

Fractional Laser Resurfacing

Congratulations on your decision to consider laser resurfacing to remove or reduce the appearance of your wrinkles. The CO2 laser has been proven to be an effective tool in battling the tell-tale signs of aging and is the gold standard for procedure to smooth skin. Other technologies are constantly being developed in hopes of improving on the results of the CO2 laser but nothing has replaced the efficacy of traditional laser in removing wrinkles.

Laser resurfacing does have its shortcomings and these include the potential for lightening the color of the skin, transient darkening during the healing phase, prolonged redness of the skin, and the inability to completely smoothen some wrinkles. This is especially true for dynamic wrinkles or those which are a result of underlying muscles (i.e.: crow's feet). Your skin will heal in 5-7 days at which point you can use make up to help conceal the redness. The redness will diminish with time with more redness associated with higher power settings.

The procedure is done in the office under local (topical and injections). You can request oral sedation which will help with mild anxiety. We proceed at a pace which is comfortable for you but you still have to be able to tolerate multiple injections.

The procedure requires eye protection (simply closing your eyes may be adequate) to prevent injury to your eyes.

The **recovery process** can be distressing because of the appearance of your skin and the swelling that normally occurs for the first 24-48 hours. Detailed instructions are provided, asking that you liberally apply ointments and prevent drying out of your skin. Your face will be weepy and red. Your eyes may swell shut. Pain may persist but usually is not a problem for most people. Pain is treated with analgesics and cool compresses. Expect your skin to stay weepy for up to 5 days. Your redness can be impressive with the higher power settings and may not resolve for up to *several months*. Your skin is very sensitive and any incidental trauma such as a simple scratch by your fingernail can lead to an open wound and delay healing.

As your skin heals, you will be asked to use **non-comedogenic** (doesn't clog pores) **moisturizers** to prevent the development of whiteheads. Eventually, you will be allowed to resume an exfoliant such as Retin-A or glycolic acid. This is a maintenance program that will help maintain the results you achieve from laser resurfacing. *Always test products on a small area of your lasered skin prior to applying it to your whole face because your skin may still be hypersensitive to those products.* Sunscreens or sunblock should be used whenever outdoors for prolonged periods. This may be discontinued when the redness has completely resolved.

A newer technology (fractional laser resurfacing) has been developed to reduce the healing time and side effects. Fractional laser is more like selective cutting when compared to the clear cutting of traditional laser. This allows for a faster recovery, quicker healing, and lesser a result. You will need several fractional sessions to

achieve the same result of one pass with a traditional laser. But in many situations, this can produce a satisfactory result with less risk of permanent lightening of your pigmentation. You select the intensity of the treatment, realizing the more intense we go, the closer the healing process approaches that of traditional laser.

And if patient and willing to undergo a series of treatments (weekly for 8 weeks) with maintenance every 3-4 months, microneedling or Venus Legacy can provide this with downtime for microneedling 3-4 days and no downtime for the Venus Legacy with none of the risks that lasers have.

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