

# Let there be light!

Lasers and light therapies are becoming increasingly popular due to their low pain factor and quick recovery times. Here, we chat to Dr Jay Burns, a pioneer in the field of skin rejuvenation, who explains how these non-surgical treatments work



**M**ost people of any age would like to improve their skin texture, even their skin tone, and get rid of brown and red spots.

Lasers promise to achieve all of this, and they are revolutionising the skincare game. They are non-invasive, suitable for almost all skin types, and promise little down time – very different to a lot of other treatments on the market!

World-renowned plastic surgeon Dr Jay Burns was one of the first people to see laser's potential application to skincare. He initially worked in general surgery before moving to plastic surgery.

Dr Burns was always interested in lasers so he enlisted the help of physicists from Texas State Technical Institute, who explained to him how lasers worked. "I then met Rox Anderson, who was one of the pioneers in laser skin treatments. He's been involved in 80 per cent of the lasers that have come to market over the past 35 years."

Dr Burns initially used lasers to treat vascular tumours and port wine stains, especially in children. Over time, lasers grew more specialised, and skin resurfacing treatments were invented.

He now works as an aesthetic surgeon and is a big advocate of Sciton's laser treatments, including Broad Band Light (BBL) Hero/Halo and Moxi,

which are hugely popular with Kim Kardashian and Victoria Beckham.

## **BBL AND MOXI**

BBL is a treatment which involves using different types of light and heat to treat texture, spider veins, acne, sun and age spots, with little to no downtime. The handheld device only targets the affected layer of skin, meaning nothing else is harmed during the process.

"None of these light wavelengths cause cancer, unlike sunlight," Dr Burns says. "This treatment is very fast and also has good cooling for the epidermis, leading to little pain. It feels like a warm rubber band for most people."

The heat also stuns and injures collagen, which promotes the production of new collagen and elastin, leaving skin thicker and plumper.

Moxi targets water and makes the top layer of skin slough off over five days. It's also suitable for people with darker skin tones. "It's not an open wound," Dr Burns continues. "If you combine BBL Hero with Moxi, that's our number one treatment. For more damaged skin, we recommend the BBL Halo." Patients can usually return to normal activities following treatment. The skin will be red for about an hour, but they must avoid



direct sun exposure and wear sunscreen afterwards.

People with scleroderma [a rare condition that thickens skin and tissue throughout the body], extremely sensitive skin, and autoimmune diseases are not suitable for the treatment.

A study from Stanford University revealed that people who did BBL three times per year for three years showed that the genetic make-up of their skin was changed from aged DNA to a more youthful group of DNA.

"The ageing genes are turned off, while the younger DNA is turned on. Over the course of 10 years, people's skin can look better than when they started. It's not a magic wand, but it's pretty close," Dr Burns adds. "Combined with good skincare, three BBLs a year can yield great results, and people can stay away from the more aggressive lasers."

Overall, Dr Burns says that lasers are designed to improve the quality of the skin. However, he admits they won't replace injectables or surgery, as each of these treatments target different types of ageing.



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signs of ageing.

“Wearing sunscreen is the number one non-negotiable,” he says. “However, all the studies have suggested that people are making two mistakes when it comes to sunscreen.

“Firstly, they don’t put on enough sunscreen, and secondly, they don’t reapply. The average amount of sunscreen a person puts on is one-sixth of what they need.

“Most sunscreens degrade rapidly in the sun. The best ingredient to have in a sunscreen is zinc oxide. Years ago, this was the ingredient that was in the white sunscreens, which you put on the skin and it stayed there, like a white paste. This ingredient has now become microparticulated. It goes on white, but it rapidly turns clear.”

Dr Burns recommends his patients to use a sunscreen with zinc oxide, as it lasts longer than any compound in the sun. However, it will only last on our skin for 80 minutes, so it needs to be reapplied every hour and 20 minutes.

The doctor also recognises that we as human beings don’t often follow the rules, especially when it comes to SPF. For this reason, he recommends combining your sunscreen with an antioxidant.

“If the sun gets by your sunscreen, it starts to create chemical reactions that produce harmful substances that affect our DNA, cause inflammation and ageing. An antioxidant, like a vitamin C, will bind up those harmful substances before they act negatively on the skin.”

It’s also worth noting that the skincare products themselves don’t have to be expensive in order to work. “A trusted skincare line that has good reviews is enough,” Dr Burns says.

The doctor also admits that he himself probably should have been more careful with his sunscreen as a younger man, but now he has started using it in earnest, he’s noticed an improvement in his skin. “It’s never too late,” he adds.

**Interview by Áine Kenny**

■ BBL Hero, Halo and Moxi treatments are available nationwide at reputable aesthetic clinics.

PHOTOS: GETTY

**FOUR PILLARS OF AGEING**

**GRAVITATIONAL DESCENT**  
This involves the skin slowly being dragged downwards over time. “You see this with heavy brows, jowls, skin collecting underneath the neck and lines lateral to the mouth called marionette lines,” Dr Burns says. “The only treatment for this is pulling that skin up via surgery. While certain lasers can do some mild tightening, it’s important that people understand that for some types of ageing, surgery is the most effective treatment.”

**DYNAMIC LINES**  
Dr Burns says if you imagine sitting down in a pair of linen trousers, they will crease and develop lines from all the movement and bending. The same thing happens to our skin over time. “Dynamic lines can include crow’s feet, lip lines, forehead furrows. These can be addressed with injectable neurotoxins, which will stop the muscles contracting,” he explains.

**VOLUME LOSS**  
As we get older, hollowing occurs. “The skin becomes less plump over

time. Usually we first notice it in cheeks and temples. Volume gets a bad name at the moment, as you see people overfilling, especially lips, which doesn’t look good,” Dr Burns says. “When you restore volume correctly, it can have a very profound, rejuvenating effect.”

**SKIN SURFACE**  
As we age, the canvas of our skin gets worn out. “This is mainly caused by sun damage. People start to notice age spots, pigmentation and dilated blood vessels,” Dr Burns says. “Melanocytes in our skin can become disrupted and cause pigmentation. Skin can also become flaky and thin.” Lasers can make the skin look fresh again, so the canvas that goes over the other signs of ageing is the best it can be.

**PREVENTION**  
Despite all the advanced treatments we have nowadays, Dr Burns says it is important to have a good skincare routine as it can prevent the visible

