

do they really work?

EXPERTS DEBATE THE LATEST BEAUTY TECHNOLOGIES

TRIED + TESTED

FROM FAT FIGHTERS AND WRINKLE ERASERS TO SKIN SMOOTHERS AND ANTI-CELLULITE SOLUTIONS, THE BEAUTY AND ANTI-AGING TREATMENTS ON THE MARKET THAT PROMISE TO MAGICALLY ERASE AGING CONCERNS ARE A DIME A DOZEN. WHILE SOME OF THEM WORK AND PROVIDE RESULTS, OTHERS ARE NOTHING MORE THAN A DRAIN ON YOUR WALLET. WE ASKED SIX TOP BEAUTY EXPERTS THEIR OPINION ON SOME OF THE MORE COMMONLY ASKED ABOUT TREATMENTS AND POSED THE AGE-OLD QUESTION, "DO THEY REALLY WORK?"



"Occasionally, the results from Ultherapy can be remarkable."

Dermatologist Ava Shamban, MD



"The issue with these treatments is that the results are not always predictable."

Dermatologist Annie Chiu, MD



"Results depend on using the right technology on the appropriate patient."

Facial plastic surgeon Lee Ann Klausner, MD



"CoolSculpting is great for downtime-free fat reduction."

Dermatologist Gilly Munavalli, MD



"We see nice results with Ultherapy but be aware of the pain."

Dermatologist Marina Peredo, MD



"Zerona is effective but not as effective as liposuction."

Plastic surgeon Michelle Copeland, MD



Have you ever had one of these treatments? Share your story at [facebook.com/newbeautymagazine](https://www.facebook.com/newbeautymagazine)

the skin TIGHTENERS

In the past, the only way to tighten loose skin was by surgically excising it. While that is still the most reliable option to date, nonsurgical machines and devices that firm slack skin have definitely made their mark.

01

FIRMS WITH RADIO-FREQUENCY ENERGY

{Thermage}

WHAT IT IS A radio frequency–based treatment that can be used on the eyelids, around the eyes and on the face and body to improve saggy skin. Taking 15 to 60 minutes to perform, depending on the area treated, skin is first cooled before it is heated (this stimulates collagen creation) and then cooled again. It's the heating of collagen fibers that helps smooth and tighten the skin. Thermage has gone through many changes since it first entered the market—the third generation of the machine is currently used.

THE EXPERT OPINION



THE PRO "Thermage may be better for patients in their 30s and 40s, because the collagen fibers are more responsive," says Hermosa Beach, CA, dermatologist Annie Chiu, MD.



THE CON "It can create new collagen in the skin, however some patients need tightening beneath the skin and would benefit from other types of treatments. It comes down to making the right diagnosis," says New York facial plastic surgeon Lee Ann Klausner, MD.

THE
VERDICT

IT WORKS, BUT HAVE REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS.

"While Thermage does heat the skin to create collagen, it may not be able to go as deep as some patients may need it to, so you may not get the desired result," says Dr. Klausner.

02

TIGHTENS A SAGGY NECK THROUGH ULTRASOUND

{Ultherapy}

WHAT IT IS An FDA-approved, noninvasive technology that uses ultrasound to lift and tighten skin on the neck. A handpiece is placed on the skin and a display allows your doctor to see where energy is delivered. Because Ultherapy is not totally pain-free—there's a vibrational feeling and deep heat—you may be given pain medication. It works best on those with loose skin rather than excess fat.

THE EXPERT OPINION



THE PRO Dr. Chiu says that Ultherapy does work and does have good science behind it. "But the problem with any of these treatments is that the results are not predictable on every patient. Some have really good results, others have minimal results."



THE CON Smithtown, NY, dermatologist Marina Peredo, MD, says that while Ultherapy is more tolerable now than when it first came out, it is still not totally pain-free. "Be aware of discomfort. It hurts because it's sending ultrasound waves with high energy into the deeper layers of skin to tighten the muscle and form collagen. Great results outweigh the discomfort."

THE
VERDICT

IT WORKS, BUT YOU HAVE TO BE THE RIGHT CANDIDATE AND YOU WILL NEED MORE THAN ONE TREATMENT.

"I use Ultherapy a lot in my practice and see good success in those with more advanced signs of elasticity loss when more than one treatment is done," says Dr. Klausner.

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the fat MELTERS

Noninvasive fat fighters are big business for one reason: There's no need for surgery. "Currently we can heat and freeze fat with different modalities, which can all potentially cause death of the fat cell, but we don't yet have one machine that can do everything we want it to do on every patient," says Dr. Klausner.

01

REMOVES FAT WITH A LASER LIGHT

{Zerona}

WHAT IT IS The noninvasive contouring procedure is said to fight unwanted areas of fat with a laser that emulsifies fat cells so that they can be dispelled by the body. Zerona is purportedly pain-, heat- and sensation-free since you lie below the lights (positioned over the body)—no devices come into physical contact with the skin. There is also said to be no post-treatment swelling, either.

THE EXPERT OPINION



THE PRO "I've offered Zerona in my office for almost four years and have found the treatments to be successful. Most patients lose between three-and-a-half to five-and-a-half inches," says New York plastic surgeon Michelle Copeland, MD. "While I feel that Zerona is effective, it is not as effective as liposuction."



THE CON "There are multiple laser heads that hover above the body while you just lie there; and you have to follow a strict diet and exercise plan. There's too much involved in this procedure that the patient needs to do outside of having the treatment done that makes me think there's no way that it can provide good results. I just don't buy it," says Dr. Peredo.

THE VERDICT

WHILE YOU MAY GET RESULTS, THEY AREN'T AS EFFECTIVE AS LIPOSUCTION. "From what I've seen with Zerona, this treatment does not give the results it promises," says Dr. Peredo.

02

FIGHTS FAT WITH ULTRASOUND TECHNOLOGY

{Liposonix}

WHAT IT IS A single treatment that destroys and eliminates unwanted fat with high-intensity focused ultrasound. This treatment—you'll probably feel tingling or discomfort—is best for those who are at their ideal weight and living a healthy lifestyle, but have difficulty getting rid of stubborn fat in the love handles, waist or stomach. Though it is noninvasive with little to no downtime, there may be swelling and bruising at the treatment site.

THE EXPERT OPINION



THE PRO "The upside to Liposonix, which is marketed as a liposuction alternative, is that studies show a permanent reduction in the size of the waist with just one treatment as opposed to multiple treatments that some other fat-reducing treatments necessitate," says Dr. Chiu. "Contouring can also be achieved because the machine can be maneuvered and manipulated in such a way that we can sculpt areas like the saddlebags."



THE CON "We tried this device in our office but found that the pain-to-benefit ratio was too high," says Santa Monica, CA, dermatologist Ava Shamban, MD. "The discomfort was pretty extreme and some patients weren't finishing their treatments, so we couldn't gauge and quantify the end results."

THE VERDICT

IT WORKS, BUT IT CAN HURT. While incisions or a recovery aren't required, Liposonix can be uncomfortable if the highest energy levels are used. On the flip side, about one inch, on average, can be lost from one treatment. "Like all nonsurgical fat-reduction procedures, the results from Liposonix can vary from patient to patient," says Dr. Shamban.

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03

FREEZES AWAY FAT

{CoolSculpting}

WHAT IT IS A noninvasive, downtime-free way to hone in on stubborn fat. CoolSculpting uses a patented cooling process to target fat cells by pulling the fatty area between two cooling panels—this creates tightness on the skin with pressure—freezing them to death (the treatment takes anywhere from one to three hours). As the fat cells die—it takes a few months for the full effects to be seen—they are naturally eliminated from the body. The results, while long-lasting, are not instant and your skin may be temporarily bruised, swollen or numb. And, while it doesn't address loose skin, it does treat fat.

THE EXPERT OPINION



THE PRO "I find this to be effective for the right candidate," says Charlotte, NC, dermatologist Gilly Munavalli, MD. "It's an excellent answer for healthy patients seeking to reduce fat in the abdomen, love handles and the muffin top, with little to no downtime. The results become more evident over time, so the improvement and gradual change, prevents anyone from asking the question, "What did you have done?"



THE CON "CoolSculpting got a lot of hype when it was first introduced—the concept of it is great, but expect for the skin to be sitting in the device for an hour or so while it's being pulled and sucked," says Dr. Chiu. "There's also swelling that can last a few weeks. But, if you repeat the treatment one or two times, it can give good results, although it is not a replacement for liposuction."

THE VERDICT

IT WORKS, BUT YOU MAY BE SWOLLEN FOR SOME TIME. If you're not a candidate for liposuction (CoolSculpting is for smaller areas of fat), or would rather not endure surgery, this is an option. "I like it because it addresses hard-to-treat areas. The device works effectively despite the fact that it is noninvasive," says Dr. Shamban. "While CoolSculpting works, we don't know if it is the magic fat treatment that we are all looking for. Only time will tell," says Dr. Chiu.

whatever happened to...

Just because a beauty or anti-aging treatment is introduced to the public does not mean that it works, is safe or has the longevity to stay on top. These procedures were popular at one point but have since fallen to the wayside.

{thread lift}

What it is During this "facelift technique," barbed sutures were placed under the skin to lift droopy muscles for a tightening effect. "The threads are inserted painlessly under the skin to contour for immediate tightening," says Dr. Copeland.

Why it became phased out Large scars, knots and skin dimpling occurred. Also, the sutures didn't allow proper aging, so when volume was lost, the face looked unnatural, and excess skin wasn't removed.

{collagen injections}

What it is Collagen was the filler of choice in the '90s and early 2000s to augment the lips. It went by the brand names of CosmoDerm, CosmoPlast and Zyderm (all are no longer manufactured).

Why it became phased out Doctors began using hyaluronic acid fillers. Collagen required allergy testing and, "although the results were natural-looking, collagen was not long-lasting and quickly absorbed in a few months," says Dr. Copeland.

{mesotherapy}

What it is A cocktail injection that purportedly fights fat and cellulite (it was also used for anti-aging purposes). Plant and natural extracts, vitamins, minerals, chemicals and drugs, as well as phosphatidylcholine and deoxycholate are mixed together and then injected.

Why it became phased out Though available, mesotherapy was not FDA-approved, and injectors could compound the mixtures themselves—that discredited it. Patients didn't know what they were being injected with and scarring, pain and infections were often the result. There was no set dosage protocol either. "Long-term safety and lack of clinical trials resulted in a public FDA warning in 2010 and as a result, mesotherapy fell out of mainstream use," explains Dr. Chiu.