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THE BEAUTY EXPERT

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Bottoms Up!

The shape of things—specifically, the butt we covet—has changed in recent years. So long, stick figure. Hello, high, round, and firm. By Rory Evans

Smoldering Eyes,
Silky Skin

High-tech Fixes?

Cellulite is a democratic affliction—but it doesn't come with the power of veto, unfortunately. Every year, a new batch of high-tech treatments claims to offer checks and balances. Here, we examine the promises of five of the latest.

What it is: MED SCULPT

How it works: This FDA-approved handheld device delivers ultrasonic energy that helps dissolve fat cells, most of which are then excreted in the urine. It also supposedly breaks up the connective bands that trap fat and create cellulite, in turn diminishing its bumpy look.

Second opinion: "Ultrasound does penetrate more deeply than some of its fat-fighting predecessors," says David E. Bank, associate in clinical dermatology at Columbia University/Presbyterian Hospital in New York City. "However, the amount of energy needed to destroy these bands is inordinately high." He adds that even if the bands were severed, they would reform within 6 to 12 months.

Cost: \$150 to \$250 per treatment, six to ten treatments needed.

What it is: LPG LIPOMASSAGE

How it works: A handheld vacuuming-rolling-kneading device that reduces the appearance of cellulite. But rather than simply lie there doing nothing, the recipient must contract and relax certain muscles repeatedly, which the company claims releases fat more efficiently. In a recent study funded by LPG but conducted by an independent French lab, LPG-treated fat cells broke down and were excreted.

Second opinion: "It's possible this could work, but the results have not yet been published in peer-reviewed medical journals, which tend to be an indicator of the validity of a study," says Tina Alster, clinical professor of dermatology at Georgetown University.

Cost: About \$100 per session, 8 to 12 sessions required.

What it is: NEEDLE-FREE MESOTHERAPY

How it works: The device has nine vibrating metal balls emitting microcurrents that the company claims force a solution containing

phosphatidylcholine, a derivative of lecithin that allegedly dissolves fat, five times deeper into the skin than topical application alone would.

Second opinion: "When phosphatidylcholine was banned in Brazil for safety concerns, everyone took note," Alster says. "Nothing is banned in Brazil." There are no studies showing whether applying phosphatidylcholine topically is safe, and "if the injection version of mesotherapy has never yielded convincing results, why should this version?" Alster asks.

Cost: \$400 per treatment, a minimum of two sessions needed.

What they are: HYALURONIC-ACID INJECTIONS

How they work: The same substances that fill wrinkles are now plumping up dimpled skin. According to a study published in the *Archives of Dermatology*, regular injections of Restylane boost collagen production, which strengthens skin over time and may keep fat from bulging through gaps and appearing as dimples.

Second opinion: Most experts believe that Restylane injections could work, but they don't think other hyaluronic-acid fillers would do the same. Because they are injected in areas you sit on, less-stable fillers "can disperse too quickly for them to do any good down there," says Doris J. Day, clinical assistant professor of dermatology at the New York University Medical Center.

Cost: For a large area, it takes three to ten syringes of Restylane (\$500 to \$800 each) per session, about every six months.

What it is: SMOOTHSHAPES 100

How it works: This FDA-approved device, which launches this October, combines three technologies: light, laser, and vacuum massage. In a new study, it reduced cellulite in 81 percent of subjects (verified by MRI tests) after nine months.

Second opinion: "I haven't heard much about this device, but I do like the idea of a combination treatment for cellulite," Alster says. "The fact that there was MRI documentation is good."

Cost: \$250 per treatment for ten treatments.

—ABBIE KOZOLCHYK

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