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Doctors Weigh in On HIFEM Muscle Stimulation Plus RF/TPE Combination

By Kevin A. Wilson, Contributing Editor



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With a suite of modalities that attack different issues and areas via a variety of vectors, BTL Aesthetics (Boston, Mass.) is a force to be reckoned with in non-invasive body sculpting technologies. There's no denying the results because the research is there: BTL technologies work if you use them as directed. In combination, the synergy is equally evident, according to expert physicians.

An excellent example of this includes the EMSculpt and EMTone. As stand-alone treatments, each provides results that will bring patients back into the office for more and can be integrated into any body sculpting plan because of their unique mechanisms of action. Together, they can provide homerun results.

According to Paul J. Frank, MD, a cosmetic dermatologist and medical director of PfrankMD in New York, N.Y., combination treatments are always the best intervention. "When people look at their bodies, they see one thing – that it's just no good – but the problem is usually multifactorial," he said. "It is not just the skin, or fat or muscle, so a multifactorial solution will yield the best results. Therefore, the more therapies we can bring to bear, the more aspects of the silhouette can be corrected, and the better the overall outcome is going to be. When the procedures complement each other, it is even better, and that is what we have with EMSculpt/EMTone."

EMTone, the newer of the technologies, uses radiofrequency (RF) plus targeted pressure energy (TPE) to battle cellulite effectively. A combination itself, this comfortable treatment works for both hard and soft cellulite by delivering homogeneous heat via monopolar RF to affect the skin and underlying tissue. Concurrently, the fibrous septae are relaxed and slackened by the mechanical manipulation of TPE, which also enhances collagen turnover and stimulates microcirculation as shown in histology studies. The overall effect is improved skin quality, remodeling of

surface and underlying tissue, and visibly improved appearance of cellulite.

According to dermatologist Lesley Clark-Loeser, MD, who practices in Davie, Fla., a typical course of treatment is four sessions spaced over about two weeks. "This is a truly effective therapy for improving cellulite, which is a high-demand indication because there hasn't been much in the way of effective treatment available to us. It not only addresses different types of cellulite; it also accounts for the multifactorial nature of the condition."

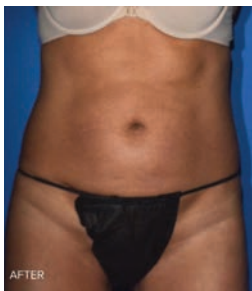
"In my experience it is the first device to combine RF and mechanical energy in this way," added Dr. Frank, "so you're able to boost collagen and improve connective tissue components while breaking up irregularities such as fat pockets and dimples in the skin."

EMSculpt has been making waves since its arrival on the scene and is becoming more popular as the device evolves with the addition of smaller skeletal muscle applicators, increasing its utility. "EMSculpt uses algorithms designed to rapidly and variably target all regional muscles using focused electromagnetic current of different intensity levels," said cosmetic dermatologist Mariano Busso, MD, who practices in Miami, Fla. "This provides supramaximal contractions throughout the treatment session to induce muscular hypertrophy."



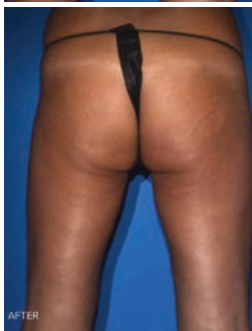
Before and after treatment with EMSculpt and EMTone

Photos courtesy of Mariano Busso, MD



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Not only does this use of high intensity focused electromagnetic (HIFEM) energy improve underlying musculature, it causes upregulation of local metabolism as the supramaximal contractions – far beyond what one could achieve voluntarily – create a local energy deficit affecting nearby fatty tissue. Four 30-minute sessions of EMSculpt, spaced two to three days apart, are required to produce results, which take a few months to fully manifest.

“This device is truly novel, bringing a new category of aesthetic treatment into the armamentarium,” Dr. Frank explained. “To me, EMSculpt is to the body what injectable neurotoxin was to the face a few decades ago.”

“What happens with the combination is that we start with EMSculpt to build the underlying musculature, which has a serendipitous effect on localized fat as energy needs cause fat cell apoptosis,” said Dr. Frank. “I don’t sell EMSculpt as a fat removal device, but people definitely notice reduction of fat. Then we have EMTone to treat the surface and subsurface skin and tissue.

“It is like a layer cake; the musculature is the deepest layer, with fat going into the subdermis, then the dermis and epidermis with the fibrous septae throughout,” Dr. Frank continued. “This combination treats all layers of the cake. EMSculpt treats the deeper layers, fat and muscle, where EMTone is everything above that including improvement of microcirculation, better skin tone and quality, and reduction of laxity.”

“What this kind of therapy is great for is addressing body contouring needs the patient has a hard time describing,” said cosmetic dermatologist Dendy Engelman, MD, who practices at Manhattan Dermatology & Cosmetic Surgery (New York, N.Y.). “It could be the underlying musculature, skin laxity, textural issues, things like that, mostly in combination. I start with EMSculpt to restore

underlying musculature and reduce fat, then apply a course of EMTone to address the skin and underlying tissue. You can do both treatments the same day, safely.”

Both devices are also very easy and safe to use, and as such are commonly delegated to ancillary staff, improving profitability. “EMTone requires a little more attention by the user, EMSculpt mostly requires supervision and simple adjustment over a treatment session, and both are totally safe for trained staff to apply to patients with confidence,” said Dr. Clark-Loeser.

“The similar protocols make concurrent treatment convenient for patients, and the more I can rely on physician extenders to provide excellent care, the greater the impact on our bottom line due to efficient use of time and expertise,” Dr. Clark-Loeser added. “Most of my staff is cross-trained on either or both devices, so no matter who is around or who is on vacation, we’re able to function.”

Patient response to the combination has been enthusiastic, according to Dr. Clark-Loeser. “Most women, starting at age 30, come in with textural changes and skin tone issues, but will benefit from the improvement of underlying musculature. As they age the problems are more profound, but results can still be achieved. Both low- and high-BMI patients will benefit, but the higher BMI group won’t see as much of a visible result.”

This combination is ideal for professionals on the go, or anyone seeking maximum results with minimal hassle. “In New York City where I practice, everybody is busy,” said Dr. Frank. “They want to know how many treatments, how much time, how much is involved, and what kind of downtime they can expect. This is perfect because it is fast and easy, involves relatively few sessions, has no downtime and requires nothing but a little time. We can often do both treatments concurrently, saving more time. And maintenance is just as easy, maybe a few sessions a year if they take good care of themselves. You can’t beat that.”

Non-Invasive EMSELLA/EMSCULPT Combination for Complete Core Health

By Kevin A. Wilson, Contributing Editor

The core is often thought of as the abdominal and back muscles, but there is much more to the story. The numerous small pelvic muscles that stabilize the body and fine-tune motor activity are often overlooked. A strong core leads to maximum athletic performance while an incomplete core strength profile often leads to injury. And, importantly, anyone can benefit from a solid foundation of core strength for these very reasons.

The challenge: building the core is not as simple as doing bicep curls. “Building the biceps, triceps or pectorals involves relatively limited movement, more or less depending on the muscle, and simple exercises to strengthen them. The core supports all of these muscles and is much harder to work thoroughly without performing a wide range of different exercises, so it is a much more complicated prospect,” explained urologist Judson Brandeis, MD, an expert in sexual medicine and male rejuvenation in San Ramon, Calif.

“Range of motion, balance and overall strength all start with core strength,” Dr. Brandeis continued. “In the lower trunk these muscles work together as a system, often working against each other, but still as part of a distinct whole that affects many aspects of life that we take for granted until they’re impaired. This is painfully evident for women after pregnancy. While we can’t treat the stretching of the pelvic floor, we can restore the core musculature using a new and profound combination therapy of EMSELLA and EMSCULPT.”

Targeting local musculature, both EMSELLA and EMSCULPT from BTL Aesthetics (Boston, Mass.) deliver focused electromagnetic energy (HIFEM) of varying intensity and duration of pulses to induce supramaximal contractions non-invasively over the course of therapy. The result is a complete stimulation of the muscles, both large and small, independent of movement because induced contractions are involuntary. None of the local musculature is missed, and each muscle is worked well

beyond any person’s capacity to exercise, regardless of athletic ability.

Individually, each device delivers astounding results, but together they provide a second-to-none core building workout. Furthermore, both devices require minimal supervision of ancillary staff, so physicians need not spend a lot of time performing the actual treatment, thus freeing them for tasks that are a better use of their valuable time.

“These devices effectively build core musculature in a manner impossible through exercise alone, with more therapeutic benefits than we could possibly state here,” Dr. Brandeis advised. “For example, my posture is better since undergoing EMSCULPT treatment, because the back and abdominal muscles work together.”

While not specifically studied as of yet, the combination of EMSELLA and EMSCULPT offers the distinct benefit of providing a more complete, hassle-free treatment of core muscles. This is especially true in the lower trunk, where the combination can



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Before and three months after treatment with EMSCULPT

Photos courtesy of Carolyn DeLucia, MD

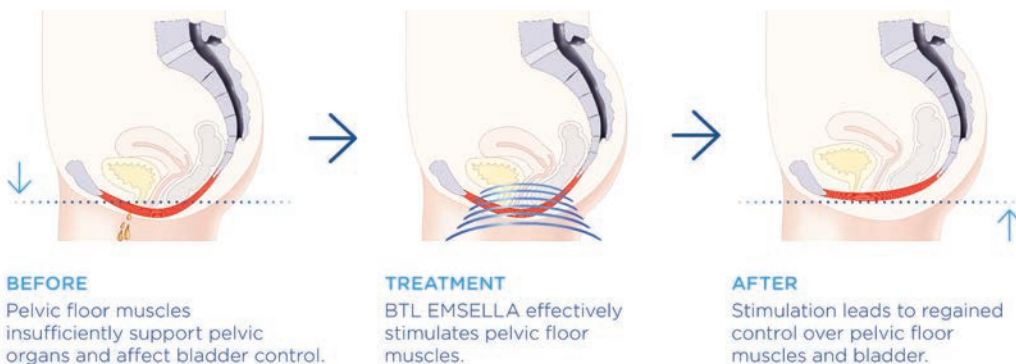
address the full circumference of muscular anatomy, and at depth.

EMSCULPT uses the HIFEM procedure to create tens of thousands of supramaximal contractions in the treated areas such as the back, abdomen and thighs. New applicators allow for the treatment of skeletal muscles on the limb as well.

EMSELLA also employs HIFEM, but is focused on pelvic floor strength, sending its carefully crafted electromagnetic pulses upward through a dedicated treatment chair. Women simply sit in the chair fully clothed – no muss, no fuss. It is FDA cleared for the treatment of incontinence, but the strengthening and toning of core muscles in the pelvic region may provide myriad benefits not yet thoroughly studied. Regardless, both devices are safe and easy to use. A course of EMSELLA treatment is typically six, 30-minute sessions, done two times per week. With EMSCULPT, four, 30-minute sessions are spaced about two to three days apart.

The pelvic floor supports pelvic organs and is part of the system that manages urination. Weakness and lack of control in these muscles is often a significant factor leading to incontinence. According to obstetrician/gynecologist Carolyn Delucia, MD, director of VSPOT MediSpa in New York City, N.Y., this may stem from deconditioning due to aging, childbirth, menopause or other common factors, and therapies generally involve the manual training of these muscles.

“EMSELLA treats all forms of urinary incontinence because it strengthens all pelvic floor muscles,” Dr. DeLucia stated. “Patients may experience leakage when coughing, sneezing or working out; they may have sudden urges their weakened muscles are unable to hold back for long, or they may experience any or all of these symptoms. Regardless, EMSELLA can help.” The impact on quality of life is extraordinary.



“Women avoid, or altogether cease, many activities, including sex, or avoid social situations because of incontinence,” Dr. DeLucia shared. “The statistics on how many women deal with these issues are staggering. Improvement leads to a marked return of self-esteem and a sense of restored normalcy.”

One area where this combination excels is in the mommy makeover – therapeutic interventions designed to restore a woman to some semblance of what her body was like before she had children. This may involve treatment of incontinence, or treatment of abdominal separation – the separation of abdominal rectus muscles after childbirth.

Cosmetic dermatologist Dendy Engelman, MD, who practices at Manhattan Dermatology & Cosmetic Surgery (New York, N.Y.), dealt with significant abdominal separation post-childbirth. “It takes more than sit-ups to improve this, and in extreme cases surgery is required. If you have had C-sections, you’re going to be even less inclined to have additional surgery in that area,” she pointed out.

“In my case it wasn’t a weight-related thing, you could literally place two fingers there, the separation was that severe,” she explained. “I noticed improvement using EMSCULPT by about the fourth session, but over time the improvement was significantly greater. Without these treatments I would have just roughed it because I didn’t want more surgery with the associated risks and loss of work time. It is phenomenal to have this kind of simple, nonsurgical therapy at our disposal. It avoids every negative aspect of surgery, but gives a near-surgical result, in my opinion.” She added that the condition might also be prevalent in patients who were born with some level of super-umbilical hernia as well.

“We’ve also seen in studies that abdominal separation is directly correlated with urinary incontinence and weakness in the pelvic floor,” added Dr. Delucia. “The musculature is basically contiguous. So, we can safely infer that using EMSCULPT to treat abdominal separation will complement EMSELLA treatment. What this all means is that we can take a full-scale surgical mommy makeover, which costs a lot and involves a fair amount of risk, and reduce much of it to two non-invasive treatments that will be much less risky and much less expensive.”