

Laser Hair Removal

The foundational
service of an
aesthetic practice



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Laser hair removal: The foundational service of an aesthetic practice

Within the last 10 years, the non-invasive market has shown rapid growth, with new agents offering patients significant opportunities to achieve desired outcomes. The aesthetic physician's outlook toward the non-invasive boom likely depends on his/her specialized vantage point. While there was once a clear distinction between the core cosmetic specialties, these new innovations in the development and use of aesthetic products may be shrinking that divide. Therefore, it is important for everyone—regardless of specialty—to consider how this changing procedural landscape impacts the way they practice. Operators, owners, and providers must be business-savvy and focused on the bottom line, as well as be patient-focused and driven to attract and retain customers. One of the most sensible places to begin is with the acquisition of a laser hair removal device. It's the foundational device of many aesthetic practices.

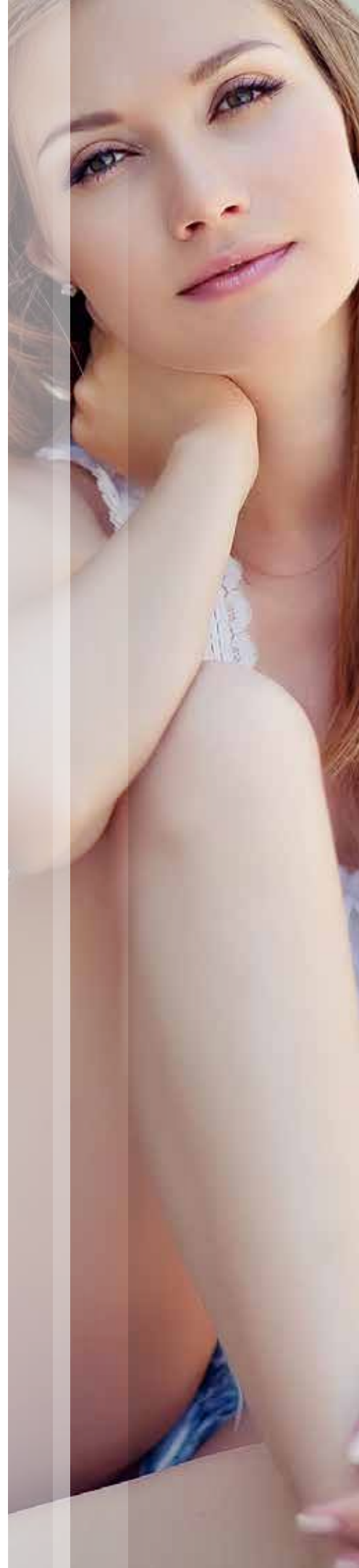
No matter whether you are just starting into the aesthetic space or expanding services within this area, making the right investments is key to success. There are many options to consider as you build your operations, but growth doesn't need to happen overnight. There is nothing wrong with building slowly, introducing one core piece of equipment or new service annually. But how do you determine the right place to begin?

While there are many potential strategies, one of the absolute musts is to scan the local environment to see what other practices are offering. What seems to be popular in your area? Are there services that are not being offered or are also being offered by limited numbers of providers? It may also be helpful to do an environmental scan of your practice to gauge the demographics of your current patient population since they will likely be among your most promising initial targets. You might even want to formally survey a cross section of your prospective patients to see what services they would likely be most interested in.

It is likely, no matter the mix of your patient population, that laser hair removal will be among the most in-demand services.. The global hair removal products market size was valued at USD 2.2 billion in 2018 and is expected to expand at a CAGR of 5.5% from 2019 to 2025. Rising consciousness with respect to personal grooming and enhancing aesthetic appeal are some of the factors fueling the growth of the global market.¹ Europe is second largest laser hair removal market, due to rising cases of skin disorders, changing lifestyle and rising spending power of consumers.² While well behind neuromodulator and hyaluronic acid injections in popularity, laser hair removal is at the top of device-driven procedures annually within aesthetic practices and continues to grow in popularity.³

There are several reasons for this:

1. Laser hair removal is a service that attracts both men and women. In fact, laser hair removal is the most popular energy-based procedure for men.³
2. It is popular across multiple age groups, with a balanced spread of demand. In a 2016 study, 32.7% of laser hair removal patients were between the ages of 18-34, 40% between the ages of 35-50, and 27.3% were older than age 50.⁴
3. It is not a one-time procedure. Patients who are satisfied with the results of their first series of treatments will likely come back periodically for regular maintenance.



4. Laser hair removal procedures can be performed on multiple areas of the body. Perhaps one patient wants to get rid of unsightly hair on their neck or upper lip. Another may want to address issues along their bikini line, another on their stomach or back. It's a versatile procedure.
5. Laser hair removal has proven results among patients of varying skin phototypes.
6. Procedures generally take less than an hour, allowing patients to move quickly in and out of a practice without having to significantly interrupt their schedule.
7. Laser hair removal is the gateway to a broad spectrum of other aesthetic procedures. It is what gets patients in the door and allows you to start building long-lasting, profitable partnerships with your patients.

What to consider when shopping for your first laser

1. **Versatility** – Can the device treat multiple conditions? While you may only be interested in the laser's ability to treat patients looking for a proven hair removal solution, your practice may evolve and look to expand its services. Some lasers have a narrow indication solely for hair removal, which is likely reflected in their price tag. More expensive lasers may necessitate a larger initial financial hit but give you more flexibility for future growth into areas such as the treatment of benign vascular and pigmented lesions.
2. **Brand Value** – As with any product, brand value must be considered prior to any laser purchase. What is the history of the company? What is their reputation in the industry? What other lasers does the company have in their portfolio? Your purchase of a laser hair removal device is going to be your first step in what may be a long-term professional relationship. Be sure that you are comfortable with the company you decide to invest in.
3. **Training** – What sort of initial customer support will be provided once you purchase the laser to help get you up to speed? Is there training available once you become familiar with the device and are looking to perform more complex/difficult procedures? The learning curve with some lasers is steeper than others, and some manufacturers may agree to put you in touch with more experienced operators to help you navigate through more complex procedures.
4. **Marketing** – Does the manufacturer offer any sort of support to help you get the word out about the new services you will be offering? Are there printed materials they'll be able to provide you with to leave in your waiting areas? What about videos for your social media feeds? Obviously, you'll need to let the public know as you add a new service to your practice, and some manufacturers have well-honed promotional plans they'll happily share with you to ease your burden.
5. **Maintenance** – What if something breaks or isn't working correctly with the laser you purchase? Does the manufacturer offer any sort of warranty or will you have to pay for a service call every time? These are the hidden costs of a new laser acquisition that can quickly add up if they aren't planned for proactively.



6. **New or preowned?** – As lasers become ubiquitous in many aesthetic practices, there is a growing market for preowned lasers. There are, of course, pros and cons to the acquisition of a used device. The price tag will obviously be discounted but incorporating a used machine into your practice comes with various risks. Will the manufacturer agree to service the laser if something goes wrong? How do you field test the device to ensure it is working properly before it arrives at your practice?
7. **Peer feedback** – You hopefully have a network of colleagues you trust who practice in different parts of the country. Don't be afraid to ask them questions about their experiences with laser technology. Are they happy with their purchase? What might they have done differently in introducing their new service(s) to the general public?
8. **Return on investment** – This is where you'll need to do some calculations and projections. If you purchase laser X, how many procedures will you need to perform each week/month/year to cover the costs of the acquisition, consumables, maintenance, and other related services? No one purchases a laser to lose money, but it is important to set a benchmark of specific goals for your practice.

Why the Gentle Pro™ Series is the right choice for your practice

Candela's Gentle Pro Series has an unmatched track record, with more than 20 years of history as the gold standard within physician practices and hair removal clinics around the world. It is the leading energy-based, hair removal device chosen by dermatologists for good reason.⁵

In addition to its utility as a hair removal device, the Gentle Pro Series offers providers the potential to add services to its menu of options for patients. The GentleLase Pro® 755 nm Alexandrite laser is the perfect choice for hair removal in patients with lighter skin types and can also be used to treat benign pigmented and vascular lesions. The GentleYag Pro® 1064 Nd:YAG laser is appropriate for hair removal in patients with darker skin types and can also be used to treat vascular lesions, wrinkles, and onychomycosis (nail fungus). The GentleMax Pro® combines both wavelengths into a single device, giving users the broadest versatility.

All Gentle Pro Series lasers feature the distinctive Dynamic Cooling Device™ (DCD™) technology, which delivers targeted bursts of non-toxic cryogen to the epidermis. This proprietary technology allows users to provide consistent epidermal protection no matter how fast the laser is fired, helping to optimize patient comfort and skin protection while also optimizing operator visibility.

As the most versatile device in the product line, the GentleMax Pro opens up a range of opportunities for providers. Patients can be treated with multiple spot sizes, ranging from 1.5 mm to 24 mm depending on the anatomic features of the targeted region. Smaller, specialty spot sizes are also an option to treat vascular and pigmented lesions, as well as nail fungus.

The GentleMax Pro features an intuitive, touchscreen interface that allows providers to easily select and adjust treatment parameters as necessary. Pulse durations can be modified based upon the procedure and patient skin type.



The Gentle Pro™ Series: What does the data say?

Davoudi SM et al (2008):⁶ This study enrolled 20 patients between the ages of 16 and 50 with skin phototypes III and IV. Patients were randomized to receive four treatments on the medial and lateral sides of their legs every 8 weeks with one of four protocols using either the GentleLase or GentleYag lasers:

- GentleYag laser (12-mm spot size)
- GentleLase laser (12-mm spot size)
- GentleLase laser (18-mm spot size)
- Combination of GentleLase and GentleYag lasers (treatments 1 and 2)

Of the 15 patients who completed the 18-month follow-up, mean hair reduction was greater than 70% in all treatment groups.

Russe et al (2020):⁷ This retrospective analysis looked at 945 patients who underwent 3,606 treatments with the GentleLase between 1997 and 2005. Patients were mostly female (>95%) and had skin phototypes I-IV. At a mean follow-up of 3.9 years, 74% of patients had 75-100% physician-reported clearance in body hair (patient-reported clearance was lower, at 48%). More than half of all patients reported slower hair growth following treatment with 42% reporting a change in hair texture. Long-term adverse events were minimal and confined to the face (1 case of scar, 4 cases of herpes infection).

Nouri et al (2004):⁸ This double-blind, randomized trial looked at the efficacy of an 18 mm vs. 12 mm spot size with the GentleLase. Seventeen females ages 18-55 years with skin phototypes II-IV were enrolled to receive three treatments for unwanted hair in the axillary region. Eleven patients completed the treatment and follow-up period. At 6-month follow-up, the mean percentage reduction in hair count favored the 18 mm spot size (52.2% vs. 41.9%). There were no reported adverse events in either group.

Conclusion

If you have been on the fence about introducing a laser device into your aesthetic practice, it's not too late to make the investment. There remains substantial demand and growth opportunities as patients look for more core and specialty services that can be addressed through laser technology with laser hair removal being in very high demand. Building your reputation through a partnership with a trusted, respected brand such as Candela is one of the keys to long-term success. The Gentle Pro series is an excellent place to start your use of energy-based devices as the Gentle brand is the gold standard in laser hair removal and the Gentle Pro series are also versatile lasers that can be used to treat multiple indications with a long track record of success. The proof is in the data.

1. Grandview Research - <https://www.grandviewresearch.com/industry-analysis/hair-removal-products-market>
2. <https://brandessenceresearch.com/consumer-goods/laser-hair-removal-market-growth> 3. The American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery. 2016 US Cosmetic Surgery National Data Bank Statistics. Available at www.surgery.org/sites/default/files/ASAPS-Stats2016.pdf. Accessed September 8, 2020. 4. American Medical Spa Association. 2019 Medical Spa State of the Industry Report. Available at www.americanmedspa.org/page/med-spa-statistics#:~:text=The%202019%20Medical%20Spa%20State,total%20value%20of%20%2410%20billion. Accessed September 8, 2020. 5. Candela internal data. 6. Davoudi SM, Behnia F, Gorouhi F, et al. Comparison of long-pulsed alexandrite and Nd:YAG lasers, individually and in combination, for leg hair reduction: an assessor-blinded, randomized trial with 18 months of follow-up. Arch Dermatol. 2008;144(10):1323-1327. 7. Russe E, Purschke M, Herold M, et al. Evaluation of safety and efficacy of laser hair removal with the long-pulsed 755 nm wavelength laser: A two-center study with 948 patients. Lasers Surg Med. 2020;52(1):77-83. 8. Nouri K, Chen H, Saghari S, Ricotti CA Jr. Comparing 18- versus 12-mm spot size in hair removal using a GentleLase 755-nm alexandrite laser. Dermatol Surg. 2004;30(4 Pt 1):494-497.

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