

WISH

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5 Feast on
fresh looks
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TABLE

Get **YOUNGER-LOOKING** skin • Tempting **SNAKE** prints

A younger-looking you

Time may heal all proverbial wounds, but it doesn't do much good for the actual body. And neither does gravity. As we age, skin starts to sag, wrinkle and lose elasticity because of the breakdown of collagen, a kind of protein "glue" that holds things together. With a little help, however, the body can make some new glue, restoring a more youthful look to the skin.

New tools can tighten and lift skin and stimulate collagen production — without surgery.

New Orleans dermatologist Dr. Mary Lupo says two powerful options are **Ultherapy**, which uses ultrasound, and **Exilis Elite**, which operates with radio waves. Less invasive and less expensive than plastic surgery, the techniques reverse some aging with virtually no downtime. "Both are best for mild to moderate laxity, since neither can replace a facelift for severe laxity," Lupo says.

With both methods, some changes are seen in a few weeks, but full results can take several months. That's both good and bad news: There's no immediate gratification, but the subtle change seems more natural to those around you.

Ultherapy is FDA approved for lifting eyebrows, the neck and chin, and décolletage lines and wrinkles. An ultrasound image guides the technician in delivering sound energy, which passes through the skin's surface to treat at its foundation, stimulating collagen production and tightening along the way.

Exilis Elite's radio waves stimulate collagen production, too, but also can be used to spot-treat fat deposits, such as lower-abdomen pooches or love handles. "The RF energy of the (machine's) handpiece heats the fat and causes cellular damage," Lupo says. The body gradually washes out the cells. Ultherapy is the more sophisticated of the two technologies, with software and an ultrasound device to guide technicians. "It's more precise than general heating. Exilis and radio devices are classified as bulk heating," she says. Other radio wave-based methods on the market include Thermage and Pelleve.

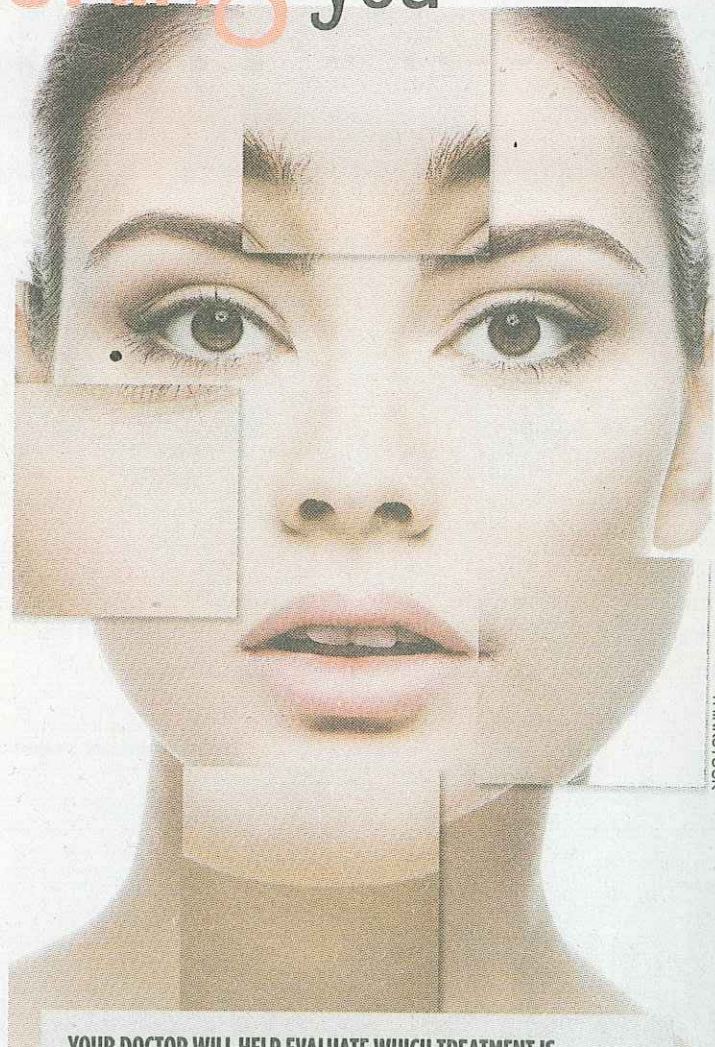
Do the skin changes last? The answer is a qualified yes. "Both are effective at turning back the clock, but not stopping it. So if you have good results, I suggest you repeat in two to five years, depending on age, to tighten what loosens over those years," Lupo says.

Expect to suffer a little for your newfound youth. Neither treatment is painless, but "most agree that Ultherapy is worse," Lupo says. She offers ibuprofen and anesthesia injections to lessen discomfort, and valium, if needed. Both, though, are far less painful than recovering from plastic surgery.

Lupo says she won't hesitate to recommend plastic surgery instead if that's what a patient needs, but also notes that dermatologists have a large arsenal of tools to improve not only the tightness but the quality of a patient's skin. "I can combine tightening with Botox and fillers that can give results that begin to rival a facelift. Putting filler along the jaw to define it while tightening the skin, and putting Botox in the muscle that pulls the face down, you get more life.

"Exilis can also be combined with the Genesis laser to improve skin quality. ... The synergy gives more dramatic results than any one alone."

— Karen Taylor Gist



THINKSTOCK

YOUR DOCTOR WILL HELP EVALUATE WHICH TREATMENT IS BEST FOR YOU, BUT DR. MARY LUPO OFFERS SOME GUIDELINES.

- ▶ Since Ultherapy typically takes only one treatment and Exilis Elite requires four to six, at two-week intervals, Ultherapy is better for someone with little time to spare.
- ▶ Ultherapy also is more expensive, so Exilis might be better for those on a budget. A single Ultherapy treatment is \$1,500 for the chest and \$2,500 to \$3,000 for the face and neck, Lupo says, while Exilis is about \$450 per session. If you need more than the typical four sessions, however, the costs can become comparable.
- ▶ Ultherapy is better for the brow lift and for chest lines.
- ▶ Exilis is preferable where there also is some fat to dissolve, such as on the neck or jowls. "Exilis, you can go back and forth (between removing fat and tightening). Ultherapy has never been used as fat dissolving."
- ▶ "Ultherapy is the more aggressive, and certainly three (sessions) can rival a mini facelift." The treatments would be spaced about six months apart.