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LASER THERAPY

the benefits

The power of light can do amazing things for your body, as Lorraine Sathicq discovers

From freshening your face to fixing your feet, lasers are increasingly useful in the world of health and beauty. They work by producing a concentrated and powerful light source, either in a steady beam or in short bursts.

Here, experts tell what lasers can do for you.

IMPROVE EYESIGHT

"LASIK is a corrective eye surgery to improve distance vision. It uses laser technology to create a flap on the surface of the eye, allowing the surgeon to subtly change the shape of the eye and allow shortsighted people to see without glasses."

A new technique called SMILE laser offers a painless, low-risk alternative that reshapes the eye via short bursts of laser energy and keyhole surgery. It takes about five minutes per eye to perform and involves hardly any downtime, with vision clearing overnight."

– Dr Patrick Versace, Vision Eye Institute, Sydney

COST: From \$3000 per eye.

CHECK OUT: visioneyeinstitute.com.au

TATTOO REMOVAL

"The picosecond laser is the latest technology in tattoo removal, delivering ultra-fast pulses of light to quickly disrupt ink granules within the skin, fragmenting them into tiny particles that your immune system can eliminate."

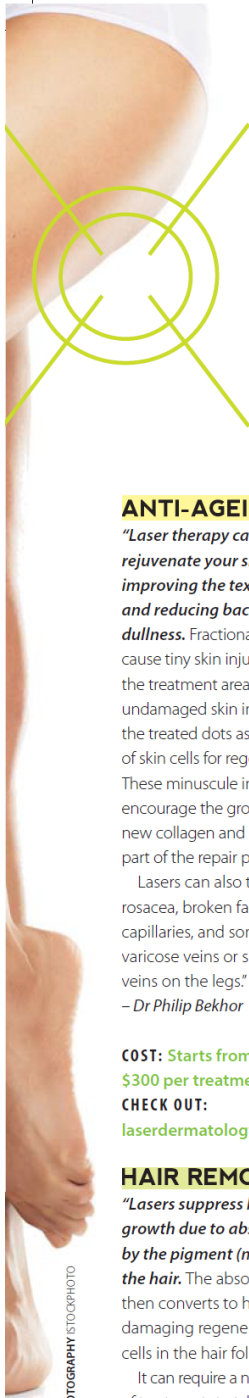
The new lasers work well on traditionally stubborn blue and green inks."

– Dr Phillip Bekhor, Laser Dermatology, Melbourne

COST: Varies, but expect to pay about \$265 for 10 minutes (treatment for a palm-sized tattoo).

CHECK OUT: dermcoll.edu.au to search for a dermatologist specialising in tattoo removal.





PHOTOGRAPHY: STOCOPHOTO

ANTI-AGEING

"Laser therapy can rejuvenate your skin by improving the texture and reducing background dullness. Fractional lasers cause tiny skin injuries over the treatment area, leaving undamaged skin in-between the treated dots as a reservoir of skin cells for regeneration. These minuscule injuries encourage the growth of new collagen and elastin as part of the repair process.

Lasers can also treat rosacea, broken facial capillaries, and some small varicose veins or spider veins on the legs."
 – Dr Philip Bekhor

COST: Starts from about \$300 per treatment.

CHECK OUT: laserdermatology.com.au

HAIR REMOVAL

"Lasers suppress hair growth due to absorption by the pigment (melanin) in the hair. The absorbed light then converts to heat energy, damaging regenerative cells in the hair follicle."

It can require a number of treatments to take effect

and results can vary. "Because it specifically targets the pigment structures, it is ineffective on grey, blonde or light red hair."
 – Dr Philip Bekhor

COST: Depends on area of treatment. Starts at \$200.

CHECK OUT: drphilipbekhor.com.au

DENTAL PROCEDURES

"Laser technology can correct a 'gummy' smile, where the teeth look too short and the gums too visible. The laser is used instead of a scalpel and provides more precise contouring of the gum line. Because the laser cauterises as it cuts, bleeding is minimal and infection less likely.

"Dentists can use laser in place of a drill for superficial cavities and may also use laser light to supercharge bleaching agents for rapid teeth whitening."
 – Dr Peter Alldritt, dentist, Rose Park Dental, Adelaide

COST: Varies. Expect to pay from \$250 per tooth for a gum lift and from \$1000 for laser whitening.

CHECK OUT: laserdentists.com.au

PAIN RELIEF

"This type of therapy utilises low-powered infrared laser

light or 'cold' laser and offers a drug-free alternative to pain management for people with chronic musculoskeletal pain and soft tissue injuries. The laser light helps remove inflammation and stimulate tissue healing. It has been used to treat a variety of conditions including back pain, muscle sprains, bursitis, tendonitis and osteoarthritis.

Expect to see optimum results in six to 12 sessions."
 – Dr Shikha Parmar, Laser Pain Therapy, Melbourne

COST: Initial consultation is \$300 and follow-up treatments around \$100.

CHECK OUT: laserpaintherapy.com.au

STRESS INCONTINENCE

"If you leak urine when you cough, sneeze or exercise, laser therapy can help. Stress incontinence is treated vaginally by applying gentle heat to the wall between the vagina and bladder, triggering collagen shrinkage and tightening the pelvic floor.

Treatments take 15 to 20 minutes and two or three treatments usually

produce results that last more than a year."
 – Dr Herbert Hooi, Cosmetic MD, Sydney

COST: From \$900 per treatment.

CHECK OUT: cosmeticmd.com.au

TOENAIL FUNGUS

"Laser treatment has several benefits over traditional oral medications and paint-on treatments for ugly, fungus-ridden toenails. Fungus loves a warm, dark environment and it grows beneath the nail bed, making it tricky for a topical treatment to get in unless you drill a hole in the nail. Laser light painlessly penetrates the nail and can kill a fungal infection in a single 20-minute session for the majority of people."

– Dr Greg Dower, My FootDr, Queensland

COST: About \$100 per treatment with a podiatrist.

CHECK OUT: myfootdr.com.au

