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Multi-Functional Harmony System Excels in Skin Rejuvenation

Facial color improvement (pigmented and vascular), coupled with the “triple T” of toning, texture and tightening, are all achievable with the Harmony system from Alma Lasers, Inc. (formerly Orion Lasers, Fort Lauderdale, Fla.).

The hardware for the Harmony’s CT3 (color + triple T) treatment consists of one station that connects ten different modules (handpieces) driven by seven technologies. Four of the interchangeable handpieces feature Advanced Fluorescence Technology (AFT), which converts unused ultraviolet (UV) light into the optimal spectrum for a specific application.

“AFT is slightly different technology than intense pulsed light (IPL),” said Randolph Capri, M.D., a dermatologist in private practice in Westlake Village, Calif. “AFT is more of a flat wave instead of a spiked wave. Subsequently, the likelihood of adverse side effects, which can occur with other pulsed light systems, is reduced.”



Before Tx



After Harmony Tx

Photos courtesy of Randolph Capri, M.D.

For improving color, the 540 nm AFT handpiece is best suited for brown pigmentation, whereas the 570 nm AFT handpiece is for vascularity. These two handpieces, in combination with the near-infrared skin tightening (ST) handpiece for soft tissue remodeling, are the three handpieces Dr. Capri uses most frequently for skin rejuvenation. He also uses the 1320 nm long-pulsed Nd:YAG component of the Harmony for treating scars and wrinkles.

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Patients schedule three to five sessions at monthly intervals. “I feel the skin tightening is comparable to the 20% to 50% improvement one observes with Thermage,” Dr. Capri stated. “And the two AFT handpieces usually achieve close to 80% improvement in pigmentation and redness.” Dr. Capri has also had success using Levulan (DUSA Pharmaceuticals) as a photosensitizing agent for an enhanced photofacial. “I normally wait one hour, then apply either the 540 nm or the 570 nm AFT handpiece.”

Overall, the Harmony laser “is quick and easy to use,” Dr. Capri noted. “There is also a large footprint: 6.42 centimeters for most treatment heads which makes for faster treatments.”

“I like that the Harmony includes both the visible and nonvisible wavelengths,” said Ilan Karavani, M.D., a dermatologic and cosmetic surgeon in private practice in Antwerp, Belgium. Patients usually schedule three treatment sessions for skin rejuvenation, spaced three

to four weeks apart. “For treating blood vessels in fair skinned individuals, I use the 540 nm handpiece. For pigmentation in somewhat darker skin, I prefer the 570 nm handpiece,” Dr. Karavani commented. “The ST handpiece is effective for reducing pore size and warming up collagen to achieve a smoothing of the skin’s surface.”

After a series of treatments, patients can expect “an evening out of their skin tone. Red and brown spots disappear,” Dr. Karavani conveyed. “There is also a reduction in pores and a tightening of the skin. I notice an improvement in color, as well as an improvement in toning, tightening and texture.” He has also confirmed these results with a skin analysis system (Skin Evidence) that uses close-up digital photography.

Dr. Karavani, who has used nearly all the different light-based systems, believes the Harmony laser “by far, provides the widest range in application. Changing from one handpiece to another is very easy. It takes you approximately 30 seconds. The system is also cost-effective.”

Photos courtesy of Bhupendra Patel, M.D., FRCS



Before Tx



After Harmony Tx

Other components of the Harmony include a 1064 nm YAG laser wavelength for both rejuvenation and blood vessels, and an erbium handpiece for ablative resurfacing. In addition, a secondary filter provides safer treatment of any skin type. “You don’t have to use such high energies to deliver the precise energy that you desire,” explained Tanya Evans, M.D., a dermatologist in private practice in Laguna Hills, Calif. “You’re actually using lower fluences to achieve the same results. So you don’t have to worry that the patient will blister or scar.”

Dr. Evans treats rosacea, pigmentary changes and collagen. “I usually use two different treatment heads during the same session, but you can use up to three, because of that safety margin,” she said. Typically, patients schedule five sessions, one month apart, for skin rejuvenation. “But some patients are content after three or four sessions.”

The ST handpiece for collagen stimulation is different from any other aesthetic device because “the 780-1000 nm wavelengths have been adjusted to target the

collagen that they are trying to rebuild, without it being painful,” Dr. Evans noted. “I’ve had treatment myself with the ST handpiece. You hardly feel anything at all. Other skin tightening machines have a lot of pain associated with them because they haven’t been able to filter out the high water absorption wavelengths that cause pain.”

Dr. Evans most popular AFT modular is the 540 nm wavelength. “It’s effective for vascular and pigmented lesions, but it also does a lot of rosacea and skin rejuvenation. Overall, the Harmony is a truly diverse device for skin rejuvenation. We achieve very good results. About 90% of our patients are very happy. Treatment is safe and highly efficacious, more so than the IPL devices I’ve used. In fact, we like the Harmony so much that we use this laser in three offices. And it’s been easy to integrate into our practice.”

“We are achieving the results that you would expect from an IPL machine, but we are also obtaining some tissue tightening. This is a nice added bonus,” reported Bhupendra Patel, M.D., FRCS, a professor of facial plastic surgery at the University of Utah in Salt Lake City. Patients normally schedule five treatment sessions, spaced four to six weeks apart. “Besides using the 540 nm and 570 mm handpieces, I use the Q-switched YAG head for any dark lesions,” said Dr. Patel, who also uses the 1064 nm wavelength “for stubborn veins in the face.” The Q-switched head can also be used for tattoo removal.

During the first and second sessions, Dr. Patel uses the 540 nm handpiece, then at the third session the SR head. “In the final two sessions, we mix and match. I’ll often use the 570 nm handpiece in combination with the 1064 nm wavelength. By and large, we’re achieving very good improvements in vascular and pigmentary changes. With appropriate energy adjustments, we’re getting some very satisfied patients. I think the texture is reasonable. Certainly there is textural improvement in the chest and the neck to a considerable extent. There is also definite improvement in color. Patients can expect reliable results, as long as they commit to a series of treatments.”

Dr. Patel finds that the Harmony is cost-effective for his practice. “Some of the other machines cost two to three times as much,” he pointed out. “In this day and age, patients have a finite cost that they are willing to bear for treatment. The multiple modalities of the Harmony are very useful. Chemical peels and microdermabrasion were not giving me the skin improvements I wanted. And most people don’t want to schedule CO₂ and erbium treatments on a routine basis. The Harmony is a valuable addendum to my practice, which is largely a surgical practice.” ■