

Sciton's STAR Procedure Combines SkinTyte and MicroLaserPeel

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Patients achieve skin tightening and skin smoothing during the same session when combining the Broadband Light (BBL) and the scanned Erbium:YAG (Er:YAG) modules of the Profile laser system from Sciton, Inc. (Palo Alto, Calif.).

"For years, BBL has been used for photorejuvenation," said Michael Kaminer, M.D., a partner at Skin Care Physicians in Chestnut Hill, Mass. "However, by shifting the spectrum of BBL, you end up with slightly deeper penetration. This impacts deeper structures and there is more collagen heating. Skin remodeling is induced. The net effect is skin tightening."

A scanned Er:YAG 2940 nm laser, known as the Contour module, is used to perform a MicroLaserPeel (MLP). This light resurfacing procedure allows the user "to precisely control how much skin he wishes to ablate," Dr. Kaminer said. "Therefore, you avoid ablating to a depth which causes the delayed and prolonged healing associated with the more aggressive resurfacing techniques."

To perform the STAR procedure, Dr. Kaminer first applies a topical anesthetic. "You don't need any oral sedation throughout the procedure," he said. A clear lidocaine gel is left on the face for about 45 minutes before beginning SkinTyte. "We literally treat right through the topical anesthetic. The degree of aggressiveness is determined by the number of passes. We do between three and five passes over any one area, all at the same time." The skin tightening portion takes between 30 and 40 minutes for a full face. The lidocaine gel is then completely removed. "We wipe the skin with gauze and alcohol wipes," Dr. Kaminer said.

An MLP takes on average 20 minutes. "We peel between roughly 20 and 30 microns of depth," he said. The depth of ablation is partially determined by the amount of photodamage. The patient also helps select the depth. "For someone who wants to heal rapidly, we peel between 10 and 20 microns," Dr. Kaminer explained. "These patients are back in action in three to four days. But for those who desire a more aggressive or deeper peel, we can go as high as 40 to 50 microns, or even deeper. The recovery time, though, would be about one week."

Dr. Kaminer typically recommends two to four sessions of the STAR procedure, spaced six to eight weeks apart. "It is an approach I call 'inside out' and 'outside in'. The inside out is a tightening of the collagen from the SkinTyte, and the outside in is the skin smoothing and texture and color improvement from the MLP. Patients comment that their skin feels smoother and tighter after only one treatment. And there is incremental improvement with additional sessions."

Moreover, an MLP provides results that compare favorably with fractional technology and with fewer treatment sessions, according to Dr. Kaminer, an assistant professor of dermatology at Yale Medical School in Boston, Mass.

In addition, with STAR, the depth of the MLP is usually slightly less than when performing it separately. "There is a synergy when using both modalities," Dr. Kaminer explained. "This results in slightly less healing time. Also, in theory, there should be fewer side effects. Remarkably, the STAR procedure has been impressively safe, although the redness may last as long as one week. But we haven't seen any significant side effects."