

THE BEAUTY EXPERT

# allure

NOV

**Inside  
The Secret,  
Complicated  
World  
Of Muslim  
Beauty**

**Goddess  
Hair  
Fuller,  
Longer in  
Minutes**

**Taking Pains  
How Much  
Procedures  
Actually Hurt**

*The*  
**NEW  
Power  
Beauty**

**Amanda  
Seyfried**  
Has  
Absolutely,  
Positively  
No Filter

**Doing It Like a Boss**





# Taking PAINS

Discomfort and beauty are always in tension.

So we teach ourselves the algorithm of: Is it worth it? We learn the calculations between ouch and better skin (or flatter abs, or a firmer jawline, or...). But you can't do the math without knowing what kind of pain you're in for.

We went to the people who know best—the patients—to find out exactly what it feels like to be on the receiving end of all those needles, blades, and lasers.

*BY KATIE BECKER*

# ULTHERAPY

An ultrasound-based technology for tightening skin on the face and body

**The Patient Report:** "Over the last several years, I've done Ultherapy three times on my face and neck. The first time, I took Percocet beforehand for the pain, but it didn't help much. The doctor held the handpiece against my skin and delivered zaps from the middle of my neck to just above my jaw. With each one, there was an intense burning feeling that lasted two or three seconds. Pain-wise, it was an eight on a scale of one to ten. The next two times, I took Demerol; the pain was more like a three—I just felt a hot sensation every time there was a pulse. Afterward, my skin was slightly flushed, but I didn't need more painkillers. My jawline definitely looks tighter now." —Amanda\*, 42

**The Doctor's Note:** "I usually give Valium or Demerol, but some of my patients use no painkillers or sedatives at all. The machine delivers heat into the muscles that tighten up coils of collagen; it feels like a sparkler hitting your skin. We 'stamp' it across the face. Most of the time the pain is a four or five out of ten, but you get some zingers of nine. Treating the whole face takes a few hundred pulses—that can wear on you. Most patients see results in about a month." —Paul Jarrod Frank, a cosmetic dermatologist in New York City

**The Pain Meter:** ●●●●●

# COOLSCULPTING

A freezing procedure shown to reduce fat on the abdomen, thighs, and upper arms

**The Patient Report:** "I work out and eat well, but I had this ring of fat around my belly, like a life preserver, so I tried CoolSculpting. A vacuum-like contraption—around the size of an iPad mini—sucks in about two inches of your skin, which feels bizarre. The area starts to feel increasingly cold, but not painfully so...then you go numb. I didn't need an anesthetic or a painkiller. I did three areas—my love handles and the area below my belly button; each one took 45 minutes. The most uncomfortable part was sitting in the same position for three hours. Afterward, my skin was a little red and felt cold for a while, but I went to dinner that night and the gym the next day. About a month later, the life preserver was gone." —Allison\*, 28

**The Doctor's Note:** "The best candidates have fat that's 'squeazy'—not the hard, beer-belly type. If you make it through the first six minutes of the cold, you'll be fine. That's when you go numb. Afterward, we use a massaging device on the area. As the skin comes back to life, it feels sort of good—like your hands warming back up after a snowball fight. You might have some bruising and light soreness, but you can go straight back to work and working out. It takes two to six weeks to start seeing results, and some patients need more than one session." —Marmur

**The Pain Meter:** ●

# CELLFINA

A device with a small blade to sever the fibers under the skin that create cellulite

**The Patient Report:** "You lie on your stomach, and the most painful part is the injection of the lidocaine. Once that kicks in, you can't feel anything. The blade's motorized, though, and the sound—like an electric knife—is jarring. I had 21 dimples treated across my butt and thighs; it took 45 minutes. The dimples were gone immediately. For 48 hours I had soreness, like after a workout, but it didn't hurt enough to even take Tylenol. The bruises lasted about ten days." —Mickey Williams, 42

**The Doctor's Note:** "The ideal candidate is under 50, so her skin has enough elasticity to spring back. The device—it looks like a petri dish—hovers over the area being treated and delivers a shot of lidocaine. Then a suction cup grabs the skin and inserts a tiny knife below the skin to cut the fiber that creates the dimple. The sound of the blade is a little disturbing; we offer noise-canceling headphones so you can listen to music. Most patients have tenderness and bruising afterward; improvements are visible in a few days." —Melanie Palm, a dermatologist in Solana Beach, California

**The Pain Meter:** ●

# MONALISA TOUCH

A fractional CO<sub>2</sub> laser used to treat signs of aging and atrophy on the vaginal walls

**The Patient Report:** "I wasn't experiencing the vaginal dryness that can come with menopause but did this preventively—three treatments, each two months apart. Your feet are in stirrups, like at a pelvic exam, and they insert a probe that's like a big metal tampon. You feel a slight vibration that's somewhat pleasant—imagine a very low-intensity vibrator. It was done in ten minutes. I haven't noticed major differences, but there's a bit more moisture, and I'll go in for the recommended yearly touch-up appointment." —Michele Cloud, 49

**The Doctor's Note:** "Decreased estrogen levels can lead to vaginal dryness and discomfort. This laser triggers cellular regeneration that leads to new blood vessels and more collagen and elastin. Some women feel a little pain around the vaginal opening during the treatment, so we might apply a numbing cream. But others say it feels good; a patient or two has even come close to orgasming. A few weeks after, a lot of women say things feel more 'juicy,' and for many, it's totally life-changing." —Maria Sophocles, a gynecologist in Princeton, New Jersey

**The Pain Meter:** ●