

NEW YOU

The Official Magazine of Cosmetic Surgery

**WINDOWS
TO THE SOUL**
Make Your Eyes Younger

8 TOP OPS

Brazilian Butt Lifts,
Tummy Tucks, Neck
Lifts and more...

WRINKLE FREE

Fast Track to
Smooth Skin

ALSO

Find Your Local Doctor
The Secret Powers of Citrus
Do Men Like Breast Implants?



Premiere Issue | SPRING 2010
\$4.95 US \$5.95 CAN + FOREIGN

LASER SKIN RESURFACING: THE FACE

Sun Damage? Undamage—With Lasers

It's time to turn back the clock and reclaim the skin you were once in.

By Anita Huslin

Y*outh in a bottle?* Sounds nice, but the truth is that most potions promising young, supple skin work best on skin with early signs of aging. For the majority of us concerned with deeper lines and wrinkles, age spots, and changing skin tone and texture, the question becomes, how do we turn back the hands of time to make visible improvements to our face? While chemical peels and dermabrasion literally peel or sand off layers of skin, laser skin resurfacing has become one of the most popular introductory procedures for patients new to cosmetic surgery who are looking to improve the appearance of wrinkles, age spots, veins, sun damage, and other effects of aging.

A WRINKLE IN TIME

“Ponce de Leon was looking for the fountain of youth,” says Dr. Joseph Niamtu, a Richmond, VA-based cosmetic surgeon who specializes in facial procedures. “We have not found it yet, but we are getting closer. Coupled with advances in anti-aging medicine, we may well be able to really slow the aging process.”

An author, international lecturer and Fellow of the American Academy of Cosmetic Surgery and the American Society for Lasers in Medicine and Surgery, Dr. Niamtu owns and uses three lasers

HOW LASERS WORK

Lasers deliver light energy to targeted areas of skin, producing a controlled burn of surface skin and underlying tissue, which in turn boosts the production of collagen. When healed, the new skin is exactly that—new, smooth, and youthful.

in his practice, and does all of his skin resurfacing treatments on an outpatient basis. “Today when a patient comes in, I can give them a range of options based on the amount of damage to their skin and the amount of correction they want. Youthful skin is much more attainable.”

And that’s exactly what he told his facelift and browlift patient Deborah Arrington, the 54-year-old owner of a construction material company who had deep wrinkles, age spots, and an abundance of freckles caused by sun damage to her fair skin. While lifts repositioned and removed excess skin, they didn’t improve the skin’s quality—that’s where the lasers came in.

TWO TYPES

Depending on how aggressive you need (or want) to be, there are two paths available for laser resurfacing: ablative and fractionated.

+ Ablative resurfacing is performed with either a carbon dioxide (CO2) or a solid state laser, which physically remove a layer of skin—and all those skin flaws with it when the skin grows back.

+ Fractionated resurfacing is performed with a fractionated laser, which penetrates deeper into the skin via small pinholes and vaporizes less surface area of the skin. Less damage means less downtime, but slightly less results and a more gradual improvement over time.

While ablative resurfacing is considered the more traditional treatment method, a lot of excitement has been generated in the past few years since fractionated laser technology hit the market. The basic difference is that ablative lasts longer, with more dramatic results, while fractionated has a much quicker recovery time. (Fractionated treatments can be done multiple times to improve the benefits; ablative lasers have some risk of side effects that include changes to the natural skin color.)

Both kinds of lasers “remodel the skin and give it a more smooth and refreshed appearance,” says Dr. Tina S. Alster, director of the Washington Institute of Dermatologic Laser service and Clinical Professor of Dermatology at Georgetown University Medical Center. But which is right for you? It largely depends on your level of skin damage.

TREATMENT SPECTRUM

For Mild Damage. Lighter CO2 lasers produce similar results to the fractionated laser and both work best on patients with mild to moderate age spots, fine lines and wrinkles. In those cases, the cost of treatment is moderate—about \$700—and recovery is rapid. Patients experience redness at first as though they were mildly sunburned and their skin is completely healed within three to four days.

FOR MODERATE DAMAGE. For those with mild to moderate wrinkling, a fractionated or medium-strength CO2 laser is focused on the damaged tissue to reduce age spots, smooth fine lines and wrinkles and improve skin texture. This also produces a sunburned-like effect in the short term, before it fades and leaves smoother skin with significantly less evidence of dark spots and lines. It costs about \$1,500 and patients are fully healed in about seven days.

FOR SEVERE DAMAGE. The strongest CO2 lasers are used on patients with the most significant sun damage, wrinkles and skin discolorations. Patients are sedated for the procedure which generally takes 35 to 60 minutes. The treatment produces raw and weepy wounds that eventually crust over and require 14 days to heal. Discomfort is moderate—a light prescription pain killer or ibuprofen is often given for pain, and the procedure is typically done in an outpatient facility at a cost of about \$7,500.

To treat Deborah’s sun damaged skin, Dr. Niamtu applied a combination of laser treatment levels. “She had a multi-pass full ablation CO2 laser done on all areas of the face except the surgical flaps [from the face and brow lifts],” says Dr. Niamtu. These more delicate areas were treated less aggressively with a CO2 LITE treatment “so as not to compromise them,” says Dr. Niamtu. Deborah went through about a week in which her skin was

“weeping” serum, a clear component of blood. As it began to crust off, her skin eventually faded from red to a normal color.

SMOOTH OPERATOR

But achieving the best results with lasers isn’t simply about the technology. It’s highly dependent on the (wo)man behind the machine.

Dr. Alster says patients should ask the physician how many other patients with similar skin conditions he or she has treated and whether they have encountered any significant side effects or complications. Before and after photos of the physician’s patients are also worth requesting.

Dr. Niamtu also asks patients about their expectations of skin resurfacing procedures. While it’s not reasonable to expect every wrinkle or scar to be erased, they can look for significant improvement after the procedure, he says.

“I told Deborah if she had a twin sister and I did Deborah’s facelift when she was 60, that when she and her sister are 80, Deb will still look younger,” says Dr. Niamtu. “We don’t stop the clock, we just turn it back.”

BEAUTY BRIEF

| | |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------|
| PROCEDURE | Laser Skin Resurfacing |
| COST | \$3,000 to \$4,500 |
| TIME IN | Half a day |
| TIME OUT | A Long Weekend/Take the Week Off! |
| ANESTHESIA | Local |
| PAIN | Major Ouch |
| INVASIVE? | Knife Free |



PROTECTION FACTOR

Ready to restore? The “fix” is only one part of reclaiming your skin of youth. To maintain your skin-perfect results, it’s imperative to protect your skin daily with a full-spectrum (UVA, UVB) sunscreen: daylight hours, 365 days per year.