

FADE YOUR SCARS IN 30 DAYS!

The ACNE SCAR Routine Builder

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## Routine Builder

30-Day Plan for Teens & Adults

Safe for All Skin Tones



- ✓ Identify Your Scar Type
- ✓ Step-by-Step Routine Calendar
- ✓ Top Products for Clearer Skin

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Top Products for Clearer Skin

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# Acne Scar Routine Builder

A clear, skin-tone-aware 30-day plan for teens + adults (sensitive + normal skin).

## Inside this guide

- 60-second scar-type quiz
- 3 routines (Sensitive / Normal / Advanced)
- Ingredient match chart (PIH, PIE, texture)
- Do-not-mix list + irritation rescue plan
- Shopping checklist + product categories (affiliate-ready)
- When to see a dermatologist

## How to use it

- 1) Identify your mark type (Page 3).
- 2) Pick your track (Page 6).
- 3) Follow the calendar for 30 days.
- 4) Reassess at Week 6-8 for true results.

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**Medical disclaimer:** This guide is for educational purposes and does not replace medical advice. If acne is severe, painful, scarring quickly, or affecting mental health, consider a board-certified dermatologist.

## The Big Idea: “Scar” vs “Mark” (and why this matters)

Most people searching “how to get rid of acne scars” are actually dealing with **post-acne marks** that fade with time and the right routine. True scars (texture changes like pits or raised bumps) often need professional treatment. This guide helps you figure out which you have — and what to do next.

What you see	Most likely	What works best
Brown/tan/gray spots after pimples	<b>PIH</b> (post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation)	SPF + pigment helpers (azelaic, vitamin C, tranexamic) + gentle retinoid (optional)
Red/pink/purple marks that linger	<b>PIE</b> (post-inflammatory erythema)	SPF + barrier repair + calming actives (azelaic/niacinamide); avoid over-exfoliating
Dents/pits/uneven texture	<b>Atrophic scars</b> (pitted texture)	Retinoids can help a bit, but best results come from in-office options (microneedling/laser/subcision)

### Results timeline (realistic)

**Week 1-2:** You should feel less irritation and fewer new marks (if acne is controlled).

**Week 3-4:** Early brightening of newer marks; texture still similar.

**Week 6-8:** Better read on what’s truly working (especially for PIH/PIE).

**Rule of thumb:** If your routine is causing stinging, burning, or peeling daily, it is too aggressive. The fastest routine is the one you can actually stick to.

## 60-Second Scar-Type Quiz

Circle or check the answers that fit you best. Then follow the matching track on Page 6.

Question	A	B	C
1) What color are the leftover marks?	Mostly brown/tan/gray (PIH)	Mostly red/pink/purple (PIE)	Mostly dents/pits (texture)
2) How long do marks last?	Weeks to months	Weeks to months	Months to years (texture doesn't fade much)
3) Skin tone (optional but helpful)	Medium-deep or deep skin tone	Light-medium skin tone	Any skin tone
4) How sensitive is your skin?	Stings easily / rosacea / eczema prone	Sometimes sensitive	Rarely sensitive
5) Are you still breaking out often?	Yes (active acne)	A little	No (mostly marks)

Your match	Start here
Mostly PIH (brown marks)	Prioritize daily SPF + azelaic/tranexamic/vitamin C track. See Pages 6-8.
Mostly PIE (red marks)	Prioritize SPF + calming/barrier-first track. See Pages 6-8.
Mostly texture/pitted scars	Use the routine to support skin, but plan for pro options. See Page 10.
Still breaking out a lot	Control acne first (new acne = new marks). Use the "Acne Control" notes on Pages 7-8.

**Key note for deeper skin tones:** PIH is especially common, and irritation can create more pigment. When in doubt, go slower.

## 3 Non-Negotiables (Especially for Darker Skin Tones)

These three rules make the biggest difference for fading acne marks without making things worse.

### 1) Sunscreen every morning

UV exposure keeps marks darker for longer — even on cloudy days. If you only add one thing, make it SPF.

### 2) Introduce actives slowly

Irritation can trigger more pigmentation. Start low, go slow, and build tolerance.

### 3) Fewer products = better results

A simple routine you follow daily beats a complicated routine you quit in Week 2.

## Fast safety checklist

- Patch test new actives on a small area for 2-3 nights.
- Avoid harsh scrubs, cleansing brushes, and “10-step” routines while fading marks.
- Moisturize after actives; a strong barrier reduces irritation.
- If you use a retinoid, use SPF daily.

## Ingredient Match Chart (What Actually Helps)

Use this chart to pick ONE main active to start (plus SPF). Add a second active only after your skin is stable.

Concern	Best first choices	Optional "level up"	Notes for sensitive / deeper tones
PIH (brown/dark marks)	Azelaic acid, tranexamic acid, vitamin C, niacinamide	Retinoid (adapalene/retinol), gentle AHA 1x/week	Avoid daily strong acids early; irritation can worsen PIH.
PIE (red/pink marks)	Azelaic acid, niacinamide, barrier creams, sunscreen	Retinoid if acne persists; light exfoliation 1x/week	Focus on calming + consistency; don't chase quick peeling.
Active acne (new breakouts)	Benzoyl peroxide (spot or wash), salicylic acid	Retinoid at night (slow ramp)	If acne is uncontrolled, marks will keep returning.
Texture / pitted scars	Retinoid + supportive routine	Derm options: microneedling, laser, subcision	At-home products have limits for texture; set expectations.

### Quick definitions

**Azelaic acid:** helps with redness + marks; often well-tolerated.

**Tranexamic acid:** supports pigment control; common in dark-spot serums.

**Vitamin C:** antioxidant + brightening; some forms sting sensitive skin.

**Retinoids:** help acne + texture over time; start slowly.

## Choose Your Track (Pick ONE)

Pick the track that matches your sensitivity and how much time you want to invest. You can switch later, but don't start with multiple tracks at once.

Track	Best for	What you'll use	Frequency
Track A: Sensitive-Safe	Sensitive skin, deeper tones prone to PIH, beginners	SPF + azelaic/niacinamide + moisturizer	Actives 2-3 nights/week
Track B: Normal Skin (Balanced)	Most people with PIH/PIE + mild acne	SPF + brightening active + optional retinoid	Actives 3-5 nights/week
Track C: Advanced (Stable Skin)	You tolerate actives well and want faster progress	SPF + retinoid + pigment serum; minimal extras	Actives 5-6 nights/week

### Universal AM routine (all tracks)

**AM:** Gentle cleanser (optional) → Moisturizer → **Broad-spectrum SPF 30+** (reapply if outdoors).

**Optional:** Pigment serum in AM if it does not irritate you (vitamin C or tranexamic).

### Universal PM routine (all tracks)

**PM:** Gentle cleanse → Active (per your calendar) → Moisturizer. If you use benzoyl peroxide, consider short-contact or spot use to reduce dryness.

## 30-Day Calendar — Track A (Sensitive-Safe)

Goal: fade marks without triggering irritation. If you're unsure, start here.

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
PM: Moisturize	PM: Azelaic/ Niacinamide	PM: Moisturize	PM: Moisturize	PM: Azelaic/ Niacinamide	PM: Moisturize	PM: Moisturize
PM: Moisturize	PM: Azelaic/ Niacinamide	PM: Moisturize	PM: Moisturize	PM: Azelaic/ Niacinamide	PM: Moisturize	PM: Moisturize
PM: Moisturize	PM: Azelaic/ Niacinamide	PM: Moisturize	PM: Moisturize	PM: Azelaic/ Niacinamide	PM: Moisturize	PM: Moisturize
PM: Moisturize	PM: Azelaic/ Niacinamide	PM: Moisturize	PM: Moisturize	PM: Azelaic/ Niacinamide	PM: Moisturize	PM: Moisturize

**Notes:** If you have active acne, add salicylic acid 1x/week on a non-active night. If anything stings, switch to “moisturize only” for 3 nights and restart slower.

## 30-Day Calendar — Track B (Normal Skin, Balanced)

Goal: steady fading + acne prevention without overdoing it.

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
PM: Retinoid	PM: Moisturize	PM: Pigment serum	PM: Moisturize	PM: Retinoid	PM: Moisturize	PM: Moisturize
PM: Retinoid	PM: Moisturize	PM: Pigment serum	PM: Moisturize	PM: Retinoid	PM: Moisturize	PM: Pigment serum
PM: Retinoid	PM: Moisturize	PM: Pigment serum	PM: Moisturize	PM: Retinoid	PM: Moisturize	PM: Pigment serum
PM: Retinoid	PM: Moisturize	PM: Pigment serum	PM: Moisturize	PM: Retinoid	PM: Moisturize	PM: Pigment serum

**Notes:** Pigment serum = azelaic or tranexamic (or vitamin C in AM). If retinoid causes peeling, reduce to 2 nights/week for two weeks.

## 30-Day Calendar — Track C (Advanced, Stable Skin)

Goal: faster progress for those who already tolerate actives well.

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
PM: Retinoid	PM: Pigment serum	PM: Retinoid	PM: Moisturize	PM: Retinoid	PM: Pigment serum	PM: Moisturize
PM: Retinoid	PM: Pigment serum	PM: Retinoid	PM: Moisturize	PM: Retinoid	PM: Pigment serum	PM: Retinoid
PM: Retinoid	PM: Pigment serum	PM: Retinoid	PM: Moisturize	PM: Retinoid	PM: Pigment serum	PM: Retinoid
PM: Retinoid	PM: Pigment serum	PM: Retinoid	PM: Moisturize	PM: Retinoid	PM: Pigment serum	PM: Retinoid

**Notes:** Do not add multiple exfoliating acids on top of this track. If irritation increases, switch to Track B for 2 weeks.

### Do-Not-Mix (Common Irritation Combos)

Avoid pairing on the same night	Why	Safer alternative
Retinoid + strong AHA/BHA exfoliant	High irritation → more marks	Use exfoliant 1x/week on a non-retinoid night
Benzoyl peroxide + retinoid (same routine)	Dryness/irritation for many	Use BP in the morning or as short-contact wash
Multiple “dark spot” serums at once	Overload + sensitivity	Pick one hero active for 4-6 weeks

# Shopping Checklist

Category	What to look for	Your Pick from Amazon
1) Gentle cleanser	Fragrance-free or low fragrance; avoid harsh stripping	<a href="https://amzn.to/4aoQ6Bs">https://amzn.to/4aoQ6Bs</a>
2) Barrier moisturizer	Ceramides/glycerin helps tolerate actives.	<a href="https://amzn.to/49ZyRYi">https://amzn.to/49ZyRYi</a>
3) Sunscreen SPF 30+ (daily)	Look for broad-spectrum. Consider tinted formulators if you prefer.	<a href="https://amzn.to/4kjaJTX">https://amzn.to/4kjaJTX</a>
4) ONE hero advice for marks	Azelaic or tranexamic are common starts: vitamin C optional.	<a href="https://amzn.to/4a1hkyV">https://amzn.to/4a1hkyV</a>
5) Optional: Retinoid	Helpful for acne recurrence + texture over time. Start slowly.	<a href="https://amzn.to/3ZRAHV5">https://amzn.to/3ZRAHV5</a>
6) Optional: Acne control	Salicylic acid or benzoyl peroxide if breakouts continue.	<a href="https://amzn.to/4a0uNXJ">https://amzn.to/4a0uNXJ</a>

## Teen vs Adult: Small Tweaks That Matter

**Teens:** Keep it simple. Over-cleansing and harsh scrubs are common. Focus on consistency + acne control to stop new marks.

**Adults:** Marks may linger longer. Retinoids and pigment serums can help, but barrier support matters even more.

### 7-Day Irritation Rescue Plan (If You Overdid It)

Time	What to do
Days 1-3	Cleanse gently → moisturize → SPF (AM). Moisturize only (PM).
Days 4-5	Reintroduce your hero active once (only if skin is calm).
Days 6-7	If no stinging/peeling, resume your track at a slower frequency.

### When to see a dermatologist

Consider professional help if: (1) acne is painful/cystic and scarring quickly, (2) you have pitted texture scars and want a visible change, (3) marks are worsening despite a gentle routine, or (4) acne affects confidence or mental health. In-office treatments may include microneedling, laser, chemical peels, or other procedures based on skin tone and scar type.