



Sophie's choice

Dr Sophie Shotter shares her experience with NeoStrata Tri-Therapy Lifting Serum

I'm a self-confessed skincare junkie. Even before I trained in aesthetics I loved products, even though I now realise I wasted a lot of money on the wrong ones. As a doctor and clinic owner, I am passionate about encouraging my injectable patients to use great skincare. After all, a patient with glowing skin and a few lines and wrinkles looks far better than a patient with no lines but skin as dull as leather. However, the problem is often budget. Our patients are already spending a lot of money with us and they don't necessarily see the value of investing part of that in skincare products.

Whenever I've evaluated a new product range in the past, I've evaluated an entire skincare regime – often five products. We know we can get results this way, and we can demonstrate that using our Visia scanner. But can our patients always afford it?

When NeoStrata launched its new Tri-Therapy Lifting Serum earlier this year, I was excited to try it. The results and research looked almost too good to be true. This beautiful serum is a combination of Aminofil (a proprietary ingredient shown to boost endogenous hyaluronic Acid levels), 8% gluconolactone (a polyhydroxy acid), and hyaluronic acid. Even better this product can be used on the entire face, including the periorbital area. I knew I could slot it into any of my patients' skincare regimes and they would see a difference. But, what I really wanted to know was, how much of a difference could just one product make? Sure it's an extremely advanced, heavily researched product with top notch ingredients. But it's still just one product.

I looked for one patient who was budget conscious and concerned about crow's feet lines, who wasn't already on a medical-grade skincare regime. Cue Katie, a 31 year old professional make-up artist who had struggled with her skin since her teens. Teenage acne had left her skin uneven, scarred and pigmented. As she hit 30, she started noticing crow's feet lines which were really bothering her, and she had previously asked me about Botox. She was using a skincare regime from The Ordinary, which she had bought without any medical advice. Katie never went out without carefully applied make-up, so taking part in this study was a big deal for her.

Her instructions were:

1. To not change anything else about her skincare regime
2. To not have any facial treatments during the study period
3. To apply the NeoStrata Tri-Therapy Lifting Serum to her entire face, including the eye area, morning and evening
4. To attend the clinic for a Visia scan before starting the product and at four weeks.

Visia Explained

A Visia is a camera system that takes different photographs to enable skin analysis. Using normal, ultraviolet and polarised light photography, it can assess different characteristics of the skin. It compares the results to 100 other women or men of your age and gives you a percentage for each parameter. If you get 50% that means you're average for your age and gender; above 50% means above average and below 50% means below average.

We did a baseline scan, and repeated this after four weeks of using the Tri-Therapy Lifting serum twice daily.

I had never really believed that taking just one product away would be enough for a patient to see this level of improvement in their skin

Spots

In Visia terms, spots don't mean pustular eruptions on the face, it refers to the evenness of the skin tone across the cheeks.

- Baseline – 27%
- 4 weeks – 53% >



HIYA WE NEED ALL THE INSET IMAGES USED IN THIS ARTICLE SUPPLIED. TA.



I attribute this dramatic improvement to the gluconolactone in the Tri-Therapy lifting serum. Gluconolactone and other polyhydroxy acids are gently exfoliating and are also kinder to the skin than alpha-hydroxy acids, such as glycolic acid. It provides a controlled smoothing, which can be tolerated by sensitive and mature skin types. By exfoliating the top uneven layers of skin a more even skin tone has been revealed, a feature synonymous with youth.



For me, this result has two main causes. The Tri-Therapy Lifting Serum is extremely light – hydrating without being thick and heavy. It's a perfect choice for people prone to oilier skin, which Katie's skin tends towards. Aminofil is a powerful ingredient, proprietary to NeoStrata. It is an amino acid derivative which stimulates collagen and hyaluronic acid production in the skin. Combined with the hyaluronic acid in the serum, we can expect collagen stimulation leading to improved firmness of the skin and contraction of pores.

Texture

Texture is a measure of the roughness of the skin across the cheeks. Smooth skin looks more even and luminous, whereas rough skin looks dull and uneven.

- Baseline - 33%
- 4 weeks - 83%

Brown Spots

Brown spots is a measurement of surface pigmentation. This is what we can see as pigmentation abnormalities on the skin's surface.

- Baseline - 25%
- 4 weeks - 58%

For me this is due mainly to the gluconolactone causing gentle exfoliation. Sloughing off dead keratinocytes will make the surface of the skin smoother and more radiant. Hyaluronic acid is also a powerful collagen stimulator. It's also possible that collagen stimulation has been induced in any atrophic areas, making scarring appear smoother.

This improvement has to be thanks to the gluconolactone. By exfoliating gently, more of the dead keratinocytes containing the melanin will be sloughed off. This will reveal smoother unpigmented skin underneath, or, at the very least, decrease the density of the pigmented patches.



Pores

This is a measurement of the tightness of the pores across the cheek area. Youthful skin has tight pores that are barely visible. Oily skin can prompt pores to stay open due to persistent sebum secretion. Pores also loosen as the skin loses collagen with age.

- Baseline - 22%
- 4 weeks - 80%

UV Spots

On a Visia scan this measurement refers to UV damage which isn't yet visible to the naked eye, but is sitting beneath the surface.

- Baseline - 18%
- 4 Weeks - 54%

Katie had spent her teens and 20s sunbathing without sunscreen, and the low initial measurement



reflects this. I have to be honest, I'm at a loss as to how to explain this one! I'd be interested in any theories if anyone would like to email me.

Wrinkles

We specifically focus this on the crow's feet lines. It measures the depth of wrinkles around the eyes – the darker the green, the deeper the wrinkle.

- **Baseline – 18%**
- **4 weeks – 42%**

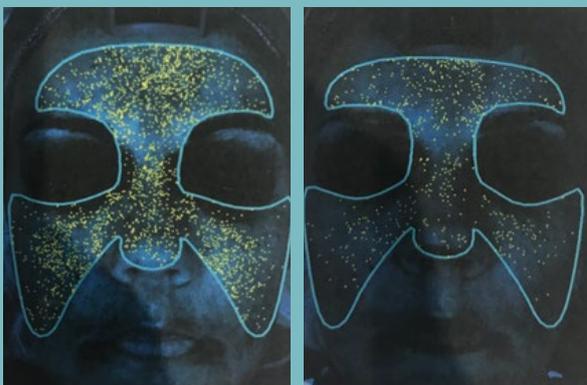
This drastic improvement is due to the Aminofil and hyaluronic acid. The delicate periorbital skin is very prone to drying out, particularly in people who wear heavy make-up. It's also the thinnest skin on the face and so collagen loss is particularly noticeable here. The collagen stimulation and enhanced hydration provided by the Aminofil and hyaluronic acid has plumped the skin, smoothing wrinkles and targeting the area that Katie most wanted to improve.



Porphyryns

Porphyryns are also known as P. acnes. They are bacteria living in the skin which can cause spots. This isn't an indication of someone who doesn't cleanse, but more that active bactericidal ingredients aren't being used.

- **Baseline – 8%**
- **4 weeks – 63%**



Hydroxyacids are known to have bactericidal activity, and I would explain this improvement through the gluconolactone killing the P. acnes in the skin. Additionally, by prompting better exfoliation there will be less dead keratinocytes blocking pores, creating a less hospitable environment for bacterial growth.

MY VERDICT

I never expected to see a result like this from just one product. When I saw the Visia scans at four weeks I was gobsmacked. I had never really believed that taking just one product away would be enough for a patient to see this level of improvement in their skin. I always worried that they wouldn't see enough of a result with a one product purchase, and so it would be difficult to encourage them to invest in their skin more in the future. Seeing these results has changed my perspective. If I have a budget conscious patient I give them this as their one product. They all come back to repurchase and usually invest in other products too, once they've seen how much this one does. **AM**



Dr Sophie Shotter has worked full-time in aesthetics for five years, setting up her own clinic in Kings Hill, Kent and working for the Cosmetic Skin Clinic two to three days per week. Her passion is for achieving natural balanced results through injectables and skin quality treatments. She is a trainer for Aesthetic Source and key opinion leader for Venus Concept. She is also personally mentored by Dr Mauricio de Maio through the Allergan Mentorship programme, with a view to joining its faculty.