

Combined Laser Resurfacing with Chemical Peels

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Over the past century, different techniques have been used to give the skin a younger look. The early attempt at face lifting were tried by Holländer, C. Miller and Noel at the beginning of the last century. Over the years these techniques have been evolving to arrive at the level of sophistication which allows for superior orbital lifting and improved, less aggressive methods that use video endoscopy to permit the treatment of deep structures and eliminate the action of the muscles that create expression wrinkles.

Even though these surgical techniques have been developed, and reached the maximum of sophistication, there is still left a high level of lack of satisfaction on the part of physicians and patients because the quality of the skin surface does not appear to change much although it has been stretched by these surgical techniques. Now it is very important to treat the surface of the skin with chemical peels and maintenance treatment with different chemical substances that have become very popular in the past 3 decades (Retinoic Acid, Glycolic Acid and Anti-oxidants).

The history of laser skin resurfacing brought a lot of hope for the recovery of skin quality for those patients with a high degree of photoaged skin. Unfortunately, these techniques are still limited to the photo types 1,2 and 3 (Fitzpatrick classification).

It is fundamental that the laser equipment, used for resurfacing, be of the highest technology and the operator should be trained sufficiently to avoid sequels from the technique being used. At the moment, the best laser equipment to remove the epidermis and to stimulate the dermis, is those that use the highest power of Erbium-YAG (3,000 mJ) because these can offer the same advantages of CO₂ lasers, but without the side effects typical of this type of laser. (hypochromia, long recovery time of the skin tissues, long lasting erythema).

With a better understanding of the interaction between the laser and the tissues, and the limitations of laser resurfacing techniques, we seek to offer our patients the best all round results, decreasing our risks, and to obtain this, it is fundamental to integrate chemical peels, (Alpha Beta Complex, TCA Chelated, TCA Enzymatic) simultaneously, with laser skin re-surfacing currently used in the periorbital and the perioral areas.

Laser resurfacing currently is used only for the treatment of severe photodamaged skin.