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5 Things You Should Do to Prep Skin Before Skin Tightening

Tatiana Bido | May 27, 2025



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If you've booked a skin-tightening treatment like microneedling, radio frequency or laser, what you do beforehand can make or break your results. Experts agree that with the right skin prep, your treatment will not only work better but also heal faster and last longer.

Austin dermatologist Elizabeth Geddes-Bruce, MD says, "Prepping the skin can make a difference in how well it responds. Well-hydrated skin tends to tolerate and recover from tightening treatments more effectively." From nutrition and topicals to the key products doctors rely on, here's what you should do to get skin ready.

1. Feed Your Skin From the Inside

Start by building skin resilience through diet. "I usually recommend patients focus on a diet rich in essential fatty acids like omega-3s," says Dr. Geddes-Bruce. Healthy fats help strengthen the skin barrier, improve hydration and set the stage for better post-treatment recovery.

2. Exfoliate Early, Then Stop

Clearing away dead skin cells lets your treatment reach deeper. "Well ahead of skin tightening sessions, I recommend exfoliants such as Defenage's 2-Minute Reveal Mask (\$55), peptides and

hydrating agents,” says Beverly Hills facial plastic surgeon **Kimberly Lee, MD**. “The mask removes dead skin cells, allowing better energy penetration and prepares the skin to better absorb peptides or growth factors applied pre- or post-treatment.” She cautions patients to stop using exfoliants several days before treatment to avoid irritation.

3. Layer Hydration and Peptides

Hydration and collagen support are essential. “Use a hyaluronic acid serum and a high-quality moisturizer,” says Dr. Geddes-Bruce. She also recommends peptides to support the skin’s healing response.

“Peptides stimulate collagen and elastin production at the cellular level,” says Dr. Lee. “They also support wound healing and repair, especially relevant for fractional or microneedling-based tightening treatments.”

Richmond plastic surgeon Ruth Hillelson, MD agrees. “Every patient should treat their skin wisely on a daily basis. Good cleansing, good topicals and good sunscreen are a must.”

4. Pause Retinol and Strong Actives

Even if you’re diligent with actives, now’s the time to take a break. “I’m cautious with actives like retinol,” says Dr. Geddes-Bruce. “Those are best paused in the days leading up to treatment to avoid unnecessary irritation.”

5. Pair Treatments with the Right Topicals

Combining technologies with the right topicals can elevate results. “I like to pair microneedling with collagen-stimulating agents and platelet-rich plasma,” says Dr. Lee. “I also combine lasers with collagen-stimulating agents, super serums and antioxidants to take advantage of the microchannels that are created from the lasers.”

Dr. Hillelson says she often treats laxity, crepiness and surface irregularities with radio frequency devices like Thermage and Morpheus8. “I use TIXEL with Iridesse Omega Serum (\$150) for lines and textural changes.”

Dr. Geddes-Bruce adds, “If we’re pairing something like radio frequency microneedling with a topical, it’s crucial that the product is specifically formulated for use with energy-based devices and can safely reach deeper layers.” For recovery, she recommends post-procedure creams that reduce inflammation, minimize discomfort and support barrier repair.

1 / 5

SkinCeuticals C E Ferulic (\$182)

This holy grail antioxidant serum combines 15 percent pure vitamin C (L-ascorbic acid), 1 percent vitamin E (alpha-tocopherol) and 0.5 percent ferulic acid to protect against environmental damage, improve the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles, and brighten the complexion.



2 / 5

Iridesse Omega Restorative Serum (\$150)

Formulated with a proprietary blend of phospholipids, ferulic acid and patented slow-release vitamin C, this serum penetrates deep into the dermal layers to stimulate collagen and elastin production, resulting in firmer, more radiant skin.



3 / 5

DefenAge 2-Minute Reveal Masque (\$55)

This exfoliating mask combines ultrafine sugar crystals with triple enzyme technology (papaya, pumpkin and pomegranate enzymes) to gently resurface the skin, enhancing the effectiveness of subsequent treatments.



4 / 5

Alastin Regenerating Skin Nectar (\$236)

Utilizing TriHex Technology, this cult classic post-procedure serum supports the skin's natural regeneration process by clearing out damaged proteins and promoting the production of new, healthy elastin and collagen, making it ideal for use before and after cosmetic procedures.



5 / 5

Lenox and Sixteenth The Laser Serum Triple Acid Concentrate (\$219)

Designed for post-laser care, this serum features a blend of glycolic, lactic and mandelic acids to promote cell renewal, along with botanical extracts like kakadu plum and licorice root for antioxidant benefits and biofermentation ingredients to soothe and support the skin barrier.



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