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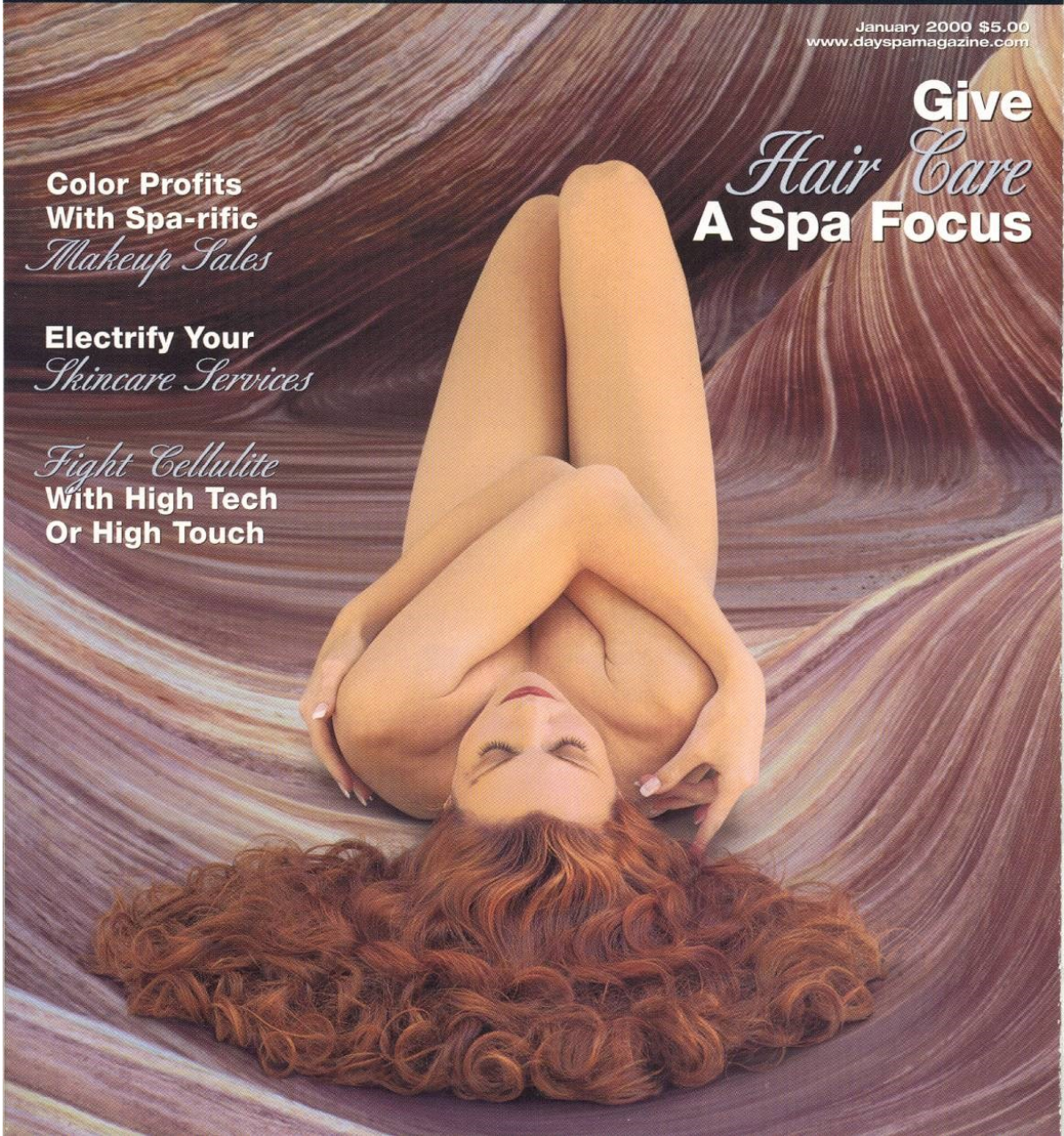
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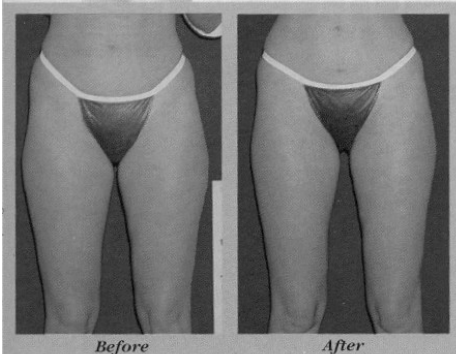
High Tech or High Touch

*Machine or massage
for cellulite reduction?
You make the call.*

By Andrea
Sercu

At the Bailey Place Salon & Day Spa in Dove Canyon, California, technician Dawn Shelley runs a motorized head across a client's spandex-clad thighs and hips, forming large figure-eight strokes as she works. The machine hums softly in the background, while the suction head gently pushes and pulls the skin in the fight against cellulite. Up the Coast at Yamaguchi Salon & Day Spa in Ventura, California, massage therapist Vladimir Dorajinski massages a client's legs and buttocks using deep-tissue strokes. After rubbing the body vigorously with a dry cloth to exfoliate the skin and stimulate circulation, he applies a green tea contouring lotion and progresses with firmer strokes to penetrate the fat cells and coax the cellulite free from its tangled subdermal web.

Courtesy Charles Wilson II and Endermologie



Both services take about 30 minutes and require about eight weeks of biweekly treatments before clients can expect noticeable results.

Both services take about 30 minutes and require about eight weeks of biweekly treatments before clients can expect noticeable results. Both services are designed to reduce cellulite by stimulating collagen and elastin, increasing circulation and lymphatic drainage, and decreasing fat-cell volume. Both types of massage also concentrate on the buttocks and thighs, an area some-

times referred to as the body's "sewer system" because of its high concentration of lymphatic waste and fat cells.

While both treatments purport to offer the same results, the tools used are radically different. In the first case, the operator works with a sophisticated piece of machinery designed to smooth the skin and reduce cellulite. In the latter, the therapist relies solely on his

hands. One treatment focuses on technology; the other on touch. Which treatment is the best option for your spa?

BY HAND OR MACHINE

To understand which option makes the most sense for your spa, you have to understand what cellulite is and how each system works to eliminate it. Recognized by its dimpling effect on the skin, cellulite is packaged or trapped fat caused by a lack of circulation, immobilized fluids and shrunken, hardened connective tissue. Both machine and manual massage work on the skin's fat cells, lymphatic fluids and collagen and elastin fibers to release the trapped fat and restore the skin's smooth appearance.

Manual cellulite-reducing massage incorporates many of the same strokes used in traditional massage, as well as some cellulite-specific techniques, such as skin rolling, a technique in which the skin is lifted, folded and rolled.

Charles Wiltsie III (see photo in opening collage), owner of Swedish Body Works, Haddam, Connecticut, and the innovator of a manual massage technique called Lypossage, has created a therapy that blends manual lymphatic drainage and athletic techniques with myofascial and deep tissue massage. He begins the vigorous massage with superficial effleurage and petrissage strokes and progresses to the deeper myofascial, tapotement, skin rolling and ringing techniques.

Vacuum massagers, on the other hand, use mechanized suction to exert the negative and positive pressure on the skin. Some machines, such as Endermologie by Ft. Lauderdale, Florida-based LPG USA, and PR Cellulite by St. Albans, Vermont-based Silhouet-Tone, also include rollers, which simulate the skin-rolling technique

OTHER OPTIONS

Although this article focuses strictly on the merits of massage compared to machine manipulation, these are by no means the only weapons in the fight against cellulite. Body wraps are the most common of the traditional spa therapies, and some companies, like Dr. Grandel, offer a whole system to fight cellulite that even includes a massage tool. Seaweed and algae services are usually combined with essential oils and herbs that promote circulation. Fango treatments are another option, as are hydrotherapy services that include marine products. For more on other methods of cellulite control, see "Combating Cellulite" in the November/December 1998 issue of *DAYS PA*.

There are also other types of equipment. Biotec, for example, markets a treatment appliance that combines infrared radiation and muscle electrostimulators to reduce some types of cellulite, and there are a number of pressure therapy devices that can be useful in treating the problem. These will be covered more completely in "Pressure Points" in the February issue.

And, of course, there are dozens of homecare products designed to fight cellulite; many of these creams and gels can be marketed to spa clients as a way to maintain the benefits of their cellulite treatments between visits. Every spa must offer a variety of approaches to controlling this common skincare problem.—*Editor*

by drawing in a skin fold and manipulating it to help release lymphatic blockage and soften the connective tissue that contributes to cellulite.



Modern vacuum massage for cellulite reduction traces back to the 1980s when French technicians noticed the vacuum massagers they used to reduce a burn patient's scars also produced visible smoothing of the patient's cellulite. After years of selling the product to medical professionals, some manufacturers recently gained Food and Drug Administration approval to market their cellulite reduction claims to the spa industry.

Although Wiltsie, Shelley and many others began their trial treatments with some skepticism, the results have made believers of them.

"This is a welcome component that has been missing from body contouring programs in spas for a long time," says Peggy Wynne Borgman, spa director at Preston Wynne day spa and the business development director at Preston Wynne Success Systems in Saratoga, California.

FACT OR FICTION?

For most people unfamiliar with either manual or vacuum massage treatments, the burning question remains: Do these procedures work? Countless personal testimonials and carefully conducted studies seem to answer with a resounding "yes."

A 1998 Synergie study conducted by Salt Lake City, Utah-based Dynatronics, found that vacuum massage therapy produced significant reduction in the appearance of cellulite for 91% of the women treated.

The results from manual massage are equally impressive. Wiltsie, who conducted a non-funded, year-long study of 100 women between the ages of 25

and 55, found that 95% of the study participants lost dimension in the targeted areas and 86% lost a total of 5 or more inches. To control the study parameters, Wiltsie had study participants promise not to change their diet and exercise habits during the study; their weight did not fluctuate by more than 1 pound during the six-week study period.

Veralucia Thompson, owner of the Alpha Beauty Clinic Day Spa in Jacksonville, Florida, and the first U.S. spa owner to use the Endermologie equipment, says clients can expect to see results usually around the sixth or eighth treatment. Dorojinski, a Russian-trained massage therapist who combines green tea therapy with massage, guarantees his massage results after five sessions. To test his theory, he gave his wife, a fellow massage therapist, half-hour massage treatments every day for one week. At the end of the study "her skin was like a baby's, very firm," he says.

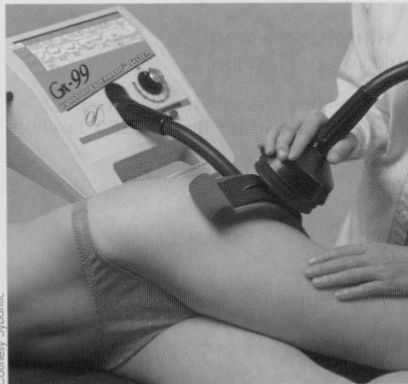
Although Wiltsie, Shelley and many others began their trial treatments with some skepticism, the results have made believers of them. Borgman, whose consulting firm has hired Wiltsie to lead training courses in Lyposassage, says her technicians even report they can actually hear the cellulite adhesions releasing as they manipulate the tissue.

One of the greatest testimonials to both vacuum massage and manual massage methods is the number of study candidates who began their treatment series with the idea that they would get liposuction if they weren't satisfied. By the end of the treatment series, most had decided they didn't need the surgical procedure. Some physicians are beginning to view vacuum massage not only as an alternative to liposuction but as a



Courtesy Charles Wiltsie III

Skin rolling and ringing techniques help loosen connective tissue and release cellulite.



Courtesy, Sybaritic

Advocates say machines allow operators to work longer and more effectively without repetitive stress injuries.

Many machine proponents contend only a machine specifically designed for this purpose can effectively break up and reduce cellulite.

necessary adjunct to it. According to Shelley, some physicians are even requiring liposuction patients to undergo vacuum massage treatments before and after the surgical procedure to help smooth out the effects of liposuction.

Despite demonstrated results, these cellulite treatments are not for everyone. Significantly overweight people, for example, do not make good candidates for the therapy. "I don't take clients who are more than 20% heavier than their ideal body weight," says Shelley. "They need to lose weight first because cellulite therapy will not produce the results they want. You can't take

someone who's 100 pounds overweight and turn her into Cindy Crawford!"

PROS AND CONS

While some level of discomfort may be unavoidable before either technique can render results, proponents of both manual massage and machine treatments say the service should never be blatantly painful. Nevertheless, some massage therapists claim that vacuum massage causes clients pain and bruising. Wiltsie, for instance, observes that vacuum massage can leave people black-and-blue and, although manual massage can too, he says a massage therapist is better equipped to adjust the pressure and prevent bruising. On the other hand, proponents of the vacuum equipment claim that only the painful Roling massage techniques can be truly effective in breaking up cellulite; regular deep tissue massage does nothing to release the hardened fibroblasts causing the characteristic dimpling of cellulite.

Spa owners using the machines insist

they are not painful, and many report clients often sleep through their treatments. Thompson says the Endermologie machine's 10-speed dial enables her to start slowly and progress at the client's own comfort level. Most machines offer a range of suction rate levels, which can be adjusted according to each client's tolerance, and some even allow the operator to program according to cellulite type, such as compact, slight or loose conditions.

Machine proponents also argue that serious hand fatigue can result from constant deep tissue manipulation. Machines prevent repetitive stress injuries and allow operators to work longer and more efficiently without exhausting the back, arms and wrists.

Jason Poland, owner of the Kearney Massage Center in Kearney, Nebraska, says his GX-99 Vibratory Endermatic System by Minneapolis, Minnesota-based Sybaritic has "definitely saved my thumbs." He also likes the fact that the system's multiple applicators can be used for a variety of purposes in addition to cellulite reduction, including scalp massage, reflexology and exfoliation.

Although many massage therapists complain about the exhaustive effects of skin-rolling techniques in particular, Wiltsie says he has developed a method to ease the finger fatigue and notes the technique gets easier with experience. "It usually takes an hour or less to get everyone in a training course doing skin rolling effortlessly," he says.

Many machine proponents also contend there's no comparison to manual massage because only a machine specifically designed for this purpose can effectively break up and reduce cellulite. Most Americans associate massage therapy with relaxation, says Shelley. "You'd

“I don’t think using machinery to deliver benefits is a good direction for spas to pursue; services are best delivered with a human touch.”

be hard-pressed to find a woman who’s going to accept that massage will help her lose weight or reduce cellulite. We don’t think of massage in that way in this country,” she says.

But massage therapists who have done the research and are familiar with skin-rolling techniques sharply disagree. Wiltsie notes that many of these machines’ functions are actually based on manual skin-rolling techniques. “The machine sucks it up. Massage does it with the fingers,” he says.

Of course, machines do offer some clients a welcome alternative. “Many of my clients tell me they don’t like getting naked for a massage, and they don’t like the oil,” says Shelley, who operates the Synergie system. With the LPG Endermologie and Dynatronics’ Synergie machines, clients wear a stretchy white body

suit, which provides for modesty and allows the machine head to glide over the body more smoothly than it could on bare skin.

Another advantage machines offer is that they require less expertise. For example, Brooke Ingram, co-owner of Body Therapy in Polson, Missouri, isn’t a massage therapist, but she

saw vacuum massage as a great complement to her spa’s body wrap services and an alternative way to introduce a cellulite reduction service. Roni Handler of Dermatage Skin Essentials in North Potomac, Maryland, also

lacks massage skills and says she feels comfortable using a system such as the Silhouet-Tone PR Cellulite because it’s fully programmed and offers a “no-fail”

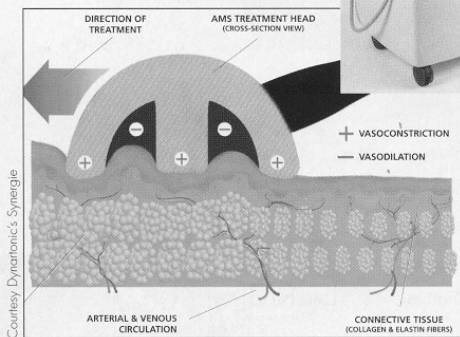
treatment. She likes knowing that a machine can provide uniform results every time. “There are good therapists and those who are not so good. I think clients get more consistency with the machine,” she says.

Advances in today’s sophisticated equipment provide operators with valuable feedback that allows them to adjust to the client’s needs. Endermologie’s Cellu M6, for instance, features a computer face with a picture simulating the thickness of the skin fold. And Silhouet-Tone’s PR Cellulite features three access keys for programming gentle, medium or deep massage treatments.

The heads on vacuum massagers can also differ. Silhouet-Tone’s PR Cellulite features a Palm Touch head that fits in the operator’s palm for multidirectional massage, while Sybaritic’s GX-99 Vibratory Endermatic System features a range of applicator heads, including round multi-pronged heads for deep petrissage, four-ball and half-ball attachments for deep tissue massage, hot/cold applicators and suction cups. Many units, including PR Cellulite, Endermologie Cellu M6 and Synergie, also offer smaller cups for facial massage.

Still, with all the technical advances, Borgman raises a thought-provoking question: “Is the value of the treatment based in the knowledge and know-how of the operator or does it not matter who’s driving the machine?”

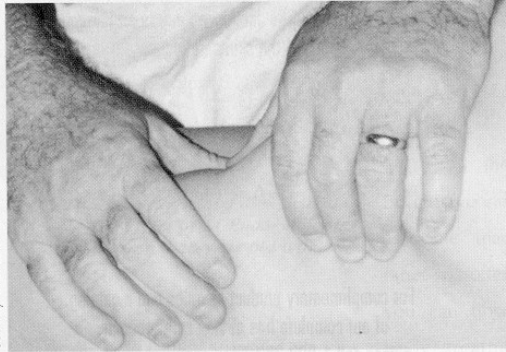
Although Borgman believes machine-driven services have helped give credence to the manual massage therapies, she thinks the benefit of touch tips the scales in favor of manual massage. “The problem with a machine is the benefit is coming from a device and there’s less importance ascribed to the therapists



This illustration from Synergie shows how machines use both vasoconstriction and vasodilation to manipulate septa and fat cells and to stimulate circulation and cellular turnover.



**Price isn't usually
an issue to cellulite-
plagued clients.**



Courtesy Charles Wiltsie III

**Charles Wiltsie III teaches his
Lypossage technique through
Preston Wynne Success Systems.**

When it comes to revenue produced, there's also quite a range. With any cellulite reduction program, clients must sign up for a series of treatments and come in on a regular basis for seven or eight weeks. After the initial series, they must continue to return for less frequent follow-up treatments to maintain the desired results.

Shelley sells her Synergie treatments

in eight-week, biweekly packages with treatments at about \$75 each. Dorojinski charges \$40 for his half-hour massages, while Wiltsie charges \$100 for his. Clients may pay up to \$100 per half-hour machine session, and according to practitioners like

Shelley who operate in high-end communities, price usually isn't an issue to

cellulite-plagued clients. "They don't care how much it costs; they just want results," she advises.

Whether you offer machine or manual therapy, you'll need to incorporate a standardized body analysis program, including photography and consistent body measurements, to illustrate clients' progress. You'll also want to protect your investment by making sure therapists get proper training. Even the pre-programmed functions of sophisticated machines are only as good as the operator. As Thompson notes, "It doesn't matter what the machine does. Client satisfaction eventually comes down to the ability of the operator to demonstrate results." ♣

Andrea Sercu is a *DAYS*PA contributing editor.