



LASERS

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## Did you know?

Lasers are categorized into two groups: ablative and nonablative. Ablative treatments “vaporize” the top layer of skin, while nonablative ones heat up underlying tissue without harming the surface to produce new collagen

## Consider them a “secret weapon” for your skin: These resurfacing wonders can improve skin quality

by brightening, tightening and smoothing—often all at once. Using various forms of energy and different wavelengths, lasers create microinjuries in the skin. “As a healing response our bodies work to fix it by generating more collagen,” explains Baton Rouge, LA dermatologist Ann C. Zedlitz, MD. “This helps undo sun damage we’ve acquired from a lifetime of exposure.” Today’s menu of treatments ranges from heavy-duty to lightweight, and finding the best one for a specific concern can be daunting. Here, we take a closer look at the solutions top experts rely on most during “laser season,” when UV rays are at their lowest.

01

### What Lasers Can Do

They can reduce the look of wrinkles and scars, even out pigmentation, eliminate age spots, minimally tighten skin, and remove cancerous and malignant lesions.

02

### Deep Lines + Wrinkles

According to New York dermatologist Jody Levine, MD, lasers work better on static lines and wrinkles, not dynamic ones.

Static lines are there even when you’re not making an expression. Resurfacing lasers can help smooth etched-in lines by creating collagen and elastin synthesis for weeks afterward. “I’ll use a full-field erbium laser like the Sciton Joule for the mouth and eyes, and treat the rest of the face with the CO2RE fractional CO<sub>2</sub> laser or ProFractional erbium laser,” says Denver dermatologist Joel Cohen, MD. “These focus microscopic beams of light to target water in the skin and remove surface damage. Downtime can last a week or more, depending on the treatment; however, results can be dramatic.”

by  
**Tatiana  
Bido**



### 03 Tone + Texture

Of the variety of imperfections that we accumulate as we age, Boca Raton, FL plastic surgeon Jonathon Cook, MD says tone and texture changes are the easiest to improve. Think mild wrinkles, visible pores, skin roughness and light acne scars. "Uneven texture is one of the most subtle things to explain to a patient, but when you see smoother skin after a laser, it's often because you really reset that surface texture. This brings out a 'lit from within' glow that happens when light bounces off the skin." For first-time laser patients, Dr. Cook says gentle resurfacing with treatments like MOXI and Clear + Brilliant are good ways to dip their toe in the laser pond. Multiple sessions may be needed to see the full results. For more aggressive polishing, Dr. Cook says full-field resurfacing with an erbium laser is best. "For deep acne scars, I recommend combining ablative and nonablative energy with the BBL Halo or Fraxel DUAL hybrid lasers," he adds. "A hybrid laser is a good option because it allows the practitioner to combine various wavelengths in one treatment for a more customized approach."

### 04 Pigment Erasers

To reduce the look of stubborn melasma, hyperpigmentation or age spots, these treatments go "low and slow," as too much heat or energy can generate additional melanin production. "Lasers work great for pigment, but you have to know what you're doing or you can make the dark patches or spots worse. This is why it's imperative to see a board-certified dermatologist who specializes in lasers," Dr. Levine says. "The combination of a BBL photofacial with the PicoSure laser has made the biggest impact for my patients. PicoSure helps lift deeper pigment and BBL takes care of more superficial pigment. The two complement each other."

For dark spots, the photoacoustic PicoWay laser is a favorite of New York dermatologist Orit Markowitz, MD. "It works from the inside out on most all skin types. It helps absorb the pigment through sound waves rather than a heating effect," she says. "It's painless, there's no downtime and it minimizes the risk of overheating surrounding tissue."

Many times laser modalities are combined or "stacked" to achieve the best results. "I often use multiple devices during one treatment because most people aren't dealing with just one aesthetic concern," says New York dermatologist Elaine Kung, MD, who likes the SmoothGlo as a starting point for treating darker skin tones. "It isn't a laser per se, but it helps treat skin laxity and discoloration. I combine the synergistic energies of SmoothGlo's Stellar M22 Intense Pulsed Light (IPL) with TriLift radio-frequency (RF) microneedling." The IPL uses multiple wavelengths of light to target discoloration; the microneedling addresses texture. "Typically, patients need three sessions performed once a month," Dr. Kung adds. "This tends to yield the best result for treating people with medium-to-darker skin tones."

### Redness + Rosacea

- 05 Rosacea can make the blood vessels on the face more visible, and both lasers and IPL can be used to treat the accompanying redness. Both modalities can target the hemoglobin in the blood vessels to heat them up and destroy them, however lasers are more precise. "The gold standard for eliminating vascular lesions, which can lead to pink and red spots and patches on the skin, is the Vbeam laser," Dr. Levine explains. "After a series of these treatments, patients experience a marked decrease in redness and their skin looks like it did when they were several years younger."

BEFORE



AFTER

To reduce the melasma on this 43-year-old patient, Dr. Levine performed a combination of laser treatments, which evened out her skin tone, improved texture, and reduced lines and large pores.





**“Because they stimulate more collagen, these treatments can provide the most natural-looking results over time, not overnight.”**

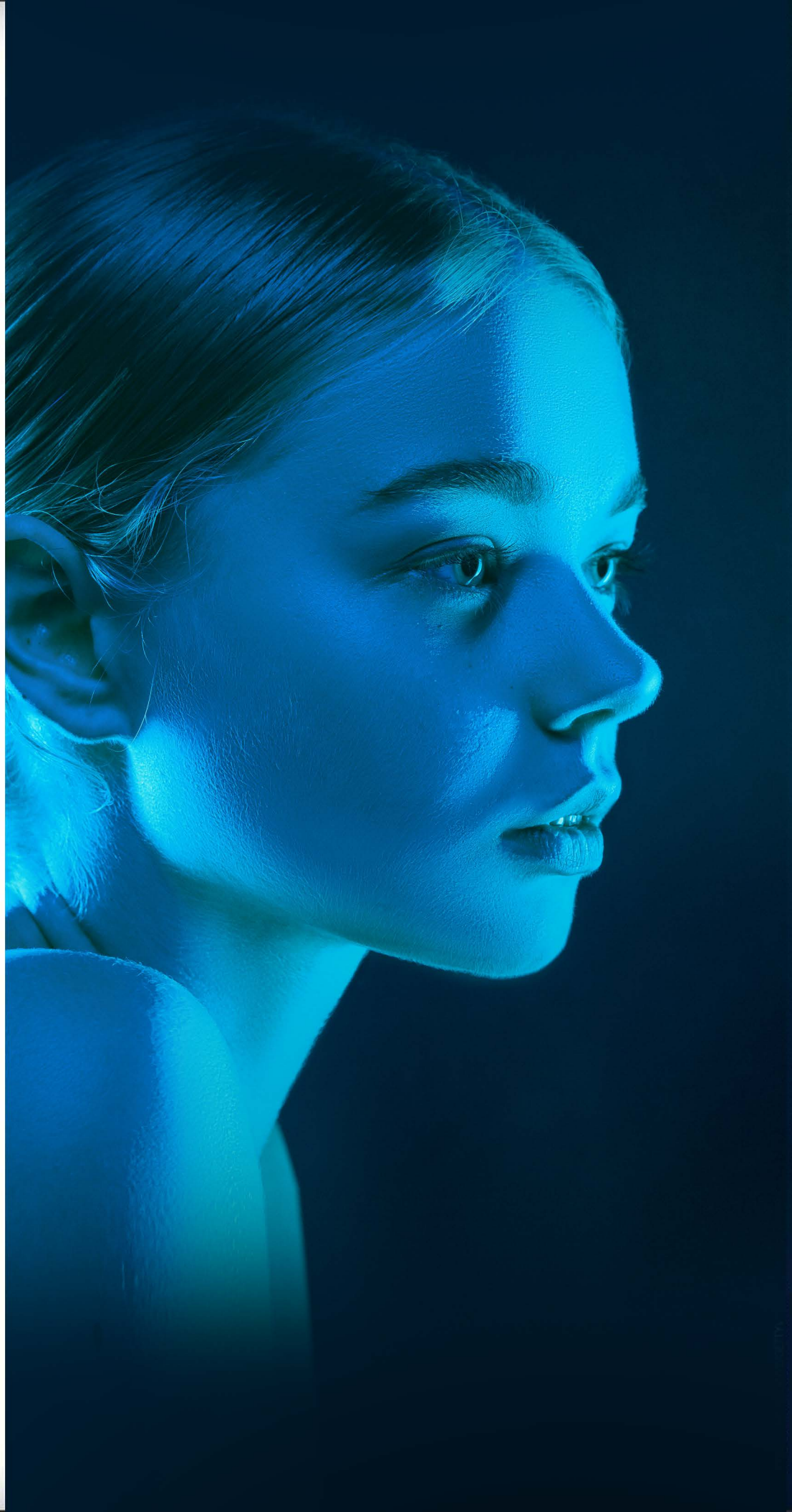
- Dr. Kung

## 06 **New “Lunchtime Laser” Options**

Dr. Cohen says the new “3-D Miracle” option on the UltraClear laser is the first treatment he’d consider a true “lunchtime laser.” In the past, referring to a laser treatment as something you could do easily on a lunch break was a stretch. “You don’t need anesthesia, and for weekend downtime, the lowest mode can be employed. If you need more improvement, we recommend a series of sessions spaced four to six weeks apart,” he explains. Other treatments with minimal discomfort and less downtime, like CoolPeel and Tixel, can also be done in a shorter timeframe.

## 07 **At-Home Laser Therapy**

The term “cold laser therapy” was born in the alternative medicine world as a pain-management approach on the body. Low-Level Light Therapy (LLLT) employs a noninvasive form of phototherapy that uses light wavelengths in the visible to near-infrared range. The FDA-cleared LYMA Laser device uses this same cold, near infrared technology, says founder Lucy Goff. “It’s a first for at-home beauty devices, and 100 times more powerful than LED. The technology has been used for decades to treat medical issues as diverse as rebuilding cartilage and healing tendons.” According to Goff, it’s safe for all skin tones and helps instruct skin cells to fight free radicals and boost collagen, leading to suppler, smoother skin. Celebrity aesthetician Joanna Czech calls it a game changer: “It’s incredibly powerful, portable and most importantly, safe.”



# REPAIR TEAM

## 08 Skin Cancer Removal

Not just for cosmetic purposes, lasers can also be an effective treatment for small cancerous lesions. Utilizing advanced imaging with Optical Coherence Tomography, which uses infrared and broadband light, Dr. Markowitz can see below skin at the depth to diagnose skin cancer. "I can then treat the spot with nonablative lasers to remove the cancer without surgery," she says. For most patients, one treatment does the trick she says, but for those with larger or deeper skin cancers, she may treat them two or three times over the course of a few months.

BEFORE



AFTER

In order to correct deep lines and sun damage on this 54-year-old patient, Dr. Zedlitz performed a CO<sub>2</sub> laser treatment, which resulted in smoother, younger-looking skin.

These essentials will help skin heal, renew and rejuvenate faster after a laser treatment.



Newly wounded skin needs proper hydration, and the **Avène Cicalfate+ Hydrating Skin Recovery Emulsion** soothes and restores using key ingredients like a proprietary postbiotic, hyaluronic acid and niacinamide. \$34, [aveneusa.com](http://aveneusa.com)



Kick skin health into high gear with **ELEVAI enfiniti Regenerative Serum**, which provides stem cell exosomes to support skin health and repair. \$299, [elevaiskincare.com](http://elevaiskincare.com)



**ElaMD UV Luminous Broad Spectrum SPF41** provides a beautiful finish that not only protects freshly treated skin, but also helps conceal redness. \$36, [eltamd.com](http://eltamd.com)



The **Doctor Rogers Skin Recovery 101 Kit** contains the cult-classic Restore Healing Balm, along with the Restore Face Wash and Cream for an easy, no-brainer approach to caring for post-procedure skin. \$150, [violetgrey.com](http://violetgrey.com)



The creamy, nonirritating **Murad Soothing Oat & Peptide Cleanser** safely cleanses away oil and impurities without stripping skin or disrupting the moisture barrier. \$42, [murad.com](http://murad.com)



Use **Alastin A-Luminate Brightening Serum** twice a day before sunscreen to continue the brightening effects of your treatment without the harshness and added risks of hydroquinone. \$168, [alastin.com](http://alastin.com)