



Ultrasound body shaping
 Dr Leslie Koark, a plastic surgeon with his own practice, says this high frequency energy is now applied in more ways than pregnancy scans. "He has expanded to include therapy, like removing calcifications in joints, for instance. And now, it's been modified to target fat cells."
 When intense ultrasound waves are directed at the fatty area, the energy hits fat cells located just below skin, causing them to vibrate and break up. According to Dr Chiu, the waves also generate heat in skin, which leads to gradual skin remodeling and tightening.
 Currently one of the more common non-invasive treatments for body shaping, it also has FDA approval. "With ultrasound, there are no needles. We know how it works," says Dr Koark, who offers the ultrasound treatment known as Ultrashape at his clinic.
 During the painless procedure, a plastic showerhead-like handheld device that emits frequency is pressed against skin and moved around the problem areas. "It causes fat cells to disintegrate and release fat, but won't harm other cells. The fatty acids are then absorbed by the liver and excreted in stool when you defecate," says Dr Koark.
 Dr Low Chai Ling, medical director of The Sloane Clinic, who also offers Ultrashape, says that on top of needing no downtime or recovery period, results tend to be smoother compared to liposuction, where side effects include lumpiness or scarring in the treated area.
 "These limitations are why ultrasound works best for the not-severely-overweight who want a shapelier body. For better results, some clinics combine it with other methods and technology. At The Sloane Clinic, Ultrashape treatments are complemented with a session of Thermage, which uses radiofrequency to tighten and tone sagging skin. "Thermage offers more intensive cellulite-smoothing as well as skin-tightening effects," says Dr Low.

Dr Low Chai Ling, medical director of The Sloane Clinic, which also offers Ultrashape, says that on top of needing no downtime or recovery period, results tend to be smoother compared to liposuction, where side effects include lumpiness or scarring in the treated area.

These limitations are why ultrasound works best for the not-severely-overweight who want a shapelier body. For better results, some clinics combine it with other methods and technology. At The Sloane Clinic, Ultrashape treatments are complemented with a session of Thermage, which uses radiofrequency to tighten and tone sagging skin. "Thermage offers more intensive cellulite-smoothing as well as skin-tightening effects," says Dr Low.



a session of Thermage, which uses radiofrequency to tighten and tone sagging skin. "Thermage offers more intensive cellulite-smoothing as well as skin-tightening effects," says Dr Low.

Currently at Jet Concepts facial salon, the Jet-M machine sprays liquid ingredients such as medical-grade hydroxy acid and vitamin solutions into skin via a dimpled pen-like device. The force of the spray reportedly also helps to exfoliate and flush out trapped impurities, like how powerful water jets remove grime from walls.

According to Dr Juan Ho, a dermatologist at Jean Ho Skin and Laser Clinic, similar techniques are used in medicine, where molecules are propelled at high velocity to penetrate skin. The faster the speed, the smaller the droplets and the better the penetration.
 "Many vaccination programs are sometimes carried out in developing and developed countries using jet-injection rather than standard syringes and needles. The drug is introduced deep into the skin using pressurized gas from a medical-grade device," she explains.
 However, Dr Ho says there's a difference between the kind used in medicine and cosmetics. "Medical equipment can produce gas jets with speeds of up to 100m per second in order to get through to skin's epidermis and upper dermis. But at this speed, there is significant risk of causing pain and bruising to skin. The discomfort would be like that of a needle prick."

The salon's version, she says, is unable to reach such a velocity. "For hydration, exfoliation and drawing, lower speeds are sufficient as only penetration into skin's outermost layer is required."
 However, founder of Jet Concepts Gladys Cheng says that there is little risk of the spray damaging skin, despite its supposedly hitting the face at roughly 200m per second. "The jet only causes abrasion or bruising if it's held from above the skin at the same point for two to three minutes. As long as the device is constantly moved, it's safe and what you get is exfoliation of dead skin and the opening of pores to allow the infusion of vitamins and oxygen into the skin," she says.
 The salon is also careful to ensure that its therapists are well prepared. They receive six weeks of training on how to use the

Jet-M machine and how to gun a jet before they are allowed to administer the treatment. Anne Tan, a PR consultant who did the facial, says the process was completely pain-free. "It feels like getting a cleansing facial and a deep lymphatic massage at the same time without the therapist touching my skin," she says.
 Prices start from \$85. For more information, visit www.jetconcept.com.

Soundwave cellulite busting
 Acoustic Wave Therapy, which utilizes sound energy, was originally used to break up kidney stones, and treat muscle and tendon disorders. But patients soon noticed a beneficial side-effect: it tackled cellulite as well, which is why the technology has since been adapted for this specific purpose.

The gun-like device works by emitting rapid bursts of audible soundwaves in a gel medium. According to Dr Ivan Tan, founder of Nu Reflections Centre for Cellulite Therapy, which offers this treatment, these sound waves create short bursts of acute pressure that are reportedly strong enough to disrupt the structure of cellulite. Patients experience a stinging sensation, which can be slightly uncomfortable, but reportedly makes skin look smoother and more toned after just one session. And unlike contrast lasers, Dr Tan says there's no risk of affecting other organs.
 The treatment has its sceptics, such as Dr JJ Chiu. "I don't believe that Acoustic Wave is safe or scientifically sound. We don't have sufficient understanding on the complex nature of cellulite. The safest treatment with some scientific data of efficacy are radiofrequency, like Thermage, and laser action. But there's not a single scientific study on acoustic wave treatment for cellulite."

Dr Tan, however, says cellulite seems to respond well to such stimulation. "The effects after one treatment are mild and don't last," he says. "Patients need a minimum of six to 10 sessions, spaced a week apart, for more permanent results. Most say they see continual improvement even two months after their last treatment. For maintenance, they should return for treatments once a month. So far, it's shown promising results. Besides, I trust the R&D of Nuera Medical, the company that manufactures the machines. It's a pioneer of shockwave therapy," he says.

At \$350 per session, it's not exactly low maintenance. But don't try to substitute them with sighs at a local champing club. "It's work, the pressure needs to be focused. The sounds at a club are too diffused to do any good," says Dr Tan.