

Skin Tightening Revisited

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Collagen, the major structural protein of the body, is in every organ and is especially important in the skin. Common signs of aging, such as facial lines, wrinkles and sagging skin, result from a decrease in collagen in the skin and other tissues. As the skin loses collagen, it thins and becomes inelastic.

Skin tightening using radiofrequency and/or a device may be considered a non-surgical option. Common radiofrequency devices are Solta's Thermage device or Alma's Accent. Common pulsed light devices, Cutera's Titan, Sciton's ST and Syneron's Velashape, combine radiofrequency and light energy. The newly released SymphonyRF, or ThermiRF, uses radiofrequency subdermally.

How does Radiofrequency or Pulsed Light Work as Skin Tightening Treatments?

Radiofrequency (RF) works similarly to the way your microwave oven reheats food. RF energy acts on your tissue to induce heat. The goal is to control the heating to be just enough to stimulate good tightening of your tissues. Pulsed light treatments can work in two ways: by converting light to heat in your tissue (similar to the sun warming your skin) and by stimulating repair cells in your skin.

Compared to other skin tightening treatments, the major difference for light and RF is that the epidermis, or outer skin layer, is not damaged in any way, but the radiofrequency energy or light energy heats the deeper skin layers during the treatment. The body's natural wound healing response

then causes collagen changes in the skin with resultant skin tightening. A series of these treatments is usually performed.

Premedication may be required depending upon device, treatment area and your individual needs. One or more passes may be performed. Treatment may take anywhere from several minutes to one hour or more to complete.

NON-SURGICAL SKIN TIGHTENING BENEFITS

- A non-invasive technique
- No surgery required
- Minimal discomfort
- Minimal risk of change in skin
- Used for all skin types
- Rare downtime

NON-SURGICAL SKIN TIGHTENING CONSIDERATIONS

- Non-surgical skin tightening cannot give the same results as a facelift or body tuck procedure.
- These treatments are useful after a surgical procedure to improve skin quality.
- Multiple treatments are usually needed.
- Risks/Complications/Patient Safety
- Small burns are rare but possible.
- Skin may be red in the treated area for a few hours.
- Rare loss of volume beneath the treatment areas has been reported.
- Non-surgical skin tightening devices have minimal recovery and full activity may be resumed almost immediately.

The effort to find ways to treat sagging skin continues but technology keeps advancing. The quest to understand and treat the aging process has stimulated the next generation of devices which treat the deeper tissues more effectively. 🌿



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