

Synergistic Use of BTL RF Devices

Maximize Body Shaping and Skin Tightening Outcomes



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Before Tx



After Vanquish Tx

Photos courtesy of Stephen Beals, M.D.

By Kevin A. Wilson, Contributing Editor

Aesthetic physicians have rapidly come to recognize radiofrequency (RF)-based Vanquish, Exilis Elite and Protégé Elite from BTL Industries, Inc. (Framingham, Mass.) as effective, novel modalities for the ever-expanding body shaping and skin tightening market. Individually, they each offer advanced and efficacious non-surgical therapies for a wide-range of concerns. Together, and in combination with other modalities, these devices can catapult clinical outcomes to heights that exceed patient expectations for non-invasive skin contouring and tightening, as well as boost physician utilization of their existing armamentarium.

Vanquish focuses heat at the proper tissue depth using BTL's patented Selective Field RF™ technology that tunes thermal delivery based on deep tissue impedance. This technology also shapes the radiomagnetic fields to optimize penetration and rapidly heat fat selectively without the device touching the body.

For skin tightening, Exilis Elite uses powerful monopolar focused RF to heat skin uniformly, using a high velocity feedback loop to promote rapid heating of skin to the therapeutic temperature range (between 40° C and 42° C) without overheating. This not only contributes to high levels of patient comfort, but also enhances the final result and significantly improves safety. Histological studies document neocollagenesis and increased dermal elastin as beneficial effects of treatment. Advanced cooling technology allows variable depth treatment for perfected outcomes and positive patient experiences.

Protégé Elite is a tabletop version of Exilis technology that is ideal for treatment of the face and neck. By harnessing RF in unique and powerful ways without consumables, BTL has truly bridged the gap between the improvements afforded by surgery and the impressive rejuvenation now possible with non-invasive modalities.

Resultingly, plastic surgeons are turning to technologies such as Vanquish to expand their patient base. "Not everybody wants surgery," said Stephen P. Beals, M.D., a plastic surgeon in Phoenix, Ariz. "People with excess fat may be put off by the cost, risk, downtime, pain and discomfort, need for anesthesia, or some other factor associated with surgery. Combined with my expertise, this technology provides a viable alternative for patients. The fact that this no-touch treatment works so well is truly remarkable."

As an adjunct to surgery, Vanquish excels. "Some patients need thigh liposuction, but don't really have enough fat around the middle for lipo, so they get Vanquish," Dr. Beals noted. For some patients who've had successful liposuction, Vanquish can further enhance the final result. "Sometimes I use it to provide additional smoothness and contouring to an already good result," he continued. "And in some cases there are stubborn areas left that are resistant to intervention via liposuction because of their fibrous nature, density or some other factor that leads to a suboptimal result otherwise beyond my control. I can smooth and improve the result non-invasively with Vanquish, turning a double into a home-run."

Abdominoplasty patients can also benefit, Dr. Beals added. "I try to be conservative with abdominal liposuction during abdominoplasty because removing too much fat may inhibit circulation to the skin flap, which retards healing. Thus, with Vanquish I can further improve the result without additional surgery."

Dr. Beals waits at least six weeks after surgery to consider Vanquish. "It's very important to wait until swelling has subsided and any lost sensation has returned to the region so that patients can provide feedback to the operator, preventing accidental overtreatment due to lack of sensation. It may be up to six months before patients are fully healed from surgery, but after six weeks or so most patients are fairly well healed and have around 95% of the full result, so you can tell where and how much to treat."

One case Dr. Beals shared involved a patient who was converted to liposuction after Vanquish. "This patient was very happy with the Vanquish result, they simply decided they were interested in more after having seen what Vanquish could do. It's so important to get people into the practice and expose them to your range of capabilities, and as BTL further develops this technology we're going to see more panels for different body areas so even more patients can benefit from this outstanding non-invasive technology."

Grace Y. Liu, M.D., medical director of Newport Coast Dermatology in Newport Beach, Calif., uses Exilis in conjunction with not only Vanquish, but other commonly sought modalities such as injectables. "Exilis provides excellent tightening comfortably with fast results that are complementary to many of the procedures I provide, such as injectables or fractional focused ultrasound tissue lifting. I can even use Exilis as a touch-up or maintenance treatment by itself. It's like a comfortable spa procedure with a medical outcome. So it's no surprise that in my office Exilis is in use about 90% of the day."

When one approaches anti-aging from multiple vectors the overall result is astounding, and Exilis plays a key role in this, according to Dr. Liu. "Using neurotoxin and fillers appropriately, by themselves or together, you can take years off of someone's face," she stated, "but if you add Exilis for a full-face rejuvenation, that's when you're giving someone seven to ten years back without a face-lift. Everything works synergistically."

Dr. Liu believes that using Exilis first allows physicians to then see where neurotoxin and fillers are really needed. "This way you're more effectively and conservatively administering the injectables or other treatment. Since you're only needing one or two treatments with Exilis spaced a week or two apart, you can wait for the result and treat with other modalities adjunctively. You can also use Exilis after for further enhancement, and then occasionally for freshening before a special event because there's no downtime. Patients have no qualms about doing this. The eagerness of patients to undergo comfortable and effective synergistic treatments with Exilis and Vanquish, combined with other modalities, as well as the lack of consumables, makes it easy to recoup the cost of devices in a few months."

Facial plastic surgeon James Newman, M.D., medical director of Premier Plastic Surgery in Palo Alto and San Mateo, Calif., agreed with Dr. Liu's



Face and neck regions before Tx



Face and neck regions after Exilis Elite Tx
Photos courtesy of Grace Liu, M.D.

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Before Tx



After Vanquish Tx

Photos courtesy of Grace Liu, M.D.

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assessment of Exilis and Vanquish, “together, these devices go hand in hand. Vanquish provides non-invasive circumference reduction like no other device, and Exilis can tighten overlying skin non-invasively,” said Dr. Newman. “Both technologies are very safe and very well tolerated. It doesn’t get much simpler than that and it’s no wonder patients love them.”

Dr. Newman has been using RF technologies as early as Thermage, so he was originally skeptical about the capabilities of the BTL devices, but now uses all three. “We’re looking at serious claims with the BTL devices, but they deliver what they claim so I definitely wanted to offer them in my practice. And as a longtime Thermage user I was also impressed that BTL is not only building on Thermage technology directly, but has properly licensed the technology rather than appropriated it in some other way. This speaks volumes to me about BTL’s willingness to use proven technology and do things right. They’ve been in business 20 years and are committed to excellence in healthcare.”

Dr. Newman uses Protégé as a face-lift enhancement and maintenance therapy or, in many cases, to stave off the need for surgical intervention, especially in younger patients. “For face-lift patients Protégé is a great once-a-year refreshment of tightening for the face, but the real effect we see is in maintenance of the neck outcomes. The neck area tends to relax a bit after a short while even with the most skilled surgeon at the helm. By employing Protégé patients look better longer. It is an ideal maintenance device because it’s so comfortable to undergo treatment and there are no disposables so cost is reduced. Inexpensive maintenance helps patients get the most out of their outcomes for the longest period of time, making everyone involved happy, which contributes to our reputation and growth as a practice.”

Younger patients may want to take steps to improve face and neck laxity as well, and in these cases Dr. Newman suggests Protégé as a best option. “This device is most likely to provide the highest satisfaction because treatment is non-invasive and comfortable, results can be seen after only two or three treatments, and the cost is oftentimes less than that of other energy-based alternatives.”

BTL’s commitment to avoiding consumables is an important factor in the overall consideration of device use, Dr. Beals stated. “Many devices require consumables and in some cases this may be unavoidable, but it always increases the cost for both physician and patient. Since BTL devices do not employ consumables, it reduces the cost of treatment to me, a savings which I can pass on to the patient to make treatment more accessible and help further broaden my patient base.”

For Dr. Beals and others this aspect of practice is very rewarding, enhanced by the power and utility of BTL technologies. “I get more out of broadening my patient base and meeting new people every day,” he said. “These people don’t know much about me or my practice until we begin to build a lasting relationship of trust based on experience. BTL technologies help me do that.”

Editor's Note: Vanquish is indicated for applying therapeutic deep heat in body tissues for treatment of selected medical conditions. Exilis Elite is indicated for non-invasive treatment of wrinkles and rhytides, in addition to other dermatologic and surgical procedures. Protégé Elite is indicated for non-invasive treatment of periorbital wrinkles and rhytides, in addition to other dermatologic procedures.