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skin

Lift tone & tighten

IN A NON-SURGICAL APPROACH TO FACELIFTING, **ULTHERAPY** BY HIGH TECH LASER USES ULTRASOUND TECHNOLOGY TO LIFT THE FACE AND NECK. CAITLIN BISHOP REPORTS.

In lifting and tightening the skin on the neck, chin and brow, Ultherapy, distributed by High Tech Laser, signifies the latest technology in non-surgical, non-invasive facelifting. It is designed to counteract the skin laxity associated with ageing, and uses focused ultrasound technology to improve skin texture, refine the facial contours and, most notably, lift the skin on the face and neck for an anti-ageing effect.

'Ultherapy uses the fundamentals of ultrasound technology to address the same muscles of the face and upper neck that are affected in a surgical facelift or brow lift,' explains American dermatologist Dr Vivian Bucay, who will speak at the Australasian Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgery's (ASAPS) Non-Surgical Symposium in May.

'Ultherapy can be effective in creating a more defined jaw line, firming the skin under the chin and on the neck, tightening the skin on the cheeks and reducing sagging around the eyes,' she continues. 'It is also effective in improving lines around the mouth.'

Similarly, Queensland cosmetic physician Dr Mary Dingley uses Ultherapy to help combat the signs of ageing and revitalise the complexion. She explains ultrasound therapy can achieve consistent and predictable results.

'Focused ultrasound seems to produce more reliable results than what we were using before,' she says. 'Like all non-surgical lifting procedures, Ultherapy involves a wait to see the final results – around six months – but we seem to get far more predictable effects with this modality.'

‘Ultherapy causes a gradual lifting effect, due to the formation of new collagen in the skin’s deeper layers’

Ultherapy uses a patented DeepSEE technology to achieve noticeable results. This technology affords practitioners a visual image of the subcutaneous skin layers, up to 8mm deep. It is here, in the superficial muscular aponeurotic system (SMAS), where Ultherapy's ultrasound treatment inflicts small, fractional thermal injuries, without damaging the skin's upper layers. These injuries trigger the body's healing response and cause tightening and shrinkage in the deep facial tissue.

'The three-dimensional, digital imagery allows me to see below the surface of the skin and accurately gauge depth,' Dr Bucay explains. 'During treatment, I move the transducer over the treatment area, laying down parallel lines of ultrasound waves.'

For improved results, treatment can be performed at different depths using alternative transducers. The SMAS

and dermis can be tightened using the 4.5mm and 3mm transducers respectively, while the 1.5mm transducer delivers effective results around the eye area.

Though multidimensional lifts can create holistic and universal results, Dr Dingley says the different transducers

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can be used for different skin concerns. 'Different transducers will focus at different depths to produce different effects. The deepest one focuses on the "SMAS" layer, a fibrous layer below the skin of the face which is usually tightened in surgical facelifts,' she explains. 'A mid-depth transducer focuses on the deeper layers of the skin, and a more superficial one may be used for skin texture issues.'

Common treatment areas for Ultherapy include the forehead, mid and lower face and eyelids. Treatment can also help reduce the appearance of crepey and drooping skin on the neck and cheeks, as well as the appearance of nasolabial folds and marionette lines.

'The typical patient is one with mild to moderate laxity, usually of the cheeks and submental (under the chin) area,' Dr Dingley says. 'Ultherapy causes a gradual lifting effect, which occurs due to the formation of new collagen in the layers targeted during treatment. This takes place gradually, over a six month period.'

In most cases, treatment is reasonably well tolerated and patients can typically resume everyday activities immediately after. Dr Bucay often combines Ultherapy with other modalities to optimise results following treatment. 'I usually have an initial consultation with my patients to explain how Ultherapy works and explore the possibilities of combining procedures,' she explains. 'Ultherapy can be partnered with laser resurfacing or other treatments to treat age spots and surface irregularities.'

Although there are some instances where surgery is needed to achieve the most suitable results in facial rejuvenation, Dr Bucay explains Ultherapy offers an effective option for those patients looking to rejuvenate their face using a less invasive process with next to no downtime, if any.

'Ultherapy affords a wonderful alternative for the patient who wants a firmer, more youthful-looking face and neck without surgery,' says Dr Bucay. 'Ultherapy improves skin integrity and resilience, using a discreet process with minimal downtime.' **csbm**