

I Tried the Newest Laser Treatment for Acne Scars — Look at My Before and Afters

This article originally appeared on xoJane.com.

By **KATHLEEN BRAINE** /xoJane.com

Updated Aug 01, 2018 @ 10:00 am

Each product we feature has been independently selected and reviewed by our editorial team. If you make a purchase using the links included, we may earn commission.



CREDIT: ANDRESR/GETTY IMAGES

Ever since I can remember, I've had acne. I've written before about how my hormones went crazy — and subsequently did a number on my skin — starting when I was thirteen, and since then I tried multitudes of treatments to get my skin under my control. In the last few years, I've combined a regimen of diet changes, birth control solutions, and the heaven-sent spironolactone to keep my skin (fairly) consistently clear. However, because of the fusion of my wayward skincare youth and my super-duper pale skin, I have been left in my late 20's with a face that is festooned with mild

to moderate acne scars – especially around my chin and mouth. I know, the joys of problem skin never end, right?

I've always longed to get rid of these scars. Not only are they fairly unsightly, they also serve as a constant visible reminder of how terrible my skin used to be – something I don't like to remember whenever I see my face in the morning. Even when I was in high school, I would sometimes use MS Paint (I know, right?) to zoom in on photos of myself and pixel-by-pixel erase the discoloration and pitting on my chin from my acne scars before I posted them on the Facebook (it was called "the Facebook" back then).

VIDEO: 5 of the Most Expensive Facials on the Market

After the ceaseless acne flare ups on my face began to subside, I began to look into options to more permanently correct the offending scars. Yet, the options that I initially attempted – different chemical peels, topical scar gels, and micro-needling – all made only *a small visible difference* (though my skin felt really nice afterwards). Additionally, the more aggressive treatment options I discovered – notably Fraxel Restore and the more ablative Fraxel Repair laser resurfacing – quite frankly, scared the hell out of me.

True story; I was so afraid of doing a Fraxel Restore treatment that I moved an appointment I had set up *five* times before ultimately canceling it (my sincere apologies to everyone).

I'm no stranger to doing weird things to my skin, but for some reason, the idea of using lasers on my FACE, when I would need some sort of downtime to recover, is something that has always seemed insane to me. Lasers are dangerous! You can cut people up with them!

Because of this, when my favorite Medical Aesthetician, Amanda Sanzone from [Dr. Matthew Schulman Plastic Surgery](#), told me about Sublative Laser Resurfacing – a highly effective laser resurfacing treatment with less downtime and visible skin damage than Fraxel – I was initially super skeptical. But, because Amanda had also introduced me to the most effective scar treatment I had tried so far (Dermapen micro-needling) I decided to trust her.

Despite my initial trust, I arrived at Dr. Schulman's office for my treatment and

immediately tried to chicken out (seriously, I did). Luckily, because she knows me, Amanda was able to expertly convince me that my face wasn't going to be horribly disfigured by showing me her own photos from her recent Sublative treatments (it didn't hurt that her skin was looking amazing that day). She assured me she would only do a mild Sublative treatment on one of the lower settings so that I could see how the treatment worked and how my skin reacted.

According to Amanda, Sublative laser is a fractionated radiofrequency device that stimulates healthy collagen and elastin production in the skin and is among the most effective resurfacing laser treatments available. The ability of the laser to treat acne scarring, aging skin and pore size with little to no downtime is what leaves her patients extremely happy with the results. Sublative laser works by directing radio frequency energy directly into the skin in a grid pattern. Because the top layer of skin remains intact, the skin around the grid accelerates collagen stimulation and keeps the outer epidermis from being completely destroyed — limiting downtime and visible skin damage. After the treatment, new and healthy skin is revealed, correcting scarring, discoloration, fine lines, stretch marks, and pore size. Amanda told me to expect to see mild to moderate redness for 1-2 days, and that the grid marks from the laser handpiece could be barely visible for up to four days.

Still nervous, but determined, I closed my eyes as Amanda washed my face thoroughly and then applied a numbing cream to my skin. Once she had waited fifteen minutes for the cream to take effect, she began to use the handpiece to quickly apply the laser in a grid like pattern around my face. The pain actually wasn't terrible, but what I immediately noticed was that Amanda wasn't kidding when she said my skin would feel hot.

The heat and the burning sensation spread rapidly and increased in intensity as the process continued. After less than 10 minutes, Amanda was done with my whole face, and she handed me ice packs that I accepted with relief.

My face wasn't as red as I expected, but I left the office with my face burning as if I had rubbed jalapeños across a sunburn. It was definitely unpleasant. However, after my 35 minute subway ride and 10 minute walk back to my apartment in Brooklyn, I could feel the burning starting to subside. I had been instructed to avoid anything on my face other than ice packs for the following 12 hours, so I ate a salad, watched some Netflix,

and quickly fell asleep around 9:45.

The next morning I awoke to no more burning, but rough, almost scale-y feeling skin with a moderate tinge of redness. If I leaned into the mirror and looked closely, I could clearly see a grid pattern from the laser. Luckily for me, I had my new Charlotte Tilbury Magic Foundation on hand, so I was able to cover up the redness and roughness with only two coats of foundation and a lot of Make Up Forever HD Microperfecting Powder.

On day two after the treatment, I woke up with barely any redness visible at all. The grid marks had gotten a little more defined, but I was actually more fascinated than bothered by them, and my makeup easily disguised my skin as I went out for the day.

By the time five days had passed, I was already texting Amanda telling her that I definitely wanted to do this again on an even higher setting, as the downtime and side effects were so minimal, I was willing to deal with even more for more results. Though the grid marks were still slightly visible on my skin, I already saw a perceptible improvement in the texture and severity of my acne scars, and I was excited to try to accomplish even more improvement.

Ultimately, after a week, I was 110% sure that I was sold on Sublative laser. As Amanda had instructed, I applied a mild retinol cream (Amarte Wonder Cream) at night for a few days after day five. My skin felt soft as butter, and I could see that my scars were softer and less apparent than they had been before the treatment. I wouldn't say that I'm exactly a Laser convert, but I'm definitely not afraid of the heat anymore, especially if it is Sublative. I'll update you guys with more images as soon as I get my next treatment.

By KATHLEEN BRAINE /xoJane.com