

Perfect Partners Laser Treatments and Esthetics

Years ago, laser treatments were considered an experimental luxury that only the wealthy could afford. The general population was not even aware of the availability of such procedures or of the benefits they could offer. Today, unprecedented advancements in the laser field are making this remarkable technology affordable to the masses. Laser treatments are becoming as common as a facial, and practically as painless. They fit themselves into the daily schedule as easily as leg waxing or a facial steam, and the previously required downtime for healing is becoming a thing of the past. Today, lasers can remove wrinkles, improve skin tone, or successfully remove unwanted hair. Most importantly, the fields of esthetics and laser surgery are forming a strong and mutually beneficial union.



If they haven't already, your clients will be seeking your advice about laser procedures. They'll want to know what is available, where to go and whom they can trust. Your general knowledge of the field will not only help them, but it will help your own practice as well. Laser procedures and esthetics are two branches of the same tree, sharing the common goal of beautification and improving skin quality. The laser surgeon, a physician specifically trained in the field of laser surgery and medicine, relies on estheticians to tone the client's skin before and after laser treatment, which is why they always are seeking good technicians they can recommend with confidence. These days, it is as common for a laser practice to employ an esthetician as for a day spa to employ a laser surgeon. The two kinds of treatments are non-competitive. One begins where the other leaves off.

Referrals

You should feel better than ever about referring your clients to a laser specialist. The risk to the client has never been lower and the results have never been better. First, consider the risk factor.

The risk can approach zero, as long as clients are willing to do a little homework to find a reliable and experienced laser surgeon. They should learn to ask a few questions to determine who is qualified to treat them. You can research the laser practices in your area and develop a file of referrals for your clients. The following kinds of questions will help determine the reliability of a laser physician:

- Where did you study and receive certification?
- How long have you been practicing laser surgery?
- How many patients have you treated? What were the results?
- Did they incur any short- or long-term problems?
- Can you supply photos and references? Do you rent your equipment or own it?
- How many different kinds of treatments have you performed?

The "right" answers to these questions should indicate that physicians studied full-time at a reputable institution, rather than taking a few weekend classes. They should own their equipment, rather than renting. If they rent, it's usually because they only treat patients occasionally and may not necessarily be the best in the field. They should indicate that their patients have not had any long-term problems following the treatments and that they have had satisfying results. They should supply you with satisfactory before-and-after photos as well as the names of some patients you can call. Do contact patients to verify claims.

Laser treatments

Once you and your clients have located a reliable laser physician, know what treatments are available. Today's laser procedures can treat a wide range of conditions:

- Improve brown or red spots caused by sun damage or aging,
- Improve fine lines or deep wrinkles,

David J. Goldberg, MD, is a board-certified dermatologist and the director of Skin Laser & Surgery Specialists of New York & New Jersey, LLC. He has treated patients and trained physicians, and has been instrumental in making laser technology available worldwide. Goldberg earned his medical degree from Yale University, and completed his dermatology residency and dermatologic surgical fellowship at New York University Medical Center. He has published more than 50 academic papers, has contributed to five academic textbooks, has written a textbook on laser hair removal, and was the first recipient of the prestigious Leon Goldman, MD award, named for the founding father of laser surgery and medicine.

Medical

- Revert color changes due to aging, helping to restore a soft pink hue to aging yellow skin,
- Restore elasticity to skin, and
- Treat *telangiectasis*, red blood vessels that appear on cheeks or nose due to sun exposure or aging.

In addition to laser treatments, collagen injections can improve smile lines and Botox* injections can soften deep forehead lines and crow's feet.

Historical perspective

The field of cosmetic laser surgery has evolved over the last ten years from the early extensive surgical techniques to today's "lunch-time" wound-free procedures. In a 1958 scientific paper titled "Infrared and Optical Lasers" published in *Physical*

Review, physicists Arthur L. Schawlow and Charles H. Townes proposed a technique for generating laser light technology based on their work with microwaves. In 1960, physicist Theodore H. Maiman used a ruby crystal to develop the first medical red-light laser beam that ultimately evolved into today's laser technology, including one of the first hair removal lasers—the normal-mode ruby laser. Since 1960, lasers have been adapted to dermatology.

Leon Goldman, the father of dermatologic laser surgery, applied the ruby laser to skin diseases using ablation techniques—procedures that remove the outer layer of skin. These early procedures were limited to treating small areas of skin and tended to leave scars. Some 30 years later, laser hair removal became a reality for patients with dark hair and light skin.

Ethnic skin types with darker complexions were more difficult to treat, but today's advancements are making it possible to treat all skin types.

The carbon dioxide (CO) laser treats sun-damaged and wrinkled skin. This laser improves mild to severe wrinkles, as well as photo-aged skin with brown and red spots, by removing thin layers of skin with minimal damage. While these treatments offered dramatic improvements, they left a temporary oozing wound and continued redness for one to six months. The long healing process discouraged many physicians and their informed patients from using laser resurfacing.

A later development was the erbium: YAG laser. This system removes wrinkles and improves sun-damaged skin by removing the surface and dermal collagen. Unlike

*Botox is a trade name of Allergan Corporation, Irvine, CA.

CO₂ lasers, this system produces little heat damage, and wound healing and recovery time generally are shorter. Both CO₂ and erbium: YAG lasers, although promising in benefits, sometimes are accompanied by side effects and complications such as redness, delayed healing, pigment changes and scarring.

Today's laser techniques offer exciting new options. Non-ablative, or subsurface remodeling, is the newest approach to improving sun-damaged skin. Non-ablative laser dermal remodeling also treats wrinkles, skin tone or color without wounding the skin and with almost no redness. These techniques do not rupture the skin's surface and therefore can be performed during a lunch-hour appointment, with no downtime. The procedure remodels the skin beneath the surface and stimulates the formation of new collagen, which can continue for several months after treatment. These non-abrasive procedures partner beautifully with a day spa or esthetic treatment of microdermabrasion, which then polishes the skin's outer layer.

Because the degree of collagen remodeling is not as great as with other more aggressive laser approaches, the non-ablative technique is for those who cannot take time away from their daily activities to undergo laser procedures and healing. However, patients with extensive sun-induced pigment changes are best treated with either an ablative laser or with newer photo-rejuvenation techniques.

Photo-rejuvenation technology is a new non-ablative process that rejuvenates discolored, aged or sun-damaged skin. The treatment is administered in a series of four to six procedures in three-week intervals. In most cases, the entire face is treated, rather than a limited affected area. This gives the skin a more uniform and attractive appearance. The patient can return to all activities immediately after the procedure.

Non-ablative laser dermal remodeling allows physicians to treat a large percentage of patients with a simple procedure that causes little discomfort. Patients also are pleased with the excellent long-term results. Although these technologies don't always provide the dramatic improvement seen with other more aggressive laser procedures, the gentler approaches are very popular for their ease of treatment and their zero-impact on the client's daily activities. Such technologies will continue to expand the multimillion-dollar cosmetic laser industry and will provide the next generation of cosmetic procedures for baby boomers and their children.

Esthetician's role

The scope of clients who seek cosmetic laser treatment has dramatically changed over the last decade. Now more clients in their 20s and 30s who show signs of *solar elastosis*, poor color of the skin due to sun damage; *telangiectasis*, dilated red blood vessels; and *lentigines*, brown age spots, are referred to laser surgeons. The overall appearance of aging skin primarily is due to sun exposure, which damages collagen and elastin fibers. Other factors include genetics and aging. Many patients have exposed themselves to vast amounts of sun during activities of everyday life and recreation. Thinning of the ozone and other environmental variables have left visible signs of aging, damage and disease now evident in younger people.

While health care laws vary from state to state, physicians generally are the only professionals allowed to use laser technology for skin care treatments. In some states, however, registered nurses can be trained to perform some of the non-ablative laser dermal remodeling. This should not stop estheticians from contacting dermatologists and plastic surgeons directly and being proactive about their services. There is a place for

them in the realm of this technology.

The vital role of estheticians in reference to laser treatments is threefold. First, they can prepare the client's skin before the laser treatment. Second, estheticians can administer treatments soon after surgery to promote healing and maintain optimal condition of the skin. Third, and most important, ongoing esthetic care can reduce the need for future laser treatments.

Hair removal

Clients often are more concerned with the cosmetic appearance of their hair than with function, and modern Western culture dictates the norm for acceptable quantity and location of body hair, especially in women. The number of patients seeking treatment of excess, unwanted hair continues to rise.

Hirsutism is the excessive growth of terminal hair in women on male hormone-dependent areas of the body—upper lip, chin, cheeks, chest, abdomen and anterior thighs. *Hypertrichosis* is an increase in hair growth that is not male hormone-dependent and, in most cases, not of hormonal origin.

Many modalities have been used to treat unwanted hair including shaving, plucking, bleaching, waxing, chemical depilatories and cover-ups. All of these methods are temporary and some may cause pain, pigment changes, irritation, distortion of hair follicles or even scarring.

Electrolysis and thermolysis introduced the possibility of permanent hair removal. However, the effectiveness of these treatments is heavily dependent on the experience of the technician. In addition, electrolysis and thermolysis are not as practical for treating large areas of excessive hair growth. Because of the limitations of these modalities, interest in laser hair removal has grown tremendously.

During the last several years, laser technologies have begun to play a crucial role in the treatment of unwanted hair. Lasers can achieve long-term hair removal by destroying the centers of hair growth and targeting melanin, the

pigment in the hair. Melanin's ability to absorb a wide range of wavelengths makes hair removal successful with long-pulsed ruby, alexandrite and diode lasers, as well as non-laser intense pulsed light sources. However, the success of these particular lasers is limited to light skin. This is because darker skin simultaneously absorbs the laser light.

Breakthroughs in this area have overcome even these technological hurdles. Additional lasers now are available for removing hair on all skin types. This is big news for millions of people with ethnic skin types that have been difficult to treat.

Future of lasers

Laser hair removal, non-ablative wrinkle reduction and photo-rejuvenation technology represent three new aspects of cosmetic industry. Laser cosmetic procedures have been performed for more than a decade and will continue to become safer, subtler and less expensive. Clearly, the future is brilliant for laser technology and the millions of people who will benefit from every new breakthrough. The advances that will take place in the next few years can't be imagined. Esthetics and laser surgery, however, always will be the perfect partners. ■

TRY...

LASER
Lépil

**The Permanent
Hair Removal**

**100% satisfaction or
your guaranteed
money back!**

Call (905) 850-7126

- ▲ Available to Estheticians and Electrologists.
- ▲ It is the only equipment *worldwide* that guarantees your client 100% satisfaction or their money back.
- ▲ Will not cause any type of pain, burning, scarring or colour pigmentation to the skin.
- ▲ Any skin or hair colour can be treated effectively. No client needs to be turned away.
- ▲ Leasing options are available to keep your costs low as you are introducing profitable and successful equipment to increase your net profits.
- ▲ For distributor information contact Silvia Fontana 1-877-374-5180.