

Exilis Establishes Major Role in Body Contouring Practices

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Arm before Tx



Arm after four Exilis treatments
Photos courtesy of Sarah Sawyer, M.D.

Highly respected dermatologists and plastic surgeons alike are finding impressive results for both body contouring and tissue tightening with Exilis from BTL Industries, Inc. (Boston, Mass.). This innovative monopolar radiofrequency (RF) device reportedly provides precise delivery of potent thermal energy at a deeper depth than competing technologies. An advanced thermoelectric cooling system also ensures an unparalleled safety profile with minimal patient discomfort.

"RF allows you to treat everyone. Different skin tones are not an issue," said Jeanine Downie, M.D., director of image Dermatology in Montclair, N.J. Dr. Downie first became acquainted with Exilis last December while preparing for a non-invasive fat removal presentation that she gave in May 2011 at the *World Congress of Dermatology*, in Seoul, Korea. "Exilis was the first system that I tried on myself that actually worked." After two sessions, Dr. Downie noticed her love handles were going down, despite sustaining a knee injury that curtailed her running and eating more than usual as the holidays approached. "I was effusive about Exilis, to say the least. I have been looking for something like this for years. I am very happy with it, as are my patients."

Dr. Downie pointed out that although treatment "feels hot at times when melting fat, it is not painful, even when the outer skin reaches 41° to 42° C." Many of her patients describe the sensation as a warm or hot stone massage, without any anesthetic. "You are basically moving the tip all over a particular area," she said. The RF treatments can also be performed by her medical assistants, in contrast to true laser procedures, which in the state of

New Jersey can only be done by physicians. Hence, "my assistants get to spend more time with patients, which they enjoy," Dr. Downie said.

At Dr. Downie's practice, popular areas to melt fat in women are the stomach, love handles, outer and inner thighs, chin, upper arm, bra fat and the fat pads above the knees. In men, the stomach, love handles, chin and breast are primarily treated. With a series of four to eight sessions, spaced one week apart, "patients notice an improvement in their body contours," Dr. Downie related. "They look better in their clothes and many lose inches. One patient lost 3 inches from her abdomen in a four week period."

Dr. Downie has also had success tightening tissue with Exilis, in addition to reducing unwanted fat. "We can tighten the jaw, neck and around the mouth," she said. Tightening eyelids is particularly in demand to make the eyes look more open. A series of about six, 15 minute sessions, spaced one week apart can achieve this outcome.

"In a lot of places, I both tighten and melt the fat," Dr. Downie said. In many cases for tightening, "I tell patients that their wrinkles should diminish by about 50%, although a lot of them think they achieve a 75% improvement."

Despite other technologies that claim single treatment success, Dr. Downie's patients are more than agreeable to undergoing multiple sessions of Exilis because of the superior results achieved. "Patients see improvement as we go along," she said.

Dr. Downie also combines Exilis with neurotoxin and dermal fillers for tissue tightening in the perioral area. Likewise, when tightening the base of the face by the jaw, Exilis is followed

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Abdomen before Tx



Abdomen after four Exilis treatments
Photos courtesy of Marc Salzman, M.D., F.A.C.S.

by a dermal filler along the cheek bone region, “to kind of lift the whole face up,” she said.

Marc Salzman, M.D., F.A.C.S., director of the Salzman Institute of Cosmetic Surgery in Louisville, Ky., was initially more interested in the body contouring ability of Exilis than its skin tightening capabilities because he was already achieving acceptable results for skin tightening with broadband light. “Many patients need some cellulite reduction, but either cannot undergo surgery due to blood thinners, medical conditions or they simply will not fathom the thought of an invasive procedure, even if it is only laser lipolysis performed in the office,” Dr. Salzman shared.

Before acquiring Exilis last November, Dr. Salzman considered two competing technologies: cryolipolysis and low-level laser light. “However, cryolipolysis was suitable for only select body parts that would fit in the applicator,” he noted. “For example, you could fit part of the abdomen, or a hip if it was the right size, or the back roll, but you couldn’t treat the neck, arms, inner thigh or outer thigh. Also, there would be a significant cost if a new applicator became available.” Additionally, cryolipolysis involves high disposable costs.

Dr. Salzman was also concerned about the lengthy three months it took to observe apoptosis with cryolipolysis. “I thought my patients’ caloric intake would exceed a three month, 20% at best, reduction in fat volume.”

On the other hand, the science for applying low-level laser light on the fat “just didn’t make sense,” Dr. Salzman said. “I don’t believe you

can truly reduce fat with mW levels of laser.”

“In contrast,” Dr. Salzman continued, “Exilis had pretty good data from Europe that showed it worked effectively for fat reduction.” He also liked the fact that there are no disposable costs and that results are noticeable within ten days instead of three months. “As a bonus to me, I can use Exilis to tighten skin as well.”

The Salzman Institute of Cosmetic Surgery frequently combines Exilis with laser lipolysis for further tightening. Starting two to three weeks post-healing, Exilis is normally scheduled four or five times, spaced seven to ten days apart. This combination treatment is ideal for patients who seek to avoid invasive procedures like a surgical face-lift, brachioplasty or abdominoplasty, but want to achieve the maximum tightness. “You can only apply so much heat in a single session of laser lipolysis,” Dr. Salzman stated. “However, with several treatments of heat from the outside in, which is what Exilis does, collagen can be increased over a longer period of time and thus increase the amount of tissue tightening.”

Dr. Salzman estimates that laser lipolysis / Exilis combination treatments result in 10% to 15% more tissue tightening than laser lipolysis alone. Only two patients out of the hundreds he has treated for fat reduction with Exilis have failed to respond. “Results are very consistent,” Dr. Salzman said.

For Dr. Salzman, the two most common areas that he treats with Exilis are the belly and the hips. In general, patients undergo four to six sessions,



Before Tx



After four Exilis treatments

Photos courtesy of Marc Salzman, M.D., F.A.C.S.

“When treating the body, we observe some circumferential reduction and skin tightening. The response rate has been uniformly high after a series of four treatments.”

depending on how they respond, typically at 10 to 14 day intervals, with an average session lasting 40 minutes. “Everyone has been able to tolerate treatment with no anesthesia at a skin-level temperature in the low 40’s C, which probably translates to the mid-50’s C deep into the fat,” said Dr. Salzman, who himself has undergone several treatments. “It feels like a hot stone massage.”

Dr. Salzman said his staff enjoys using Exilis and that the safety profile of the device is excellent. “We have had zero problems – no blisters, nothing,” he conveyed. Patients are also happy. “In fact, many sign up for other areas, such as arms or inner or outer thighs,” he said.

Moreover, Dr. Salzman has recommended Exilis to his colleagues. “As plastic surgeons, I believe we need to have something in our armamentarium that will fit in that niche between abdominoplasty and liposuction and nothing,” he said. “Exilis works very well as a maintenance program for surgical face-lifts, for instance, starting three to five months out, to condition the skin against relaxation of the face-lift.” Maintenance protocols also retain patients.

According to Miles Graivier, M.D., F.A.C.S., owner of North Atlanta Plastic Surgery & Day Spa in Roswell, Ga., Exilis is the only monopolar RF device on the market that has a depth of penetration exceeding 2 cm (20 mm). “This depth has been proven to elevate temperature over 7° C, without causing pain or skin burns. Most bi-polar RF devices cannot deliver enough thermal energy deep enough for body shaping needs.”

By cooling the skin’s temperature with Exilis, “you achieve focused thermal energy at any depth that you desire,” Dr. Graivier explained. “You can actually tune the depth of penetration of the heat, while still obtaining elevation of 7° C.”

Dr. Graivier has positioned Exilis in his practice in several ways including non-invasive skin tightening, fat reduction for the body, and skin tightening with tunable localized fat reduction in the neck, face and décolleté. For skin tightening overall, popular areas to treat are the abdomen, flanks, thighs, arms, décolleté and even the knees. A typical protocol is one session every seven to ten days, for a series of four treatments. “I think we are seeing some fairly nice results and a high level of patient satisfaction,” Dr. Graivier said. “When treating the body, we observe some circumferential reduction and skin tightening. The response rate has been uniformly high after a series of four treatments.”

Dr. Graivier has also found Exilis to be an attractive alternative to liposuction in patients seeking small-area volume reductions. Skin tightening is an added benefit for these patients. “There is also a very high safety factor,” he said. Furthermore, “there is really no disposable cost. Treatment is very affordable with many applications, including our post-lipo patients, adding an additional level of some skin tightening.”

Plastic surgeons could greatly benefit from using Exilis, in part because treatment can be performed by ancillary personnel. “Treatment is comfortable, results are noticeable fairly quickly and seem to be maintained over a period of time, at least for



60 year old before Tx



60 year old after four Exilis treatments

Photos courtesy of David Vasily, M.D.

“The patient feedback has been the best I have had with any device. The consistency of results is truly unmatched by any other device I have purchased.”

six months,” Dr. Graivier reported. “Results are also additive because you are stimulating collagen and melting fat. In particular, collagen stimulation over several treatment sessions is something people are requesting themselves.”

For a long time, Sarah Sawyer, M.D., president and owner of Dermatology & Laser of Alabama, in Birmingham, Ala. was cynical about the efficacy of skin tightening and body shaping with laser or RF devices. “I felt for the kind of money that patients were being charged, the results were not as good as they should have been,” she said. However, Exilis won her over because of the lack of disposables to purchase, the shortened treatment time and minimal patient discomfort. “The cost benefit really stands out with Exilis.”

From 8 am until 5 pm, Exilis “is never off,” said Dr. Sawyer, whose practice started offering these treatments last summer. “Even through lunchtime, my aesthetician is constantly booked.” The practice markets Exilis through the Internet and in-office.

For skin tightening alone, the face, neck and chest are the three most popular areas to treat at Dr. Sawyer’s practice, at one month intervals for a total of four sessions. Each session lasts about 20 minutes, with roughly 20% of patients achieving ‘extraordinary’ results and approximately 50% with ‘very good’ outcomes. “Our non-responder rate is only about 2%,” Dr. Sawyer advised.

In Dr. Sawyer’s experience, areas of the body treated for fat reduction are the abdomen, thighs, buttocks and the back, with at least

four monthly sessions. As with skin tightening, “there are very few non-responders, as long as patients are selected carefully,” Dr. Sawyer cautioned. “Over 50% achieve great or amazing results.”

About 20% of patients opt for dual fat reduction / skin tightening during each session, which is accomplished by doing two passes with different settings (first pass, fat reduction; second pass, skin tightening).

Dr. Sawyer’s practice charges between \$250 and \$400 per area for each session, with one treatment free when purchasing a package. “This is definitely affordable treatment,” Dr. Sawyer said. “The patient feedback has been the best I have had with any device. Patients come to me and say ‘look at this result,’ instead of me having to ask them about results.” Similarly, she pointed out that “the consistency of results is truly unmatched by any other device I have purchased, which totals about 14.”

Importantly, “the overall safety profile is phenomenal, so I don’t have worries or concerns about complications, as I would with other devices,” Dr. Sawyer said. For fellow dermatologists, Exilis “is a sound investment.” Particularly for skin tightening, “you won’t find a better investment. In this day and age we have so many technologies that are either questionable or too expensive for patients and physicians. Exilis has given me a renewed confidence as to where body shaping and skin tightening are evolving. You can treat patients safely with very little pain, achieving consistently good results and patient satisfaction.” ■