

ANTI-AGEING RESEARCH BREAKTHROUGHS

Top on the list of anti-ageing breakthroughs is a skin-resurfacing treatment known as CO2 Fractional Laser, writes DR ADRIAN MICALLEF, aesthetic physician at the Estetika clinic in Sliema.

The 'CO2' in **CO2 Fractional Laser** stands for carbon dioxide. This laser source combines the effectiveness of traditional carbon dioxide lasers (long thought to be the gold standard in wrinkle removal) with a state-of-the-art computer scanner which delivers powerful results without the traditionally harsh side effects.

"Basically, you are getting all the benefits of laser resurfacing, still the best way to remove deep wrinkles, but without the downtime and without the complication rate", confirms Dr Micallef, who trained at the renowned Clinica Dermatologica in Via Alfani in Florence on the technique using the DEKA SmartXide DOT laser.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

The natural aging process, combined with exposure to sun and other environmental pollutants, destroys collagen, the main protein of connective tissue that keeps skin plump and line-free. Laser resurfacing uses beamlets of energy light to bore tiny holes in the skin, which works to put

the body's natural collagen production on fast-forward.

Here's what's new: Fractional CO2 laser resurfacing does this in a way that prevents damage to the top layer of skin, offering maximum results with minimal recovery time. Fractionated lasers work in kind of a checkerboard pattern, targeting



microscopic square of damaged skin to reach about 30 percent of your skin's surface in one session, leaving the remaining untreated skin to help heal the treated areas quickly. Downtime is usually minimal after the treatments with redness and sometimes mild swelling for a few days. These systems are considered safe for most skin types and may be used for the face, neck, chest, and hands. The discomfort is entirely manageable when you are topically numbed and you have a friendly doctor who uses blasts of ice to frost your skin before the laser beam touches you.

The procedure is quick and can be tailored over the right number of sessions to suit the patient's lifestyle, which can be anything from

one to four treatments. The end result is undoubtedly smoother texture, tighter pores, fewer or lighter brown spots, springier skin that looks and feels younger and healthier. The benefits will last eight to ten years, which is the same degree of improvement which can be expected from a surgical facelift.



used to restore the ground substance of healthy skin using its natural building blocks. Being natural, they will be metabolized and removed by the body over a period of months, usually up to one year. Estetika recommends the state of the art Swiss line Anteïs. Semi-permanent fillers, meanwhile, such as Ellanse[®] from polymer specialists Aqtis Medical, tend to be made of synthetic materials which, once injected, do not react with human tissue, and for this reason, will stay in place and exert the desired tissue-filling effect, for much longer, running into years.

ANOTHER BREAKTHROUGH

Another popular anti-ageing breakthrough is the use of **Dermal Filler Injections** to volumise skin anywhere in the face. This can really sculpt a lifted, youthful look without surgery. Dr David Grech, aesthetic physician at Estetika, explains: "These injectables can be used to fill in lines and wrinkles, add fullness to the lips and cheeks, and, in some cases, fill in scars, and plump up sunken areas of the face."

Dermal fillers tend to group into two major categories depending on their chemical nature and their longevity in skin. Temporary fillers, mainly hyaluronic acid, the skin's natural elastic medium, are



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