

PROBLEM-SOLVING LASERS HAVE BECOME AS COMMONPLACE IN A WOMAN'S BEAUTY REGIMEN AS THE MONTHLY FACIAL. WHILE NOTHING WORKS QUITE LIKE A LASER, WHAT YOU MAY NOT KNOW IS WHAT LASER TREATMENTS REALLY ENTAIL—FROM THE TIME YOUR DOCTOR STARTS ZAPPING TO WHEN YOU SEE A DIFFERENCE IN YOUR SKIN. "PATIENTS NEED TO REALIZE THAT THERE ARE MANY DIFFERENT LASERS AND EACH SYSTEM DOES SOMETHING DIFFERENT," SAYS WASHINGTON, D.C., DERMATOLOGIST TINA ALSTER, MD. "ALWAYS TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION THE COST, THE RECOVERY (IF ANY) AND THE CLINICAL RESULTS ANTICIPATED, SO THAT YOU'RE HAPPY WITH THE OVERALL EXPERIENCE."

LASERS

THE NEW ANTI-AGING REVOLUTION

how a laser WORKS

According to Richmond, VA, plastic surgeon Ruth Hillelson, MD, all lasers are light-based devices that target different types of cells to reduce or eliminate pigmentation, scars, redness, wrinkles and/or textural abnormalities. Each wavelength is unique to each problem, so it's important to seek treatment with a board-certified dermatologist or plastic surgeon who understands which problems respond to which wavelengths. With most lasers, your doctor will numb the area to be treated with a topical numbing cream—some may wrap the area with plastic wrap to make it more effective—or use a sedative for heavier lasers. Once you notice a slight tingling sensation or coldness (that means the area is numb), your doctor will hold the handpiece against your skin. As the energy beam is emitted out of the handpiece and onto the skin you may feel some discomfort or pain, which signals that the laser is working.

FOR SILKY SMOOTH SKIN

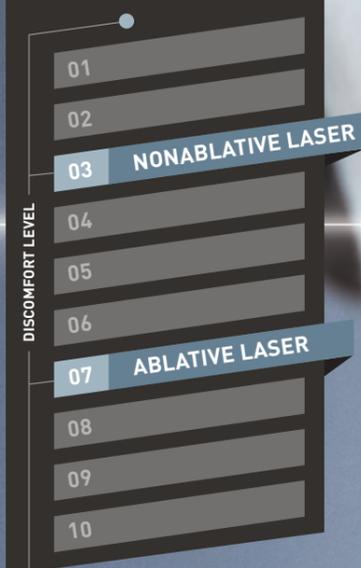
At-home hair-removal tools continue to evolve. The **Silk'n SensEpil 65K** delivers Home Pulsed Light (HPL) energy down to the shaft of each hair, destroying the root and preventing it from growing back. Only hairs that are actively growing are affected, so multiple treatments are required. \$649, silkn.com



the pain FACTOR

No laser is completely pain-free, but the level of discomfort, which is best described as a warm or even burning sensation, varies on the type of laser and setting that's used.

The pain associated with a nonablative laser is often compared to a three on a scale of one to 10; with an ablative laser, some say it's more like a seven.



"LASERS ARE MORE OF AN INTEGRAL PART OF ANTI-AGING THAN THEY WERE 10 YEARS AGO. THEIR USE WILL CONTINUE TO INCREASE EXPONENTIALLY AND THE DOWNTIME WILL LESSEN."

—DR. HILLELSON

the laser LINGO

01 ABLATIVE LASERS

These physically remove the top layer of skin tissue. Ablative lasers can be "dialed up" or "dialed down" to increase or decrease the level of penetration. The more ablative the laser, the deeper it goes, which equates to a longer recovery but with more dramatic results.

02 NONABLATIVE LASERS

These leave the outermost layer of skin intact, but are still able to penetrate the skin. Nonablative lasers don't result in significant skin sloughing or extended downtime, although some discomfort can be felt after the procedure.

03 THE DOWNTIME

Downtime means how long it takes for your skin to return to normal after a procedure. The more invasive the laser, the longer the downtime. No downtime means any redness or pinkness will be gone in less than one day; minimal downtime indicates you may be out of commission for one to three days; moderate downtime relates to a recovery period from a few days up to one week and significant downtime will likely have you at home for at least a week.

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