

Microfabrication: Driving micro/nanorobotics and mems/nems.

Eugene Park*

Department of Materials Science, Pacifica Research University, United States

Introduction

The realm of micro and nanosystems stands as a testament to humanity's drive for miniaturization and precision, profoundly impacting diverse fields from medicine to fundamental scientific research. At its core, advanced microfabrication techniques are enabling the creation of devices and robots with unprecedented capabilities.

Consider the intricate design and fabrication strategies crucial for self-assembled magnetic micro/nanorobots, aimed at targeted biomedical uses. These systems demonstrate how precise microfabrication allows for complex structures that respond to external magnetic fields, enabling controlled navigation and delivery within biological environments. Their potential in drug delivery and minimally invasive surgery highlights a significant stride in integrating robotics with nanoscale precision [1].

Building on the theme of precision, the development of integrated Micro-Electro-Mechanical Systems (MEMS) and Nano-Electro-Mechanical Systems (NEMS) nanopositioning stages is paramount. These stages are essential for achieving ultra-high precision manipulation at the nanoscale. Insights into microfabrication processes detail how design choices directly influence positioning accuracy and repeatability, making these miniature systems crucial for applications like atomic force microscopy, nanomanipulation, and micro-assembly [2].

Further expanding the scope of miniature robotics, soft micro/nanorobots represent an exciting frontier. This area explores innovative materials and advanced microfabrication techniques that yield flexible and biocompatible robots. Such characteristics are indispensable for navigating complex biological environments. Applications span from targeted drug delivery and minimally invasive surgery to environmental remediation, showing how material science and fabrication are driving new capabilities in miniature robotics [3].

The evolution toward bio-integrated untethered micro/nanorobots marks another significant advancement. This work examines the latest progress in their fabrication and real-world applications. It details how microfabrication techniques are evolving to create these

autonomous tiny robots, capable of navigating biological systems. Their potential in precision medicine, diagnostics, and therapeutics illustrates how integration with biological components is opening new frontiers for next-generation medical devices [4].

Beyond robotics, MEMS/NEMS technologies are making critical contributions to sensing. Recent progress in MEMS/NEMS sensors, particularly for medical applications, highlights how sophisticated microfabrication methods facilitate the creation of highly sensitive and compact diagnostic tools. Their utility in point-of-care diagnostics, wearable health monitoring, and implantable devices underscores a clear trend towards miniaturization and enhanced performance in biomedical sensing [5].

High-precision nanopositioning stages are not only integrated within broader MEMS/NEMS systems but also specifically designed for advanced instruments like Atomic Force Microscopy (AFM). Reviews in this area delve into NEMS-based designs and advanced microfabrication, which are key to achieving sub-nanometer resolution and stability. Different actuator mechanisms and control strategies are critical for accurate surface characterization and manipulation at the atomic scale, pushing the boundaries of nanoscale metrology [6].

The development of untethered microrobots is also being significantly influenced by microfluidics and advanced microfabrication techniques. These innovative methods create miniature systems capable of navigating and performing tasks in complex liquid environments. The work highlights their applications in biomedical diagnostics, drug delivery, and environmental monitoring, emphasizing the synergy between fluid dynamics and precise manufacturing in robotics [7].

Magnetic micro/nanorobots further exemplify the impact of microfabrication in medical applications, detailing their fabrication and utility in advanced medical imaging and therapy. Microfabrication enables precise control over the shape and size of these robots, which are then manipulated by external magnetic fields. The paper highlights their use in targeted drug delivery, hyperthermia, and diagnostic imaging, showcasing their potential to revolutionize minimally invasive medical procedures [8].

*Correspondence to: Eugene Park, Department of Materials Science, Pacifica Research University, United States. E-mail: e.park@pacific-nano.example.com

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NEMS resonators represent another facet of nanoscale precision. Reviews on this topic cover their diverse applications, focusing on how microfabrication techniques enable their remarkable accuracy. The fundamental principles behind these tiny vibrating structures and their fabrication processes are explored, emphasizing their high sensitivity and small footprint. These resonators prove invaluable in sensors, filters, and timing devices, demonstrating NEMS's broad impact across various technological domains [9].

Finally, the cutting edge of bio-integrated robotics includes comprehensive explorations into biohybrid micro/nanorobots. This involves advanced microfabrication methods for integrating biological components with synthetic structures. These hybrid systems are engineered to combine living and artificial elements for superior functionality. Applications range from drug delivery and cell manipulation to active sensing within biological environments, marking a substantial leap forward in bio-integrated robotics [10].

Conclusion

The rapidly evolving field of micro/nanosystems is significantly advanced by sophisticated microfabrication techniques. This enables the creation of highly specialized devices, notably in micro/nanorobotics, where diverse designs are engineered for specific functions. Self-assembled magnetic micro/nanorobots, for instance, are designed for controlled navigation and precise delivery within biological environments, showing immense potential in drug delivery and minimally invasive surgery. Soft micro/nanorobots, utilizing flexible and biocompatible materials, are crucial for navigating complex biological systems and apply to targeted drug delivery, surgical procedures, and even environmental remediation. Further advancements include bio-integrated and biohybrid micro/nanorobots, which intricately combine biological components with synthetic structures, offering enhanced functionalities for precision medicine, diagnostics, and cell manipulation. These autonomous tiny robots, facilitated by advanced microfluidics and microfabrication, are expanding capabilities in medical devices and environmental monitoring.

Parallel to robotics, microfabrication is indispensable for developing high-performance Micro-Electro-Mechanical Systems (MEMS) and Nano-Electro-Mechanical Systems (NEMS). Integrated MEMS/NEMS nanopositioning stages provide ultra-high

precision manipulation, essential for applications such as atomic force microscopy, nanomanipulation, and micro-assembly. Specifically, NEMS-based nanopositioning stages are critical for achieving sub-nanometer resolution in Atomic Force Microscopy (AFM) for accurate surface characterization. Furthermore, MEMS/NEMS sensors are revolutionizing medical applications by offering highly sensitive and compact diagnostic tools for point-of-care, wearable monitoring, and implantable devices. NEMS resonators, known for their nanoscale precision and sensitivity, find utility in various technological domains including sensors, filters, and timing devices. Collectively, these advancements highlight how microfabrication is foundational to developing miniature, high-performance systems, thereby pushing scientific and medical frontiers.

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