

# Exilis Ultra RF Plus Ultrasound Excels for Lips and Hands



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Combining radiofrequency (RF) and ultrasound energy, the recently launched BTL Exilis Ultra from BTL Aesthetics (Framingham, Mass.) stands out as a no-pain, no-downtime procedure for rejuvenation and shaping of the face and body, without costly consumables. New proprietary protocols for the lips and backs of the hands using this device are generating a buzz.

BTL Exilis Ultra features controlled cooling, which provides a safety measure as well as a multilayer treatment capability (superficial for neocollagenesis<sup>1</sup> plus deeper for apoptosis<sup>2</sup>), Impedance Intelligence feedback-driven energy control and two applicators; one for larger body areas (back, love handles, abdomen, arms, legs, buttocks) and a small applicator for the face, neck and backs of the hands. According to Grace Liu, M.D. a dermatologist in Newport Beach, Calif., and one of the highest volume users of BTL Exilis and BTL Exilis Ultra in the U.S., "What attracted me to this device is that while others are also effective, in my experience, this one is unbelievably tolerable and consistently gives great results."

Ultrasound and RF are the two components of therapy with BTL Exilis Ultra, each serving a distinct purpose, said Suneel Chilukuri, M.D., medical director of Refresh Dermatology in Houston, Texas. "RF uses impedance to create controlled therapeutic subcutaneous thermal damage non-invasively, penetrating up to about 2.5 cm with minimal to no discomfort."

As Dr. Liu pointed out, the synergic effects of RF and ultrasound improve vascular perfusion and stimulate processes involved in the elimination of waste at the cellular level, improving cell permeability, nutrition and neocollagenesis. "Delivering RF and Ultrasound simultaneously also makes the procedure more comfortable and reduces the time it takes to reach the target temperature (between 41° C and 45° C) from around three minutes to about one," she said. "The goal of treatment is to maintain this temperature range for a therapeutically successful timeframe."

Using the Ultra Smooth protocol physicians can treat the backs of the hands, an overlooked region, Dr. Liu shared. "An untreated hand shows one's age, especially when juxtaposed with a treated face. We're seeing more demand for this procedure as therapeutic options have improved. While there have been numerous effective modalities for hand rejuvenation, BTL Exilis Ultra is by far the most comfortable."

In Dr. Chilukuri's opinion, the effect of Ultra Smooth is profound, but different, depending on age and skin condition. "In younger patients we see restoration of texture and tone, and in older patients we see improved skin quality with less bruising than we might normally see on the backs of the hands of older people."

For lips, the protocol is termed Ultra Plump. "This involves using the small applicator in swirling daisy-chain passes around the lip, especially between the nose and the upper vermillion border. This motion heats the area rapidly and comfortably, tightening the collagen to smooth out perioral lines," Dr. Liu explained. "This tightening effect provides a sort of 'lip lift' that also makes the lips appear fuller and more plump."

"The demarcation of the lip border fades with age," Dr. Chilukuri added, "and you can restore this definition with BTL Exilis Ultra. It creates that pinkness when used directly on the lip itself, even in skin cancer patients I've treated after previous reconstruction."

Dr. Liu advised that there is a ceiling for use of Ultra Smooth on the hands, but not so much for Ultra Plump. "Ultra Smooth is generally for the younger subset of patients,



Before Tx



After two BTL Exilis Ultra Smooth treatments

Photos courtesy of Grace Liu, M.D.

between the ages of about 40 and maybe 65. Through aging, sun damage, menopause and other factors, collagen depletion on the backs of hands brings us to a point of diminishing returns. You don't see this as much in darker skinned patients, where collagen depletion is expressed less dramatically, so you can pinch the area to test elasticity and determine if Ultra Smooth may be ill-advised," Dr. Liu said. "However with Ultra Plump, since the collagen depletion effect in the perioral area is much less pronounced, there's still plenty of collagen to work with in most cases." Both Ultra Smooth and Ultra Plump require a course of two treatments.

Fillers are a profound complement to either therapy, and Dr. Liu often recommends their adjunctive use to augment overall outcomes and enhance satisfaction. She suggests physicians add fillers at the end of a course of Ultra Plump or Ultra Smooth treatments, perhaps on the last session day after the final application. "Although my understanding is that it's safe to do so, intuition tells me it's better not to use fillers first," she clarified. "Also, on the lips or hands it seems clinically wise to perform the tightening therapy first, see how the outcomes manifest, and then inject fillers. This is especially true for the lips because people are very careful about the look of their lips and eyes. These are key visual focal points so the precise application of filler is vital to patient satisfaction."

Dr. Chilukuri agreed. "After two treatments with BTL Exilis I think we see better hydrated skin that is more apt to tolerate the procedure, so potential bruising is reduced."

Fillers may be especially useful on the backs of the hands, Dr. Liu specified. "Treatment with BTL Exilis Ultra will not provide volume or, as with the lips, the illusion of volume. Products cleared for use in the hands are needed to restore a more youthful volume to that area," she said, adding that it may also be beneficial to enhance hand treatment with modalities that address sun damage.

Dr. Liu sees BTL Exilis Ultra as an ideal option for the plastic surgery office as well. "I've spoken with a number of plastic surgeons in my area and the device seems to be an ideal adjunctive therapy because it's so comfortable and effective, and results manifest rapidly. With the lip treatment there is an immediate 'freshening effect,' with great results even after a single session, although the final outcome does take more time to fully manifest," she said. "In my experience the results rival those of fractional ablative lasers at a much lower cost, with no downtime. You don't get pain-free instant gratification like that in this profession very often."

"BTL Exilis Ultra also has no associated consumables," Dr. Liu continued, "making the device very cost-effective to operate, which affects return on investment significantly. Patients are willing and eager to undergo treatment and are satisfied enough to recommend it to friends and relatives, and that also has a positive effect on our revenue stream."

Additionally, the device is available via an affordable subscription plan without a credit check or other third party involvement, making it even more affordable. With a \$10,000 down payment, plus applicable sales taxes and monthly installment payments amounting to less than one treatment per month for 36 months, physicians can have BTL Exilis Ultra in their office, with no-cost upgrades; and they have 12 months to opt out.

#### References:

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Before Tx



After two BTL Exilis Ultra Smooth treatments

Photos courtesy of Grace Liu, M.D.



Before Tx



After two BTL Exilis Ultra Plump treatments

Photos courtesy of Grace Liu, M.D.