

I TRIED IT! LASER FAT REMOVAL

New ZERONA laser claims to work like lipo without surgery.
But does it live up to its claims?

By Charlotte Anderson

AS I LAY HALF NAKED UNDER A MECHANICAL OCTOPUS WITH LASERS CRISSCROSSING MY LOWER BODY, ALL I COULD THINK WAS THIS IS NOT WHAT I EXPECTED!

When I first signed up to try the **ZERONA**, the only laser fat removal device approved by the FDA, I couldn't wait to finally get rid of those annoying "fatty bits" at the top of my thighs that make fitting into my jeans impossible. But I didn't expect the scary looking machine. I didn't expect the time commitment. I didn't expect the strange feelings I got after that first treatment. And most of all, I didn't expect it to work! Yet here I am post **ZERONA** and three inches smaller.

"Body contouring" without surgery sounds like something that falls into the same category as diet pills, cellulite creams, and electric abs belts—quick fixes that rarely (if ever) live up to their big claims. But everyone I met was so positive about the **ZERONA**.

"It changed my life," says Dan Blustin, 44, the general manager of the local LifeTime Fitness gym. "There I was running a gym, and at 30 pounds overweight! I felt like a hypocrite every day. As a former bodybuilder



and MMA fighter, I knew what I had to do to get in shape, but because of my age it just wasn't working like it used to. I started the **ZERONA** treatments in March and two months later, I've dropped 35 pounds, 8 inches off my waist, and 10 percent body fat!" I was impressed. Could lasers be the new "miracle cure" for stubborn fat?

"Oh no! This is definitely not a miracle cure," says Lisa Bloch, director of the LifeTime Fitness Medi-spa where I got my treatments. "This

is complementary medicine, not a cure all. It's designed to make your healthy eating and exercise more effective, especially if you're at a point where you've plateaued. You still have to do the work; it just enhances your results."

WHO SHOULD TRY

According to Bloch, the ideal candidate is someone already committed to making healthy lifestyle changes who doesn't have a lot of weight to lose but is more concerned about problem areas, particularly in the hips, waist, and thighs. A pretty accurate description of me after having five kids. While I've lost most of my baby weight, I've never quite regained my pre-baby shape. I signed up.

HOW IT WORKS

The **ZERONA** works by aiming lasers at your lower body specifically designed to puncture holes in your fat cells so that they deflate. (Don't worry, you can't feel the "puncturing" at all. In fact, it felt so much like nothing that I was afraid it wasn't doing anything!) Your body keeps all the fat cells—a good thing since removing fat cells can have unintended consequences, as seen in recent studies on liposuction—but they're just much smaller.

The fat is then released into your interstitial fluid and flushed out by your lymphatic system. Because we store our toxins in our fat, this also has a cleansing effect on the body.

A SURPRISING PERK

I repeated the hour-long treatments every few days until I'd finished nine in about two weeks. During this time I was cautioned to eat very clean, work out

moderately, wear compression undergarments, and drink so much water that if peeing were an Olympic sport I'd win gold. Thankfully the cleansing effect (going to the bathroom A LOT) tapered off quickly and was replaced by another unexpected side effect: crazy energy! About an hour after each treatment, I felt incredibly rejuvenated and super focused. I even started planning difficult tasks around my treatments, knowing that I'd feel extra motivated at that time.

MY RESULTS

At the end of my **ZERONA** experience, my thighs had only gone down 1/4 inch each, and I lost 1 inch off my hips. I was a little disappointed that I didn't experience huge changes like Blustin and others, but I also didn't have as much to lose in the first place. And hey, 3 inches gone is still 3 inches gone!

Is laser fat removal something you would try?

