

Laser lipolysis  
or laser liposuction

## Laser lipolysis or laser liposuction

### Removal of problem areas of fat using laser

As we get older, we tend to put on fat.

A reasonable amount of fat is healthy and also attractive. However too much fat can either be unhealthy or, if only in one or two places, can be very unattractive.

The best way to lose fat generally is by maintaining a healthy lifestyle, including a reasonable amount of regular exercise with a healthy diet. Unfortunately, although this can keep you healthy and slim, many people still develop problem areas that they do not like.

Typically in women, such problem areas are the outer upper thighs (“saddlebags”), the front of the abdomen (“tummy”), the underside of the upper arm (“bingo wings”), the backs of the shoulders (“bra strap bulge”) and the inner thighs just above the knees.



In contrast men typically have problem areas on the front of their abdomen (“beer belly”) and on the sides of their abdomen above the belt (“love handles”).

Both sexes then also tend to develop fat accumulations under the chin.

The reason that men and women have different problem areas for fat accumulation is basically hormonal.

### Removal of fat

Fat is not stored in the body as simple fat. If it was, it would be like butter. At body temperature, this would mean that it would be liquid and would flow around under the skin. Not only would this cause some very interesting problems when we sat down or moved, but the body would also regard the fat as a foreign substance and would try to remove it.

As the body uses fat as an energy store, it has to be in a situation where it can be used. As such, fat in the body is stored within specialised storage cells called adipocytes. Each adipocyte fills up with fat when we have excess calories, and releases fat for energy if we don't take in enough calories. However, once we have adipocytes, although we can empty them, we never get rid of them. Therefore, once we have become fat or have an area of fat accumulation, it can always return even if we diet.

To permanently remove an area of fat, we need to physically remove adipocytes. In the past this was done by cutting the fat away with surgery. However this led to large scars and a lot of bruising and infection. Over the last 10 to 20 years, fat in adipocytes has been sucked away using liposuction. Once again this is quite a major procedure leaving incisions usually 1 to 2 cm long, considerable bruising and loose skin post-operatively.

## Laser lipolysis and laser liposuction

Over the last couple of years, a new technique became available and proved to be popular with many people. SmartLipo® was the first of a new breed of laser lipolysis techniques.



Unlike liposuction, laser lipolysis does not take the adipocytes and fat out of the body but rather destroys the adipocytes within the body, releasing the fat. The dead cells then get slowly eaten by the body's immune system, as does the free fat. This is meant to lead to a much gentler reduction in the treated area, allowing the skin to contract as the fat is reabsorbed over several months, reducing the risk of loose skin.

The technique of killing the adipocytes and causing lipolysis is by puncturing them with a laser. The fibre is very small and can be inserted into the fat through the skin using an incision only 1 to 2 mm long. Rapid movement of the laser fibre in and out of the fat means that the fat can be broken down in a set area.

By using such tiny holes and by treating limited areas, laser lipolysis can be done as a walk-in walk-out procedure under local anaesthetic.

In spring 2008 a new 30 Watt laser lipolysis system was introduced which uses a far larger

fibre - although this can still be inserted through the same tiny incision it is still less than 1 mm diameter! The advantage of using the increased diameter fibre and much higher power is that the fat cells can be destroyed far quicker and in far greater numbers - as well as increasing skin contraction due to the extra heating of the skin.

At the same time, fat aspiration (removal) was introduced so that the liquefied fat can be removed at the time of surgery. This means that the client sees a much quicker result and larger volumes of fat can be removed at each procedure. In addition, repeat procedures can be performed closer together.

## Postoperative recovery

Laser liposuction is surgery, so there is some discomfort and bruising afterwards. Clients have to wear compression garments for two weeks following the procedure and are advised to have a skin tightening procedure called VelaShape™ between the third and eighth week (five sessions of one per week). The VelaShape™ not only helps tighten the skin but also smooths out any irregularities caused by uneven fat removal. Compared to the alternative methods of removing fat, such as liposuction, laser lipolysis with aspiration is a very elegant and minimally invasive technique.

If you would like to know more about laser lipolysis at Absolute Aesthetics, please look at the website:

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