



CAN ACOUSTIC WAVE THERAPY REALLY TREAT CELLULITE?

Bury ALL fat
misconceptions
with proper
cause and effect
education.

text by Robyn Linn Weinstein

The battle seems endless for most of the female population as recent studies reveal 85 percent to 98 percent of women have cellulite. At least we're not alone. As women struggle in their own skin to look and feel beautiful, the media continue to showcase thin, beautiful women who appear to have perfect bodies—even though thin women and celebrities (who are in the best shape of their lives) still have these unwanted dimples. As frustrating as it may sound, doctors have stated that cellulite cannot be cured by diet and exercise or by topical creams and cosmetic products. That's a disturbing realization that will haunt women on a daily basis. So, if exercise and massage don't work, what options are available? Remarkably, new scientific evidence has proven that a new procedure may end the majority of women's body issues.

According to recent studies, acoustic wave therapy (AWT) is one of the first treatments available that addresses the underlying cause of cellulite. This dimpling appearance of

the skin is a result of collagen pulling the skin down, known as a rubber band effect, and the thinning of collagen, which allows fat to push up into the skin. The contraction of collagen (the connective tissue support system of fat) actually blocks blood vessels, causing the skin to protrude and appear dimpled—a look women spend a lifetime despising. These dimples, however, are the result of poor circulation and less-than-ideal production of collagen in the skin. In order to treat the cellulite, we must relax the tissues or collagen and improve the circulation in the skin.

“What most people don't understand is that the problem with cellulite is not with the fat but with the connective tissue [collagen] that supports the fat. To treat the cellulite, we must treat the collagen in order to get rid of the dimples. It's not a matter of being overweight. It's a skin condition,” says Dr. Bill Johnson of Innovations MedSpa in Dallas, Texas.

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This prior lack of knowledge and research has stumped doctors and physicians across the nation, resulting in a myriad of futile remedies and concoctions. Until AWT went public with the D-Actor device, many women placed

when they walk out of the doctor's office, they're probably not going to notice any difference for about three months' time.

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their trust in companies in the hope of reducing their cellulite. However, as many doctors and medical practitioners understand, cellulite can never be cured or permanently removed — only temporarily treated. With that said, the technology behind AWT is now considered the best alternative to reduce the appearance of cellulite.

About 1800 women have already been treated with the D-Actor machine since D-Actor was made available for use in the States. Out of the 1800 patients, 90 percent have noticed improvement in the appearance of their skin. Sixty percent to 70 percent of the women who have had the treatments are satisfied with the results and the amount of money they spent.

“The whole point of AWT is to stimulate elasticity in the tissue and break up the collagen [the connective tissue] that has become fibrous and tense, revealing a more even look and toned area,” says Dr. Ines Braceras of Essence Medical Spa in Coral Gables. “The pressure waves in AWT rapidly contract and expand the skin, causing the connective tissue to stretch and increase the elasticity of the collagen, ultimately reducing the appearance of dimples. My clients have seen dramatic results.”

The technology behind AWT was originally used in physical therapy offices and designed to help patients ease the pain associated with poor circulation and stiff joints and tendons. It was developed by Storz Medical, a well-known Swiss manufacturer of medical equipment. After doctors found that the acoustic wave pulses were reducing the appearance of cellulite, they decided to conduct research-based clinical trials to test their findings.

Last year alone, over \$650 million was spent on equipment needed to perform non-invasive aesthetical treatments to reduce the appearance of cellulite — obviously a waste of money. These machines will soon be discarded now that AWT has proven to be the wave of the future.

According to MedSurge Advances, the nation's largest independent provider of aesthetic medicine products and services, patients must be aware that AWT does not cure cellulite, but addresses the underlying problem: the stiffening of the connective tissue and the lack of adequate blood flow exchanges. MedSurge is the exclusive U.S. distributor of AWT, and sells aesthetic products solely to physicians, ensuring clients that the procedures will be done professionally and effectively.

“My first reaction was that nothing works for cellulite. However, after much research, there is evidence that the pressure wave actually breaks up the collagen bands and thickens collagen in the dermis,” says Dr. Johnson, who was the first to conduct extensive research and clinical trials on AWT.

“We know and study the equipment that is out there for cellulite treatments, and AWT is the best alternative to reduce the appearance of dimples,” says Rob Huckels, Vice President of Marketing for MedSurge Advances. “We did our research and found that the D-Actor is the most pain-free treatment yielding actual results, especially compared to other machines that are now being used to treat cellulite.”

Over 200 doctors nationwide, including Drs. Johnson and Braceras, are currently working with AWT, using the D-Actor machine, to perform what seems to be a miracle. However, like any procedure, AWT takes time to show results. Each person must be patient and understand that

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This pain-free procedure can dramatically reduce the appearance of cellulite on the thighs and buttocks after a series of eight treatments over eight weeks or six treatments twice a week for three weeks. Significant results appear after only three weeks of the full treatment. Although the results are long-lasting, they are not permanent and require one maintenance session every three to six months to maintain the skin's elasticity and smooth appearance. "Realistically, not everyone is going to benefit from the AWT," says Dr. Braceras. "Honestly, we purchased the D-Actor to

patient can purchase for use at home. The Wellbox requires no doctor visits and can be used as often or as little as desired.

"I knew endodermology did not make sense. The only reason why I endorse the Wellbox is because it allows women to own a machine that they can use without paying for several maintenance visits. All cellulite treatments are going to be temporary, so why not have one that you own? My wife uses it and loves it," says Dr. Rubinstein.

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offer real results to my patients. There is so much out there that people are not happy with. I witnessed some great results with the AWT and thought it would be great to offer that to the community in Coral Gables and South Florida."

Remember, cellulite is partially a genetic trait that is passed down from our mothers and fathers. Unfortunately, there's not much we can do to reverse this process. Some doctors believe AWT will help somewhat, but others believe it is only a matter of time before our parents' DNA inheritance ultimately reigns. And still, some physicians are skeptical of administering treatments that require numerous doctor visits and sessions with no permanent solution.

"I have yet to find a procedure that works for cellulite," says Dr. Adam Rubinstein of Turnberry Plastic Surgery in Aventura, Florida. "I only use products and administer treatments that I believe in, and I have not found any cellulite treatment to work well. Cellulite is a fibrous attachment of skin to the underlying tissue—it's a structural thing. Just about everything that we [doctors] do will not prove to be a true fix."

The only equipment Dr. Rubinstein does use for the temporary reduction of cellulite is the Wellbox. This scaled-down endodermology machine is a full unit a

Other non-surgical treatments, such as Endermology, do not work. In 1999, the FDA actually ordered Cellulite Reduction of New York to stop suggesting that Endermology could have more than a temporary effect on cellulite. In addition, the FDA has not cleared ultrasound procedures. They actually target fat cells, not cellulite. Mesotherapy works with injections that are placed under the surface of the skin. It sounds painful, and it still doesn't work. Thermage and VelaSmooth, non-surgical procedures that use radio frequency, take 12 to 18 sessions and require maintenance sessions every three weeks. One important rule of thumb: Nothing will permanently remove cellulite. It can only assist in the appearance of the skin.

"Nothing is going to completely get rid of cellulite for good," says Dr. Braceras, "but AWT is one of the only procedures that will really help. At least women, have a chance to wear shorts and skirts year-round."

Women must understand that there is no quick fix for anything. The body is a complex system that requires more than just sound waves and intense heat to change its makeup. Nothing is going to permanently destroy our cellulite—thanks to Mom and Dad—but at least we can make an improvement. If that's reason enough to make you feel more confident in your own skin, it's definitely worth a try. **■**