

PIXEL LASER

WAYS TO IMPROVE TEXTURE

BY DR. MARTIN BRAUN



Dr. Martin Braun is the medical director of the Vancouver Laser and Skin Care Center. Dr. Braun received his MD from the University of British Columbia in 1984 after gaining early admission. He completed his core surgical training at Vancouver General Hospital. Dr. Braun has the distinction of being the first physician in Canada to perform laser hair removal over ten years ago. Since that time, he has developed the largest Botox and Restylane practice in Canada. Dr. Braun teaches cosmetic rejuvenation and lectures widely to others as a facilitator for Allergan, Canderm, and Medicis.

Cosmetic physicians continue to search for innovative ways to improve aging skin. As the years go marching by, our skin starts to show wear and tear characterized by blotchy pigmentation, broken capillaries, and a sallow yellowish complexion. Our skin texture deteriorates with enlarged pores intersected with fine lines and wrinkles, in addition to the ravages of acne scars. Sun exposure, excessive alcohol, and poor diet simply accelerate this process of collagen and elastin loss. It has been estimated that we lose 1% of our dermal collagen each year after age 20 and that this rate of loss doubles in sun exposed skin.

The gold standard for wrinkle effacement is the CO₂ (carbon dioxide) laser. A CO₂ laser procedure burns the epidermis off, and heats up the underlying dermis during the ablative procedure. A patient who undergoes CO₂ laser resurfacing requires anesthesia and also faces a long period of recovery due to the wound that is created in the process. Unfortunately, it is also not uncommon to have areas of lightening of the skin tone called hypopigmentation. This whiter skin can appear as blotchy areas without any pigment, and it is permanent. In addition, the patient's skin also looks like "something has been done to it," as it appears similar to a mannequin. It is fairly easy to spot the women running around Palm Springs who have had this procedure done as they look like ghosts. Some even suffer with an entity called "post laser resurfacing erythema," which is an extended period of red, flushed skin. Unless you look like an old leather shoe, I do not think that the risks associated with this procedure are justified.

In order to overcome these technical drawbacks, doctors now have a new device called the Pixel laser to provide textural and

skin tone improvement for their patients. This device creates thousands of tiny perforations in the skin, similar to pore sizes. This procedure is called "fractional laser resurfacing." The skin around each of these perforations remains intact, and the epidermis rapidly heals from the edge of these tiny holes. (ie: only a "fraction" of the skin is resurfaced each time) The patient who undergoes a Pixel treatment will only be red for one or two days and does not require any anaesthetic for the procedure. Makeup can be applied immediately, so there is really no downtime, which is very attractive to most patients. Furthermore, hypopigmentation has not been described with this laser. The only "downside" of the procedure is that it must be repeated several times for optimal results because only a portion of the total skin surface is treated each during each pass. However, it is my experience that patients prefer multiple visits with no downtime or risk over a single treatment that involves remaining home for an extended period of time in hiding.

Another benefit of fractional laser resurfacing is that it can be done on thin skinned areas such as the neck and décolleté. CO₂ laser resurfacing could not be done on these areas due to extensive scarring risks. Pixel treatments can be done on virtually any area of the body in a quick and painless office-based treatment with no anaesthetic required.

In our office, we use the Pixel laser for skin fractional resurfacing on any areas of the body. We have been very pleased with the results of smoother, glowing skin with virtually no risk to the patient or any downtime. ■



Frequently Asked Questions

What is a Pixel™ treatment?

A new FDA approved laser device, the Pixel by Alma laser, is designed to improve the quality and texture of the skin while it stimulates collagen regeneration. Laser skin resurfacing is a procedure commonly used to restore a youthful appearance to wrinkled, prematurely aged, or sun damaged skin. While results can be excellent, laser resurfacing can be painful and have extended downtime. In the past people have sometimes been housebound and unable to return to work for months at a time.

What are the benefits?

The Pixel™ Fractional Resurfacing FDA approved procedure offer results comparable to laser resurfacing without the discomfort or need for lengthy recuperation. It is the next generation of laser skin resurfacing that helps to improve skin texture, tone and firmness, smoothes wrinkles, and reduces pore size and scars (including acne scars) without the downtime and discomfort associated with other resurfacing lasers.

How does the Pixel work?

Pixel skin resurfacing is based on the principle of microthermal treatment zones. The laser pulses create tiny holes in the skin, removing the epidermis and upper dermis. The treatment then triggers the body's natural healing process, stimulating the growth of new, healthy skin tissue.

The Pixel treats small zones of the skin, leaving surrounding tissue untouched and intact. These large unaffected areas act as a reservoir for more effective and rapid tissue healing and collagen production. The end result: new, healthier, smoother tissue in place of skin imperfections.

What areas can be treated?

Any area of the skin can be treated that has surface irregularities, including: wrinkles, acne scars, and stretchmarks. Common areas treated include the face, neck, chest, thighs, hands and arms.

How many treatments are necessary?

Generally, treatment involves three to six sessions at three week intervals. Pixel is often bundled with other light-based therapies to achieve optimum results, such as IPL Photofacials and other skin tightening procedures.

Does the Pixel treatment hurt?

There is little or no discomfort during the treatment. Most commonly, clients feel some slight warmth with the pulse of the laser. Clients experience a sunburn-like sensation afterward (3-4 hours) that is easily neutralized with a gentle moisturizer.

Is there any downtime with the procedure?

Typically, there is little to no downtime associated with the treatment. Make-up can be applied immediately afterward. Some flaking can be experienced for one or two days with full recovery in about five days. Your skin will look better within days following the treatment, and results steadily improve over the next few months. For more information on how Pixel™ can help you achieve your skin care goals, please call to schedule a consultation.

How much does it cost?

This procedure is not covered by M.S.P. Each treatment costs \$400. We recommend 3 to 5 treatments.

Where can I get this treatment?

This treatment is now available in Canada at the Vancouver Laser and Skin Care Centre, a worldwide leader in advanced cosmetic treatment since 1996. T: 604.708.9891 www.vancouverlaser.com