

Stretch Marks

Pregnancy is an experience that can leave the body looking drastically different, especially when it comes to stretch marks on the abdomen. These red or white dermal lesions can be hard to manage and even harder to get rid of. However, **it is possible to reduce their appearance** when treated correctly by an experienced physician. [\(1\)](#)

[Dr. Tanya Kormeili](#) is a renowned board-certified dermatologist with an extensive understanding of cosmetic medicine. At [Derm & Rejuvenation Institute](#), our highly-trained medical professionals possess an **in-depth understanding** of the underlying causes of stretch marks and can recommend the most effective treatments to reduce them.

Are you suffering from post-pregnancy stretch marks? Receive individualized treatment at our Santa Monica location. To schedule your first consultation with us, contact us directly by calling **(310) 526-8301**. You can also fill out our [convenient contact form](#) at your leisure and we get back to you as soon as possible.

Before & After Photos

[View More Photos](#)

Stretch Marks and Their Formation

Stretch marks, also known as striae distensae, can form as the skin stretches after **sudden changes** in weight distribution. This cosmetic anomaly is twice as common in women between the ages of 5 and 50. [\(2\)](#) They often **accumulate after pregnancy**, and can be extremely hard to treat. And, while they do not pose any health risks, they can impact one's self-confidence and body image.

There are two categories:

- Striae rubrae (SR): red stretch marks
- Striae albae (SA): white stretch marks

As the melanin reduces after time, red stretch marks gradually turn a paler color. [\(1\)](#)

What Happens to Skin with Stretch Marks?

When the body experiences sudden changes in weight, the skin is unable to adjust quickly enough, causing it to **stretch or contract abruptly**. As well as during pregnancy, this can happen during periods of excess weight, weight loss, or even during adolescence when growth

spurts occur. The elastin fibers within the dermis break, causing **collagen bundles** that can no longer be repaired.

Stretch Mark Treatments

From stretch marks on butts, to breasts, to bellies, the media has us believing that there is magic bullet stretch mark remover out there. No there is not! However, Derm & Rejuvenation Institute offers multiple treatments to **help alleviate post-pregnancy stretch marks for our patients.**

Vbeam Perfecta Laser Treatments

Concentrated light can be used to provide targeted wound creation and break up collagen bundles. We typically use a device called the [Vbeam Perfecta Laser](#) to remove red stretch marks. It uses a prism of 595 nm of light that targets blood vessels anywhere in the body. This allows us to use it to break up anything that appears red, **including stubborn red stretch marks.**

The process is very simple. We apply a numbing cream to the treatment area, and once it is fully activated, we apply the light to the red stretch marks. It usually takes **15 to 30 minutes to complete**, and there is virtually no downtime or healing period. For best results, you may be required to come back for 2 or 3 more treatments.

Fraxel Laser Treatments

In order to target stretch marks, you must go deep enough into the skin to reach them. [Fraxel lasers](#) offer non-invasive and safe treatment for scars using **small amounts of concentrated energy**. This ignites the body's natural healing response, but only in the areas in which the **laser makes direct contact**. Fraxel laser treatment provides precise rejuvenation to certain designated areas without damaging the surrounding tissue. This makes it perfect for stretch mark treatment. As with Vbeam laser treatment, Fraxel laser treatment requires the use of numbing cream. This makes the application comfortable and **virtually painless**. It uses original **fractional laser resurfacing techniques** to address both the superficial and deep layers of the skin. It is a great alternative to other, more painful solutions for pesky stretch marks.

In combination with Fraxel laser treatment, [PRP \(platelet-rich plasma\)](#) can help reduce stretch marks. PRP is concentrated plasma containing growth hormones and enriched proteins that is extracted from your own blood. When PRP is injected into the treatment area, it is a safe and autologous way to increase even further your production of elastin and collagen fibers for better scar reduction. ⁽³⁾

Chemical Peels

We commonly use [chemical peels](#) to **trigger inflammation of the outer layers of the skin**.

Typically utilized for facial rejuvenation, chemical peels can also be used to reduce the appearance of stretch marks. They are an especially useful type of treatment if you have a large quantity of scarring, or many different areas of your body are affected. It is **more cost effective** than some other types of treatments. ⁽²⁾

Chemical peels usually consist of substances such as **trichloroacetic acid, retinoic acid and glycolic acid**. These acids work well to trigger cell regeneration as they remove the outermost epidermis (and sometimes layers of the dermis depending on the peel formulation). Since stretch marks are actually scar tissue, this treatment can only **minimize the discoloration**.

Biostimulatory Fillers: Hyperdilute Radiesse and Sculptra

[Radiesse](#) is a calcium-based filler often used to increase volume and elasticity of the facial features. When it is hyperdiluted, Radiesse encourages your body to increase its collagen production, causing the skin to firm and smoothen out when applied. It has been shown that this treatment can greatly reduce the look of stretch marks, as well as keep new ones from forming.

[Sculptra](#) is another type of filler commonly used to **replace the body's natural collagen**.

Considered a bio-simulator, it helps the body replace the collagen at a faster rate than it would naturally, especially for older patients. This can help reduce the appearance of stretch marks in a virtually painless way. Not to mention, the treatment results can last up to three years.

Subcision

When stretch marks are severe, **sometimes surgical intervention is necessary to treat them** properly. Subcision is a simple procedure in which the lesion's surface is released from underlying tissue, encouraging new tissue formation.

Which Stretch Mark Treatment is Right for Me?

In deciding what is the best stretch mark removal method, we have to determine:

- Are the stretch marks a series of red stripes?
- Are the stretch marks narrow streaks of fine white or wrinkly (cigarette paper) skin?
- Is there a brownish discoloration to the stretch marks?
- Is there excess skin fat associated with the area of the stretch mark?

Benefits of Stretch Mark Treatment

Extremely visible stretch marks are a natural and common symptom of your body's natural weight fluctuation. However, their presence can cause **social and physical anxiety** for many patients. If you cannot go a day without thinking about how they make your body look, consider treatment at Derm & Rejuvenation Institute. **Even a small amount of pigmentation reduction can provide patients with significant relief.**

Some benefits of stretch mark treatment are as follows:

- Generates overall increase in collagen production
- Decreased psychological stress
- Minimally invasive and virtually pain-free
- Short recovery period
- Performed in-office

Ideal Candidates

Whether you have **dark red stretch marks** around the abdomen after pregnancy, or white “tiger stripe” lines bordering your upper arms and thighs from a fast growth spurt, you could make a great candidate for stretch mark treatment. You should also:

- Be in good overall health
- Be a non-smoker or willing to quit
- Have reasonable expectations

Personal Consultation

At Derm & Rejuvenation Institute, Dr. Kormeili and her team of highly trained medical professionals see each and every patient for a private consultation. During this meeting, we ask you about your full medical history, **details about your stretch marks and where they reside**, and what your current treatment expectations are. Honest answering will allow your provider the best chance at exceeding these expectations and **providing you with the care you deserve.**

Once the correct procedure plan has been determined, we explain the treatment in great detail to properly prepare you for your next appointment. In some cases, **it is possible to receive treatment right after this meeting.** If that isn't possible, a member of our staff will help you schedule your future appointments at the end of this consultation.

Preparation

To best prepare for your treatment, please avoid the use of anti-inflammatory medications like Advil. If you are **currently using topical treatment for your stretch marks**, you may be required to pause their application as it may interfere with your future treatments. If you smoke, please refrain **at least 4 weeks before** your first treatment, especially if you are undergoing ablative treatments. Nicotine and tobacco products can greatly delay the healing process and make you more vulnerable to certain complications. Dr. Kormeili and her team will provide you with more detailed instructions on how to prepare once you have a concrete treatment plan in place.

Recovery and Results

Most stretch mark treatments are minimally invasive. Though **healing times vary**, they are mostly swift. Expect to experience **some redness and skin irritation** no matter the treatment, but this should subside quickly as long as you take care of the area post-treatment. You **may be given antibiotics** in some cases, and these should be taken diligently to prevent certain infections or other minor complications from arising.

The results for stretch mark removal can also vary widely between patients. If your scarring is pretty minimal, then you may see a big difference **after just one treatment with Vbeam**. If your stretch marks are plentiful and dark surrounding your lower abdomen, it will take 3 or 4 treatments before you notice significant results.

For patients that acquired their stretch marks through pregnancy, some of these **treatments also offer a certain amount of skin tightening** as well as scar reduction. For the right patient, Fraxel laser treatments can significantly change the structure of the skin. Make sure to ask about all of your options during your private consultation.

How Much Does Stretch Mark Treatment Cost in Santa Monica?

Your overall price breakdown will be discussed during your first appointment with us. Since these **treatment plans are highly customizable** and change for each individual patient, your total cost will be much different than someone else's. Be sure to inquire about all your financing options during your consultation. Call us directly at **(310) 526-8301** today to [schedule an appointment with us!](#)

FAQ

How long can it take for stretch marks to go away?

Though stretch marks rarely completely disappear, they can fade over time with the treatments listed above. They can also typically fade naturally if given the time. Natural fading usually takes around 6 months, and this time can sometimes be reduced with laser treatments or chemical peels.

Will my stretch marks go away if I lose weight?

No. Your stretch marks are scar tissue, making them permanent, even if your weight goes back to what it once was. Redness within stretch marks indicates that they are newer, and you have more of a chance that their pigment reduces over time. White stretch marks are older and “healed,” meaning they are much more difficult to address.

Can I develop stretch marks even without gaining weight or becoming pregnant?

Yes. There are genetic conditions, like Marfan Syndrome, that affect the connective tissues found in your body. This condition causes problems when developing, which can lead to stretch marks on patients that have not experienced the usual symptoms.

References

1. Huang Q, Xu L, Wu T, Mu YZ. New Progress in Therapeutic Modalities of Striae Distensae. *Clinical, Cosmetic and Investigational Dermatology*. 2022;Volume 15:2101-2115. doi:<https://doi.org/10.2147/ccid.s379904>
2. Mysore V, Lokhande A. Striae distensae treatment review and update. *Indian Dermatology Online Journal*. 2019;10(4):380. doi:https://doi.org/10.4103/idoj.idoj_336_18
3. Shin MK, Lee JH, Lee SJ, Kim NI. Platelet-Rich Plasma Combined with Fractional Laser Therapy for Skin Rejuvenation. *Dermatologic Surgery*. 2012;38(4):623-630. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1524-4725.2011.02280.x>