

# Wrinkle Erasers:

## From Botox to Skin Tightening

By Dr. Martin Braun

What do women want? Sigmund Freud wrestled with this question over his entire psychoanalytical career without ever giving us an answer. However, for cosmetic treatments, women seem to share a common desire: non-invasive, low risk procedures with no downtime that give results and are cost effective. Cosmetic physicians continue to search for innovative ways to maintain a natural, youthful appearance. Technological advancements have created the option of small treatments on a regular basis. The new paradigm: maintenance, maintenance, maintenance! Start as early as possible and continue throughout life.

As the years go marching by, skin shows wear and tear characterized by blotchy pigmentation, broken capillaries, and an overall sallow complexion. Skin texture deteriorates with enlarged pores intersected with fine lines and wrinkles. It has been estimated that we lose one percent of our dermal collagen each year after age twenty, and this rate of loss doubles in sun-exposed areas, like the face.

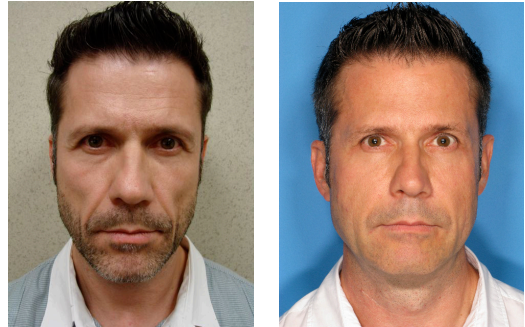
Virtually all women with aging skin would like to improve four areas: colour, tone, texture, and tightening of their skin.

Problems with skin colour are termed dyschromia: benign brown spots (lentigo) secondary to sun exposure and broken capillaries (telengectasia) visible on photodamaged skin. These brown and red spots can be faded with pulsed light, which has emerged over the past ten years as the primary light therapy. This no-downtime procedure has been named photorejuvenation or the Fotofacial. Virtually every laser company has a pulsed light device for sale; however, not all devices are equivalent. The power must be sufficient to effect a change and the spot size large enough that the light can penetrate deep into the dermis.

Problems with skin tone can be defined as a loss of radiance or uniformly glowing skin. Pulsed light will also improve overall skin tone, restoring radiance, more uniform skin color, and a healthy glow. However, skin tone is also affected by enlarged pores and fine lines, which trap light, as well as the ravages of acne scarring.

As we age, our pores appear larger. No woman ever complains that her pores are "too small." Unfortunately, pulsed light usually does not reduce the appearance of fine lines or pores satisfactorily. For these textural abnormalities, I use a fractional resurfacing technique that treats only a portion of the skin's surface with the laser, leaving small "bridges" of untouched skin. The tiny treated areas rapidly heal in 1-2 days as epidermal cells migrate from the small, untreated bridges. The client can disguise any redness following treatment with makeup.

Furthermore, unlike with chemical peels or conventional laser resurfacing, fractional resurfacing does not cause any diffuse peeling of skin. The redness fades in 3-5 days with no adverse effect on the client's normal lifestyle. Our facility uses a laser called the Pixel, applying treatments to the entire face in 30-minute appointments. As with pulsed light, most clientele do not require any topical anesthetic prior to treatment, in contrast to most fractional resurfacing procedures, which require application of topical numbing creams for 30-60 minutes prior to treatment.



(left) Before (right) After

Skin tightening was once the exclusive realm of the cosmetic surgeon who would surgically pull up flaps of sagging skin. Now patients can receive subtle skin tightening with no downtime using radiofrequency devices such as the Accent, the Pelleve, or Thermage.

Today's light-based therapy produces amazing results. However, the other hallmark of the aging process is volume loss. As pads of fat that sit under the dermis and create facial contours deflate with age, deep folds and wrinkles appear. In addition, facial muscles fold our skin over and over again, creating deep, scarred wrinkles. Two aesthetic treatments will restore a youthful, full face: Botox and fillers.

Botox is the number one cosmetic treatment in North America. It is also the most misunderstood, evoking the most vitriolic comments from detractors, who, quite frankly, do not comprehend its numerous benefits. Botox decreases the movements that cause deep facial wrinkles like the vertical "#11" between the eyebrows that makes one appear angry. People wish to "age gracefully." I tell them that with Botox they will age gracefully; they will simply age.

However, Botox will not inflate the apple of the cheek, or restore thinning lips. Some people have too much Botox and filler injected in their face, and they appear immobile or have huge sausage lips, an unfortunate occurrence that gives the entire cosmetic industry a bad name. When natural fillers like Juvederm are used properly, the results are amazing, leading to the terms Softlift or liquid facelift to describe the change.

My regular patients only have to see me twice a year for Botox, Juvederm, and a laser treatment. They all appear about 15 years younger than their chronological age. Never feel guilty about investing some money in your face – you have only one of them!

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*After receiving his M.D. from the University of British Columbia (UBC) in 1984, Dr. Braun completed his core surgical training at Vancouver General Hospital. As a pioneer in laser medicine, Dr. Braun has the distinction of being the first doctor in Canada to perform laser hair removal over 13 years ago. He currently injects more Botox® than any other practitioner in Canada. Dr. Braun has devoted his practice exclusively to cosmetic rejuvenation procedures at his private medical clinic, the Vancouver Laser and Skin Care Centre.*