

RFE (Radio Frequency Energy): Thermage®, Thermacool™, Thermalift™

Description:

While a cooling spray protects the epidermis from burning, high levels of radio frequency energy heats the dermis, stimulating collagen growth and causing the skin to tighten.

Effectiveness:

Poor (see comments below); 4-6 months before any results seen, if at all.

Estimated Treatment Cost:

\$1700-\$3000 per treatment, with 4-5 treatments needed.

Longevity of Results:

2-3 years

Undesired Effects:

Regarded by most clients as very painful; persistent unsightly redness, swelling, and discomfort.

Harmful Side Effects:

Risk of permanent fat atrophy (destruction), scarring indentions, and dimpling.

Staffing Required:

Physician

Comments:

Expensive risk considering potential of injury and lack of effectiveness. Only about 50-60% of those treated experience clearly noticeable improvement. As few as 10% gain substantial youthful changes, and up to half receive no benefits at all.

Thermage® recently reworked their device at an attempt to reduce the cases of injury, but patients still seem to be complaining of such effects.

Downtime Required:

The notion that Thermage® “requires no downtime” is an exaggeration. While most people require a rather short downtime of 3-5 days, some develop significant redness, swelling, and blisters, and may need to stay out of public eye for a week or more. Also, some residual pain may linger for several days.

