

**I**HAVE sun spots so I was curious to try out the Dermaroller or “skin needling” treatment even though it looks like a medieval instrument of torture.

It is a little roller studded with very fine needles that penetrate the dermis, stimulating the production of new collagen, the fibrous protein that gives skin its structural support.

Sun spots apart, treatments with the Dermaroller are said to be very effective for wrinkles, surgical scars and pigmentation. Apparently, the worse your skin, the more visible the results.

Skin needling, or micro needling, creates controlled skin damage, inducing the skin to repair itself. So with each fine needle puncture a micro-wound is created, triggering the body to fill these micro-wounds by producing new collagen and elastin. New capillaries are also formed.

“The skin repairs naturally, but it doesn’t prioritise ageing. With the Dermaroller, we are able to trick the skin into repairing and healing itself,” said Gunther Dippenaar of Sprout MediSpa in Parkmore, where I had my treatment.

This was an alluring proposition, so although I was anxious about the discomfort, I was ready and willing to have the years rolled back.

Of course it’s not quite as simple as that. Skin isn’t built in a day and you are told that optimal results of the procedure show up only weeks later, after a progressive and continuing transformation.

But back to the procedure itself. An anaesthetic gel is applied to your face, then you get “wrapped” in cling film (with holes over nose and mouth), and left for about 20 minutes to help it penetrate the skin.

Once the cling film is peeled

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# IT LOOKS LIKE AN INSTRUMENT OF TORTURE, BUT... CAN BEAUTY GADGET ROLL BACK THE YEARS?



**The Dermaroller, a roller with fine needles that is imported from Germany, is said to work wonders for all kinds of skin troubles. Helen Grange tried it out**

off, the clinician begins to roll the Dermaroller, in small up and down strokes, horizontally then vertically, starting with your forehead.

“If you feel any discomfort, it will be just beneath your hairline where there’s more nerve endings, and just above the top lip line,” explained Dippenaar.

It was a bit stingy and uncomfortable just under the hairline, but entirely bearable, and before I knew it the roller was on my far less sensitive left cheek. I could feel Dippenaar

lingering with the roller on the sun spots on my right cheek. Then he did a few quick up and downs on the top lip, which is another sensitive area but, again, it was just slightly stingy, not painful.

A few more rolls around the chin and jawline and the procedure was complete.

“The rest of today and tomorrow you will look like your face got sunburned,” Dippenaar warned.

I did look rather ruddy-cheeked, but this didn’t deter me from working away in a

coffee shop that afternoon. So if you don’t mind being seen flushed and sans make-up for 12 hours (to reduce the slight risk of infection), the down time can be zero.

What I noticed more was that for the next three days my skin felt dry and tight.

I’d been warned about the dryness, but I wasn’t expecting the skin to feel so taut, and I continually felt the need to lather it with moisturiser.

“That’s a good sign. It means the skin responded well and is starting its repair job,”

Dippenaar assured me.

True, over the next two weeks I gradually saw the improvement. There was a subtle change in the sun spots – they first became redder and then faded, but they are not gone, just more easily covered with make-up.

The more profound change was that my skin was softer and healthier looking. The texture of the skin is tighter and plumper. Dare I say, I think the overall effect is that I DO look younger.

According to Dr Bradley

Wagmaker, medical director of Lamelle research laboratories, which developed the Dermaroller treatment, what happened is this: after the micro-needling, my skin sent an army of white blood cells to the needled areas to investigate and, realising the skin was “injured”, began to have the damaged collagen removed and the scar tissue rebuilt.

The skin also began developing new blood pathways, which assisted more nutrients and oxygen reaching the dermis and more efficiently removed waste and toxins.

“In effect, the skin starts to rebuild itself from the inside,” Wagmaker says.

After a week, Dippenaar advised me to use the little home-use Dermaroller he gave me, to encourage my skin to keep up the good work.

The needles on the home-use Dermaroller are just 0.2 /0.3mm (compared with the professional 1-2mm needles), so doing it at home is painless and easy.

Micro-needling at home also dramatically improves the penetration of skin products, according to Lamelle, stimulating the skin’s regeneration.

Lamelle has a cellular regeneration serum and a daily cellular repair cream, which I used prolifically in the weeks afterwards.

Again, you start on your forehead and keep rolling in small crisscross patterns as you work over your face, concentrating on frown lines, deep wrinkles, scars, sun spots or pigmentation marks.

You use it two or three times a week, and I’ve started using my Dermaroller on the backs of my hands too, but can’t report anything like the change on my facial skin, though it’s early days.

Dippenaar recommends a series of at least three



**NO PAIN, NO GAIN:** The spikes of the Dermaroller are designed to pierce holes in the skin to stimulate repair.



professional Dermaroller treatments, with an interval of six weeks after each, to attain optimal results, which should occur from about six weeks and continue over the following months.

In the case of acne scars, a course of at least five treatments is recommended.

Personally, four weeks after the treatment, I’m sufficiently convinced, so I’m going for another one when six weeks is up.

● Micro-needling at Sprout Medi-

Spa costs R600 for an hour-long session (includes topical anaesthetic cream). There is a discount of 20 percent if you pay upfront for six treatments.

● Home-use Dermaroller costs between R600 and R1 400, depending on the roller needed for the type of area to be treated. Each roller is reusable and has a life span of 6-8 sessions. Tel: 011 039 5889 or visit [www.sproutskin.co.za](http://www.sproutskin.co.za)

● Dermaroller treatments are also available at Skin Renewal clinics throughout South Africa. Visit [www.skinrenewal.co.za](http://www.skinrenewal.co.za)