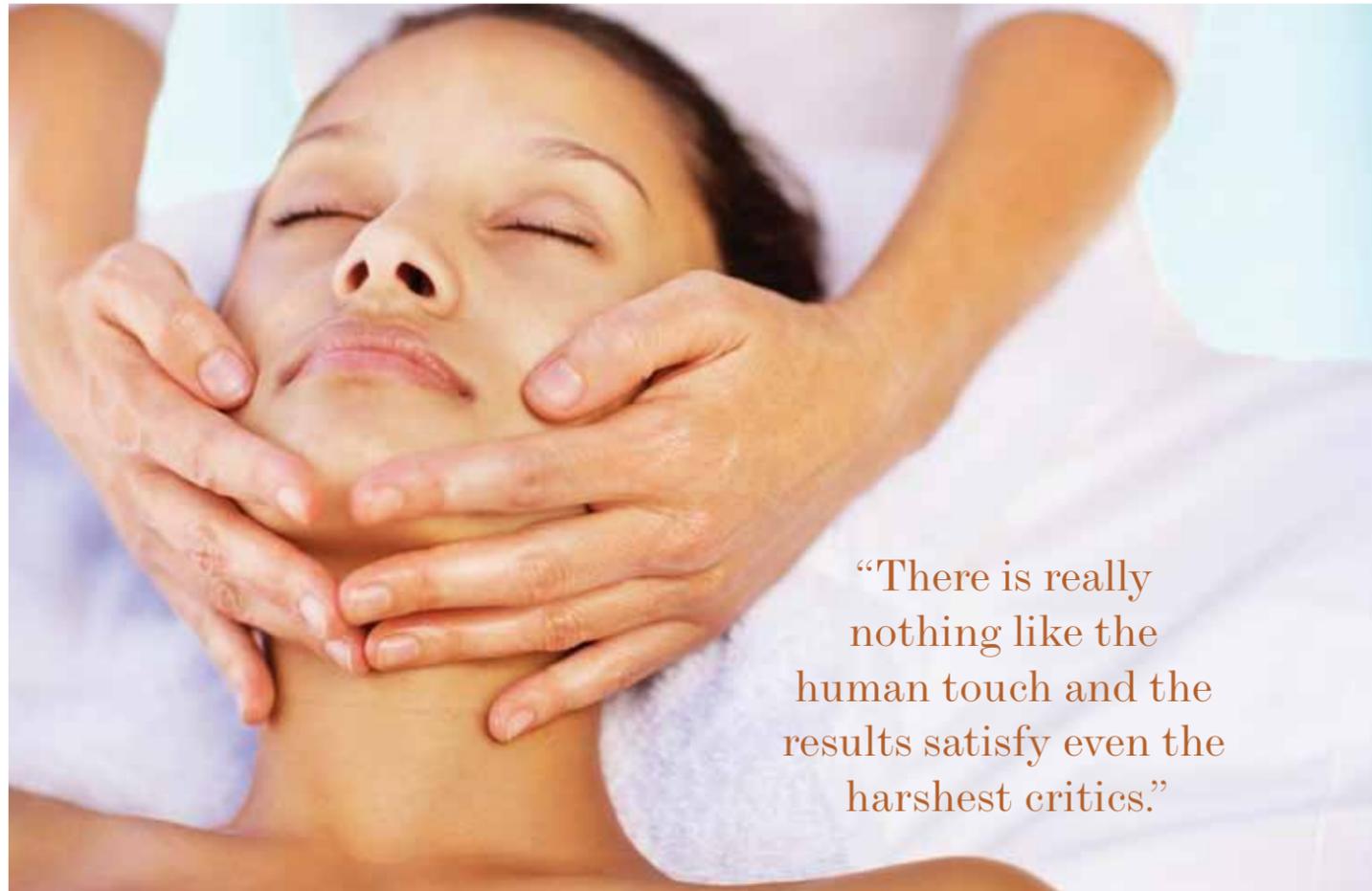


Contouring gets a facelift with a combination of products and procedures that yield remarkable results.

the Big Lift

By Russell A. Jackson

With body-conscious season still several months away, now is the perfect time to remind clients that shaping up their faces can lift their post-holiday spirits—and their sagging jowls. Why not greet them at your door with a host of face-firming options and—to stay on top of the latest trend in facial contouring—a combination of manual techniques, equipment-based procedures and topicals that, together, can achieve noticeable results?



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When it comes to facial contouring, more is more. Just ask Chanel Jenae, co-owner, product developer and head esthetician at The Arcona Studio in Santa Monica, California, who couples microcurrent and ultrasound technologies with brightening products for a complete facial-contouring overhaul.

“Depending on the skin type and condition—and the results we strive to achieve—we’ll use a combination of techniques,” Jenae says. “But hands down, clients most love the treatments that include facial massage. There is really nothing like the human touch, and the results satisfy even the harshest critics and naysayers.”

Gül C. Zone, president of DermAware, also subscribes to the multilevel approach. “The combination of facial products and machines is the future of the day spa business,” she says. And the beauty of this strategy for spas is its convenience. Since many skincare lines are easily used in conjunction with equipment, there’s likely no need to replace your existing line should you decide to introduce a new modality.

Danielle Tsoklis, director of education and development at Silhouet-Tone, likes the combination of new topicals—such as peptides and minerals—alongside technologies such as sonophoresis, microcurrent and iontophoresis—all designed to induce greater product penetration.

Myo Technologies esthetician Mimi Jackson favors a Botox and Myotech (microcurrent) combo. “Botox is great for facial contouring,” she says, “but it only lasts for three or four months, and people who use Botox for extended periods may see atrophy in the muscles. Our method reduces that effect. The combination of Botox around the jawline and Myotonology is the most amazing thing for getting rid of that jowly look.”

Dr. Michael Stampar, owner and medical director at Spago Day Spa in Punta Gorda, Florida, is a fan of technology, but he combines it with old-school strategies for refreshing and rejuvenating clients’ skin—or for preparing it for more dramatic surgical intervention. Stampar’s equipment of choice? Pelleve Facial Wrinkle Treatment, a radio frequency (RF)-based technology that he helped develop (the device can only be used under a physician’s supervision). Stampar pairs it with facial peels to maximize results.

“The combination of RF for deep smoothing and peels for surface smoothing results in a remarkable improvement,” he says. “An hour with me, then an hour with an aesthetician, and patients go home and call their friends.”

For his surgery practice, Stampar notes, the pairing of procedures also contracts the size of the “envelope” that will need to be surgically filled. “You have to use filler to restore volume,” Stampar explains. “But if you

can shrink that envelope first, you can use less filler. That combination is what I consider a whole new paradigm in non-surgical facial contouring.”

Making Manual Work

Traditional hands-on treatments, which still remain one of the most useful strategies in a day spa’s facial contouring approach, include **deep-tissue facial massage**, **lymphatic facial massage** and **acupressure massage**.

“Generally, facial massage is available at all day spas and is incorporated into facial treatments,” says Karen Asquith, national director of education for G.M. Collin Skin Care. “Stimulating, pinch-technique movements are the most popular for facial toning massages, as the stimulation of aging tissues increases circulation in the skin and metabolism.”

Likewise, lymphatic and acupressure massage help to relieve facial puffiness and make the face glow. The ARCONA Studio, for example, has developed a proprietary procedure that includes deep-muscle massage to lift and contour the face, bring out the cheekbones and tighten the jawline. “It’s 40 minutes of facial massage in addition to lymphatic and acupressure massage and facial masks,” Jenae says. “It’s truly amazing!”



But take care not to put all your facial contouring eggs into one low-tech basket, Silhouet-Tone’s Tsoklis warns.

“Facial massage techniques certainly detoxify the skin, improving cellular nutrition and cell renewal,” she says, “and the manual massage also provides relaxation. However, manual massage is not very efficient for re-educating muscle tissue or tightening facial contours.”

And as for that commonly prescribed routine of performing at-home facial exercises? “It’s well known that one of the initial causes of aging is the repeated contractions of the mimic muscles,” Tsoklis says. “Facial exercise will only accentuate expression wrinkles that are formed by constant use of certain facial muscles.”

Topicals Get a Boost

Advanced topicals are an important component in shaping the face, and strides are continually being made in this area. Although antioxidants, firming masks and peels remain a key component of facial contouring services at day spas, some newer topicals are gaining in popularity, including:

- Growth factors
- Peptides
- Carboxylic therapy

Growth factors—“the latest buzz” according to Asquith of G.M. Collin—increase the synthesis of hyaluronic acid and collagen and thus repair and improve the dermal structure of the skin. Commonly used growth factors are EGF, IGF-1, bFGF and TGFb.

The peptides palmitoyl oligopeptide and palmitoyl tetrapeptide-7 (commonly known as Matrixyl) stimulate collagen synthesis, helping to build the collagen matrix in the dermis, while mimicking the action of dehydroepiandrosterone (the “youth hormone” DHEA), to both firm the skin and minimize wrinkles.

These compounds, say experts, work best when combined with the use of equipment that helps them get under the surface of the skin. “Topical treatments will work if the formulations are concentrated, stable over time and can deliver to the skin’s target sites,” DermAware’s Zone says.

For his part, Onyx Medical’s Roger Machson stands behind carboxy therapy, a topical technology that’s new in the U.S. “It’s almost doing what some of the newer equipment is doing,” he says. “Carboxy gel is a new generation of carboxy therapy that breaks down fat and tightens the skin.”

Previously available only through a series of painful injections, the new formulation is available in gel form, which the provider applies and then covers with an active ingredient-activating wrap. “It’s a cosmetic gel that any esthetician can use on the face or body,” Machson says. “There are no contraindications, so it’s safe for everybody, and the results are spectacular with a short series of treatments.”

High-Tech Tools, New and Proven

Equipment is an increasingly integral component of facial contouring. The most common types of equipment-based procedures used in day spas for direct contouring are:

- Ultrasound, including cavitation
- Radio frequency
- Microcurrent
- LED light therapy
- Product penetration devices



- Microdermabrasion equipment with contouring options

Machson believes that a form of ultrasound called cavitation, which requires a water-based gel for execution, is a strong new option. While RF is “primarily for skin tightening and wrinkles,” he says, “there is some efficacy in fat breakdown on the superficial level, for contouring.” But cavitation, he claims, facilitates fat breakdown. “It’s for the deeper fat and is a better ap-

proach than RF, but it doesn’t do the skin tightening.”

Under the RF procedure, “electrical currents penetrate the skin, with no resistance, and hit, with heat, the subdermal junction where fat starts,” Spago Day Spa’s Stampar says. “It shrinks the pores and penetrates the membranes that go around the cell’s fat to firm the skin in a 3D, ‘shrink wrap’-type contraction.”

Cavitation uses sound waves, and Machson likens the effect to a motorboat engine that revs up in water and creates bubbles.

“That’s a cavitation effect,” he says. “The sound waves create bubbles that implode, and they target any area that is fluid-rich, like fat cells. The imploding bubble breaks apart the cell and the body disposes of the components.” (It should be noted that cavitation

Big Lift Assists

The following manufacturers provide products and/or technologies that may help you boost your facial contouring arsenal.

Beautiful Image, 800.800.0838,
beautifulimagellc.com

Belleza and Beauty, 877.411.7766, bandb1.com

Bio Jouvance, 800.272.1716, biojouvance.com

Botanical Science Technologies,
800.668.7546, botanicalscience.net

DermAware BioTargeted Skincare,
888.292.3376, dermaware.com

DermAware BioTargeted Skincare,
888.292.3376, dermaware.com

Éminence Organic Skin Care,
888.747.6342, eminenceorganics.com

G.M. Collin Skin Care, 800.341.1531,
gmcollin.com

Image Microderm, 866.462.4334,
imagemicroderm.com

Myo Technologies, 855.392.8926, myoinc.com

Onyx Medical, 800.333.5773, onyxmedical.com

Pevonia Botanica, 800.351.3516, pevonia.com

Silhouet-Tone USA, 800.552.0418,
silhouet-tone.com

Skin Care Consultants, 877.760.2722,
lamskin.com

Sothys USA, 800.325.0503, sothys-usa.com



has been called a side effect of ultrasound because unstable cavitations can occur with ultrasound units that use a frequency lower than 450. Both cavitation and RF procedures may be regulated by your state. Check to see if your spa can use them without a physician’s supervision.)

Of the more traditional equipment-based techniques, microcurrent treatment is known to enhance the contours of the face by lifting and contouring the jawline and drooping eyelids, and by sculpting the cheekbones, while relieving puffiness and increasing circulation. It’s used, as G.M. Collin’s Asquith notes, to rejuvenate facial muscles, increase cellular functioning, improve skin tone

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and texture, and increase circulation. A conductor gel is also generally used for this modality.

LED, “light-emitting diodes,” can be used to treat multiple skin conditions, depending on the color of light employed. Red light is used for contouring because it increases fibroblast activity—which, in turn, produces elastin fiber and collagen and stimulates adenosine triphosphate, or ATP, an enzyme that triggers cellular metabolism.

Éminence Organic Skin Care recently launched an LED-therapy system created to enhance the effects of topical serums while delivering light therapy benefits. A specially designed red light probe on the device can be applied to clients’ periorbital regions and nasal labial folds to tighten these areas, which are especially susceptible to sagging.

“The red LED light helps to encourage collagen production and healing in the skin,” says Stephanie



Baresh, director of product development at Éminence. “It also helps to increase blood and oxygen flow to the skin and capillaries, therefore increasing cellular metabolism and strengthening the capillary walls. As the red light can also help tighten the skin, this type of treatment is ideal for antiaging.”

Bolstering the power of combination treatment, Skin Care Consultants recently introduced equipment designed to optimize the penetration of active topicals while producing toning action for the face. Based on the proven technique of heat/cold therapy, this technology uses nonelectric thermo energy.

“The energy produced by the machine works to stimulate bioenergetic reflexes,” explains Skin Care Consultants co-founder Pat Lam. “The heat creates vasodilation in the body’s connective tissues and the cold produces vasoconstriction.” The increased metabolic activity in the skin helps products penetrate better, Lam adds, and the cold helps to firm, tone and strengthen the skin.

Microdermabrasion devices may offer capabilities beyond this technology’s primary function of resurfacing the skin. For instance, certain vacuum attachments can initiate lymphatic drainage, simulating hands-on facial massage. Image Microderm has introduced a microdermabrasion machine with built-in red and blue medical-grade light therapy to provide collagen stimulation.

Silhouet-Tone encourages a combined technologies system such as its own, which includes ultrasound with a different modulation to warm up collagen protein and electrical currents that work at the muscle, dermal and skin-tightening levels, and on product penetration. The technologies, Tsoklis says, “work in synergy to target and provide an effective solution that can be focused at each of the layers of the skin where problems occur. It’s a win-win for day spas. You can offer services that are not available to the consumer at home, and which produce the immediate results that clients are willing to pay for.”

Two final pieces of advice from the experts:

- 1) As with any investment in equipment, it’s essential to do your homework. Ensure that the training you receive is complete and the equipment is well understood. Also make sure that any contraindications are clear and that the manufacturer provides a warranty;
- 2) Keep in mind that today’s facial contouring clients are much savvier than those of the past.

As Myo Technologies’ Jackson notes, “Clients understand what they’re coming in for. Whether it’s a product or a procedure, by the time they come in to see us, they’ve looked it up online. They know what they want and they know how to ask for it.” ■

Russell A. Jackson is a freelance writer based in West Hollywood, California.