrating in one area.

Why PDRN/Exosomes or GF11 for Treatment — Plus Eres Tu PDRN in Aftercare?

The same regenerative serums used in Level 2 are appropriate here because the biological goal is the same — stimulate repair and collagen production. However, Level 3 introduces Eres Tu PDRN in the aftercare protocol. Eres Tu PDRN is not a treatment serum — it is an aftercare product used from Day 2-5 to support recover over the large treated surface area. This lower-concentration PDRN is designed to continue supporting the skin's recovery process and texture improvement during the healing phase — especially relevant when treating larger areas where the total zone of microtrauma is greater.

Level 3 Key Insight

- 36-pin = coverage and texture. 12-pin = depth and precision for scars. These are different tools for different goals.
- Body areas heal more slowly than the face — they may remain pink longer. This is normal.
- Result: smoother, more refined skin with improved pore appearance and overall evenness.

Level 4 — REPAIR: Restore • Remodel • Transform

Who It Is For

Experienced microneedlers who have completed multiple successful Level 2 or Level 3 sessions, whose skin heals fully within 5–7 days, and who have specific goals: acne scars, deep wrinkles, or stretch marks. This level requires prerequisites. You cannot shortcut your way here.

Level 4 Prerequisites — All Must Be Confirmed Before Proceeding

- ✓ Completed multiple Level 2 or Level 3 sessions successfully
- ✓ Skin heals fully within 5–7 days with no prolonged redness or reactions
- ✓ No active acne, open lesions, or active skin infections in the treatment area
- ✓ Understand PIH risk — especially important for Fitzpatrick skin types IV–VI

If you cannot confirm all four — do not proceed. There is no shortcut through healing.

Why the 12-Pin Cartridge (Again)?

At Level 4 we return to the 12-pin — not for its depth alone, but for its precision. Acne scars and stretch marks involve fibrotic tissue that must be mechanically disrupted. The 12-pin's concentrated needles can penetrate deeply into scar tissue in a focused way. The 36-pin cannot achieve the depth or concentration required to remodel scar tissue effectively.

Why Up to 2.0 mm Depth?

Acne scars and deep wrinkles exist in the reticular dermis — the deeper layer of the dermis. Reaching this layer requires depths between 1.5–2.0 mm depending on the area. Stretch marks, which occur when the dermis tears under rapid skin stretching, also require deep penetration (1.5–2.0 mm) to stimulate the collagen and elastin remodeling needed to improve their appearance.

Depth is not increased uniformly across the face — delicate areas like around the eyes and nose stay at 0.25–0.5 mm. The depth increase is targeted at the areas where scar or repair tissue exists.

Why Speed 5?

At the deepest level, speed 5 is appropriate for working through denser scar tissue and thicker dermis areas. However, this is paired with increased precision and attention to endpoint signals — even, mild-

to-moderate erythema, tiny, isolated pinpoint dots. Any signs of over-treatment (streaming, pooling, tearing) are stop signals.

Why Advanced Serums — GF11 and Stayve PDRN Exosome?

The biological challenge at Level 4 is not just stimulating collagen — it's breaking down and remodeling disorganized, fibrotic collagen in scar tissue and replacing it with organized new collagen. This requires the most potent regenerative support:

Velatox GF11 (Advanced Growth Factor Support): A concentrated growth factor blend that provides intensive signaling for collagen remodeling at depth. Used when the primary goal is deep firming and wrinkle improvement.

Stayve Medisco PDRN Exosome (Advanced Scar/Texture Support): Combines the cellular repair benefits of PDRN with exosome technology for scar remodeling. This serum continues into the aftercare — the same active product used in treatment is used post-treatment to extend the biological signal during the healing window.

The principle: **if an advanced product was used in treatment, you continue it in aftercare.** This continuity of signal during the open healing window is unique to Level 4.

Level 4 Key Insight

- This level targets fibrotic scar tissue. The biology is fundamentally different from surface texture or collagen stimulation.
- The 12-pin returns for its precision and depth — not the wide coverage the 36-pin provides.
- 3–7 days of downtime is expected and is a sign that the level is working correctly.

Result: improved appearance of acne scars, deep wrinkles, and stretch marks over consistent sessions.

The Monthly Flows by Levels

Why Timing Matters

One of the most common mistakes DIY microneedlers make is assuming that more is better. The truth is that healthy skin changes happen when treatment and recovery are balanced.

The skin improves during the healing process that follows treatment. Microneedling creates a controlled injury that triggers a wound-healing cascade involving inflammation, cellular repair, fibroblast activation, collagen production, and tissue remodeling. This process continues for weeks after the treatment itself.

THE SKIN DEEP METHOD™ Monthly Flows were designed around the biology of skin healing.

The treatment creates the signal.

The recovery creates the result.

The schedule protects both.

The Three Principles Behind Every Monthly Flow

1. Respect the Wound-Healing Cycle

After microneedling, the skin progresses through three major stages:

Inflammation

- Begins immediately after treatment
- Growth factors are released
- Repair signals are activated

Proliferation

- Fibroblasts begin producing collagen and elastin
- New blood vessels form
- Tissue repair accelerates

Remodeling

- New collagen becomes organized
- Skin strength and structure improve
- Visible improvements continue developing

Research demonstrates that collagen remodeling continues long after the visible redness has disappeared.

2. Prevent Over-Treatment

More inflammation does not necessarily create more collagen.

When treatments are performed too frequently, the skin may spend excessive time in the inflammatory phase without sufficient time for remodeling and recovery.

THE SKIN DEEP METHOD™ Monthly Flows intentionally includes recovery periods to allow the skin to complete its natural repair process before another stimulus is introduced.

3. Support the Barrier

Healthy skin requires more than collagen.

The skin barrier must remain intact to:

- Retain moisture
- Reduce irritation
- Prevent infection
- Minimize post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation (PIH)

Recovery weeks help maintain barrier health while deeper collagen remodeling continues beneath the surface.

✨ LEVEL 1 INFUSE FLOW

Hydrate • Nourish • Glow

Monthly Flow

Week 1 — INFUSE

Week 2 — INFUSE

Week 3 — INFUSE

Week 4 — REST or Light Infusion

Why It Works

Level 1 uses a nano cartridge that creates superficial channels within the epidermis only. It does not reach the dermis where collagen-producing fibroblasts live.

Because epidermal healing occurs rapidly, weekly treatments are appropriate.

The goal of Level 1 is not collagen stimulation.

The goal is:

- Improved hydration
- Enhanced serum absorption
- Skin barrier support
- Increased radiance

The fourth week serves as an optional reset period while maintaining flexibility for users who enjoy weekly maintenance treatments.

🔥 LEVEL 2 STIMULATE FLOW

Build • Strengthen • Renew

Monthly Flow

Week 1 — STIMULATE

Week 2 — Recovery & Barrier Support

Week 3 — INFUSE

Week 4 — INFUSE

Why It Works

Level 2 reaches the dermis and initiates true collagen induction. Fibroblasts are activated, growth factors are released, and collagen synthesis begins.

Collagen production continues for weeks after treatment.

The recovery week allows:

- Inflammation to settle
- Fibroblasts to remain active
- New collagen formation to begin

The infusion weeks provide hydration and barrier support while collagen remodeling continues beneath the surface.

LEVEL 3 REFINE FLOW

Smooth • Refine • Perfect

Monthly Flow

Week 1 — REFINE

Week 2 — Recovery & Barrier Support

Week 3 — INFUSE

Week 4 — INFUSE

Why It Works

Level 3 focuses on improving skin quality.

The 36-pin cartridge treats a larger surface area than Level 2, creating more overall tissue coverage while still stimulating collagen production.

Because larger areas are being treated, recovery becomes even more important.

The recovery week allows:

- Resolution of inflammation
- Early collagen remodeling
- Barrier repair

The two INFUSE weeks maintain hydration and support the healing environment while collagen remodeling continues.

Level 3 Key Insights

Level 3 is a **Skin Quality Protocol**

The goal is not repairing damaged tissue.

The goal is improving the appearance of healthy skin.

LEVEL 4 REPAIR FLOW

Restore • Remodel • Transform

Monthly Flow

Week 1 — REPAIR

Week 2 — Recovery

Week 3 — INFUSE

Week 4 — Recovery

Why It Works

Level 4 targets scar tissue, stretch marks, and deeper structural damage.

Unlike Level 2 and Level 3, the goal is not simply collagen stimulation.

The goal is collagen remodeling.

Scar tissue contains disorganized collagen fibers that require time to break down and reorganize following treatment.

This level creates the greatest amount of controlled injury and therefore requires the greatest amount of recovery.

The additional recovery periods help:

- Reduce unnecessary inflammation
- Support scar remodeling
- Protect barrier function
- Allow complete healing before the next session

Level 4 Key Insight

More treatment is not the goal.

More remodeling is the goal.

The Most Important Rule

No matter which level you choose:

More is not better.

Better healing is better.

THE SKIN DEEP METHOD™ was built around the biology of the skin—not around doing the most treatments possible.

Every Monthly Flow follows the same philosophy:

Protocol → Recovery → Results™

The treatment starts the process.

The healing creates the transformation.

The Recovery System — Why Aftercare Is Level-Specific

Aftercare isn't optional with microneedling. **It is where your results are either built or lost.**

When microneedling creates micro-channels in the skin, a wound-healing cascade is triggered. The skin immediately begins recruiting inflammatory mediators, growth factors, and repair cells. What you apply and how you treat your skin in the 7 days that follow determines how effectively that healing cascade produces results — and whether the skin barrier rebuilds cleanly without irritation, infection, or hyperpigmentation.

Every aftercare protocol in The Skin Deep Method™ follows the same five-phase framework. What changes between levels is the duration of each phase, the specific products chosen, when actives can be reintroduced, and how aggressively the skin needs to be supported.

The 5 Recovery Phases — Applied Across All Levels

PHASE 1	PHASE 2	PHASE 3	PHASE 4	PHASE 5
Hydrate	Repair	Heal	Barrier	Resume
Day 0	Day 1	Days 2–4	Days 4–5	Days 6–7
Flood skin with hydration immediately after. HA or stem cell serums only. No actives, no washing for 12–48 hours depending on level.	Barrier repair begins. Gentle cleanse (Cetaphil), hydrating serums, no exfoliants. Keep routine minimal.	Active healing underway. Ceramides seal moisture. No retinol, no Vitamin C. Minimal routine preserves the repair environment.	Rebuild the skin barrier. Ceramide-rich products. SPF every single day without exception.	Return to normal routine gradually. Reintroduce actives slowly. SPF remains non-negotiable.

Three rules that apply at every level, without exception:

No masks on Day 0 — the skin is open and vulnerable to contamination and over-stimulation.

No actives (retinol, acids, Vitamin C) for 3–5 days — these are irritants to healing tissue.

No stacking everything at once — add products gradually to avoid overwhelming a compromised barrier.

Level 1 INFUSE Aftercare — Why It Works This Way

Level 1 creates only nano-channels in the epidermis. The skin's response is mild — pinkness for 0–24 hours — and the barrier recovers quickly. The aftercare reflects this: it is gentle, hydration-focused, and accessible.

Ronas Stem Cell continues in aftercare because it was the treatment serum. The channels are still semi-open in the first 24 hours and the stem cell actives continue absorbing and working.

Eres Tu PDRN is introduced on Days 2–3 to support the minor cellular renewal triggered at this level.

Dr. Drawing Revital Cream and Merikit Ceramide E5 seal the barrier progressively through Days 1–5.

Vitamin C can be reintroduced as early as Day 5 if there is zero irritation — because the healing timeframe is short.

No saunas for the first 24 hours to prevent heat-induced inflammation in newly opened channels.

The Level 1 aftercare is intentionally simple. The goal is to keep the skin clean, hydrated, and barrier-supported while the rapid epidermal healing completes.

Level 2 STIMULATE Aftercare — Why It Works This Way

Level 2 reaches the dermis. The skin's healing response is now a true collagen-induction cascade — more significant, longer-lasting, and requiring more targeted aftercare support.

Stayve Hyaluronic Acid is applied liberally on Day 0 because it was the slip serum during treatment. HA provides intense hydration and continues to deliver moisture into the still-open dermal channels.

PDRN Exosomes or Velatox GF11 are applied on Day 0 and through Days 1–3 because the biological window is open. During the inflammatory phase, these growth-factor-rich serums continue delivering regenerative

signals to the fibroblasts that were just activated by the needling. This extends and amplifies the collagen stimulation that started in the session.

Dr. Drawing Revital Cream or Glutanex Cica Cream (chosen based on skin sensitivity) rebuilds the barrier during Days 2–4.

Vitamin C returns on Day 6 only if there is zero irritation — the deeper healing warrants a longer pause before reintroducing this potent active.

Tretinoin returns on Day 7 only if fully healed — otherwise delay 48–72 hours further.

The continuation of the treatment serum (PDRN/Exosomes or GF11) into the aftercare at Days 0–3 is deliberate. The open micro-channels created by the needles remain receptive to active ingredients for a short window post-treatment. **Using this window maximizes the investment of the session.**

Level 3 REFINE Aftercare — Why It Works This Way

Level 3 treats larger surface areas and can include body zones. The aftercare builds on Level 2's protocol with additional considerations for the wider treatment footprint and body healing.

Stayve HA continues as the base hydration layer immediately post-treatment.

Eres Tu PDRN joins the protocol prominently during Days 3–5. Its role is to support cellular repair during the active healing phase over a larger treated area where the total microtrauma is greater.

The Day 1–2 protocol uses Dr. Drawing Revital Cream only (without PDRN) — allowing the immediate repair phase to focus on barrier support before introducing regenerative actives.

Body areas heal more slowly than the face and may remain pink longer. Aftercare is extended as needed — if skin feels hot or irritated, remain in the current phase for an additional 24–48 hours before advancing.

The Heal & Barrier phase (Days 3–5) is combined because body skin often moves through these phases together.

Level 4 REPAIR Aftercare — Why It Works This Way

Level 4 creates the deepest trauma of all four levels. The aftercare is the most comprehensive, the most conservative in terms of active reintroduction, and the most flexible in terms of product choices — because at this depth, individual skin response varies more significantly.

No face washing for 24–48 hours (extended from Level 1's 12–24 hours). The deeper channels need more time before any cleansing can occur without disturbing the initial healing.

Optional La Roche-Posay Thermal Spring Mist and cool compress on Day 0 — both are calming tools for the more pronounced inflammation that Level 4 produces.

The base layer choice expands to Stayve HA or Curenex Skinbooster — offering flexibility based on individual skin needs and what was used in treatment.

The advanced serum used in treatment (GF11 or Stayve PDRN Exosome) continues into aftercare at Days 4–5. At Level 4, the biological window for these signals is longer because the inflammatory and repair phases are more prolonged.

Tretinoin and retinoids are reintroduced LAST — after peptides and niacinamide have been reintroduced first. For aggressive Level 4 sessions, tretinoin may need 7–14 days before resuming.

Acids and exfoliants are also reintroduced last — because the barrier took longer to build and is more vulnerable to disruption.

A simple Level 4 aftercare tip:

If skin feels HOT → Merikit Regenerative Calming Serum

If skin feels DRY/TIGHT → Merikit Ceramide E5 Intensive Cream

If skin feels RED/IRRITATED → Glutanex Cica Cream

OR: Stay in the current recovery phase for an additional 24–48 hours before advancing.

Safety First — Know Before You Needle

The Skin Deep Method™ is built on the principle that safety comes before results. The most important session is one that doesn't cause harm. Knowing when NOT to microneedle is as important as knowing how.

Do Not Microneedle If You Have:

Active acne breakouts, open wounds, cold sores (HSV), or active eczema/psoriasis/rosacea flare in the treatment area

History of keloid or hypertrophic scarring — microneedling can worsen abnormal scar formation

Blood clotting disorders or current use of blood thinners

Active chemotherapy, radiation therapy, or compromised immune system

Used isotretinoin (Accutane) within the last 6–12 months

Had a chemical peel, laser, or dermabrasion treatment recently — wait until fully healed

Botox or filler in the treatment area within the last 2 weeks

Pregnancy or breastfeeding

Skin cancer or suspicious lesions in the treatment area

Uncontrolled diabetes — impaired healing increases infection risk

Fitzpatrick Skin Types IV–VI: Special Considerations

Darker skin tones have a higher density of melanocytes — the cells that produce pigment. Microneedling can trigger post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation (PIH) if not approached conservatively.

Fitzpatrick I–III: Standard protocol applies

Fitzpatrick IV: Begin conservatively — start at the lower end of each depth range

Fitzpatrick V–VI: Conservative depths + extended healing windows + mineral SPF daily without exception

For all skin types: patch test new serums, introduce new products one at a time, and allow complete healing before the next session.

Common Mistakes The Skin Deep Method™ Prevents

Using the 36-pin cartridge for acne scars (wrong tool — scars need the 12-pin)

Going too deep too fast (earning progression through demonstrated healing, not guessing)

Thinking nano builds collagen (it does not — it infuses)

Not matching the serum to the goal (hydration serum at Level 4 will not support scar remodeling)

Skipping or improvising the aftercare protocol (where most DIY results are lost)

Treating too frequently and not allowing the collagen cycle to complete

THE SKIN DEEP METHOD™

Protocol • Recovery • Results

skindeepnikki.com

IMPORTANT DISCLAIMER — PLEASE READ

Not Medical Advice: The information contained in this guide is for general educational and informational purposes only. It does not constitute, and should not be treated as, medical advice, a medical diagnosis, or a recommended treatment plan. Nothing in this guide is intended to substitute for professional medical consultation, diagnosis, or treatment by a qualified healthcare provider.

No Professional Credentials: THE SKIN DEEP METHOD™ was created by Nikki Mayne of Skin Deep Nikki. Nikki is not a licensed physician, dermatologist, nurse, or any other licensed medical or healthcare professional. The content in this guide reflects personal research, experience, and publicly available scientific literature — it is not the opinion of a qualified medical professional.

Consult a Professional: Before beginning any microneedling protocol, you should consult a licensed dermatologist or physician — particularly if you have any pre-existing skin conditions, health conditions, or are taking any medications. This is especially important for individuals with Fitzpatrick skin types IV–VI, a history of keloid scarring, autoimmune conditions, or any condition listed under the contraindications section of this guide.

Individual Results Vary: Results from microneedling are not guaranteed and will vary based on individual skin type, genetics, adherence to protocol, product quality, and other factors. The scientific references cited in this guide reflect findings from peer-reviewed studies and do not guarantee the same outcomes for all individuals.

Assumption of Risk: DIY microneedling carries inherent risks, including but not limited to: skin irritation, infection, post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation, scarring, and adverse reactions to products. By following any protocol described in this guide, you acknowledge that you understand these risks and assume full personal responsibility for your own skin health decisions.

FTC Disclosure: This guide may reference specific products available for purchase on skindeepnikki.com. Descriptions of product benefits are based on manufacturer information and publicly available research. Individual product results are not guaranteed.

When in doubt, seek professional medical advice. Your skin health is worth it.

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The protocols in THE SKIN DEEP METHOD™ are grounded in peer-reviewed research. The following studies from PubMed, PMC, and the NCBI provide the scientific basis for the key principles covered in this guide.

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Note: All references link to peer-reviewed studies, systematic reviews, or clinical evaluations indexed in PubMed/NCBI. Citations are formatted in a modified APA/Vancouver style for readability. Full-text access is available for all PMC-linked articles. This reference list is provided for educational purposes and does not constitute medical advice.



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