



face



Many people wish to turn back the clock for a tighter, more youthful-looking complexion but don't want to resort to surgery. Non-invasive treatments such as Thermage and Fraxel can offer an effective solution to improve the appearance of the skin to postpone or delay more invasive procedures.

'Thermage and Fraxel are non-surgical measures that can produce outstanding results, and typically involve minimal discomfort and downtime so patients can continue their daily routines as quickly as possible,' says Sydney cosmetic physician Dr Buddy Beaini. 'In my experience, these are the treatment protocols most people are seeking these days. Ideally, they want to be able to have a lunchtime procedure that allows them to return to work afterwards and go out to dinner the following night.'

What is Thermage?

Thermage is a non-invasive procedure that tightens and renews the skin's collagen. The treatment uses Capacitive Radiofrequency (CRF) technology to heat the skin's under layer and the collagen in the inner layer, causing immediate tightening and improved tone and texture. Improvements continue for around four to six months following treatment as the collagen continues to build.

Thermage stimulates and renews the skin's collagen, improving the texture and reducing sagging skin, as well as subtle contouring of the jaw line and under the chin. It softens wrinkles around the mouth, eyes and forehead and many patients report an overall improvement of fine lines and wrinkles.

'Due to this neocollagenesis the skin looks more plump and refreshed. One Thermage treatment can make a patient look and feel years younger and can last three to four years in most individuals,' Dr Beaini says. 'It is totally non-invasive, and offers a simple, gentle and effective treatment to address some common signs of ageing.'

While it is most popular as a treatment for the neck and face, Thermage can also be used on the décolletage, upper arms, abdomen, buttocks, thighs and the backs of the hands. Treatments usually take between 45 and 90 minutes and in most cases only one session is needed.

What is Fraxel?

Fraxel laser treatment uses microscopic laser columns that penetrate deep into the dermis to create tiny wounds, triggering the body's natural response system to heal those wounds. This process expedites the body's remodelling of collagen and elastin, resulting in tighter, fresher, more youthful-looking skin.

'Think of your skin as a digital photo that is delicately touched up one spot at a time. Similarly, Fraxel treatment affects a fraction of tissue at a time with thousands of



BEFORE



AFTER Fraxel treatment



BEFORE



AFTER Thermage treatment



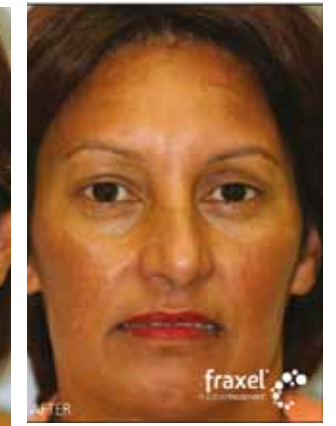
BEFORE



AFTER Fraxel treatment



BEFORE



AFTER Fraxel treatment

microscopic laser columns – each just one-tenth the diameter of a hair follicle. Then your body takes care of the rest,' says Dr Beaini.

The laser columns target only a fraction of skin at a time, leaving the surrounding tissue intact. The areas the laser doesn't touch are just as vital to skin rejuvenation. This 'fractional' treatment allows the body to heal the skin faster than if the whole area was treated at once.

Fraxel laser treatments vary in strength, downtime, the amount of procedures needed and the final results. The strongest treatment, Fraxel re:pair, can offer dramatic improvement for severely damaged skin. This is typically a single treatment procedure but requires more downtime and after-treatment wound care. Less aggressive treatments, such as Fraxel re:store or Fraxel re:fine, can achieve impressive results for mild to moderately damaged skin over the course of three to six treatments. There is typically no after-treatment wound care with these treatments and downtime is minimal in most cases.

Combining Thermage and Fraxel

Melbourne dermatologist Dr Barbara Breadon recommends using Thermage and Fraxel in a synergistic way to treat skin conditions. 'Combining these two modalities means patients have the opportunity to maximise their results,

targeting their skin in two ways,' she says. 'Patients of any age who have signs of sun damage, fine wrinkles or signs of facial ageing are all candidates for combined treatment with Fraxel and Thermage.'

Working in conjunction, Fraxel targets collagen remodelling in the upper part of the dermis to improve skin quality and reduce wrinkles and lines, while Thermage addresses deeper sagging in the skin from gravity and the natural ageing process. 'In this way, both the superficial and deeper layers of the skin are being improved,' she says.

Together, the two treatments offer highly effective and predictable results for patients with a variety of skin types and conditions. 'People of Celtic background with freckles, fine wrinkles and sun damage tend to get the best results,' says Dr Breadon. 'However, by going to an expert in Fraxel and Thermage you will be sure to get an honest and accurate assessment of what these treatments can achieve for you.'

Dr Breadon believes the combined results of both treatment modalities are superior to the outcomes that may have been achieved by using one technology alone.

'Suitable patients are able to address their skin concerns without undergoing surgical procedures and, at the very least, delay the need to consider it,' says Dr Breadon. 'The treatments add value to each other and therefore for the patient.' **acsm**

DUAL SYNERGY

AN AGEING AND SUN-DAMAGED FACE CAN BE REFRESHED AND REJUVENATED BY COMBINING NON-INVASIVE THERMAGE AND FRAXEL TREATMENTS. JESSICA RULE REPORTS.