

Pixel Handpiece from Alma Lasers Incorporates Fractional Ablation

BY BOB KRONEMYER, ASSOCIATE EDITOR

The new Pixel 2940 erbium module for the Harmony platform from Alma Lasers, Inc. (Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.) uses fractional ablative technology for outstanding skin rejuvenation with no downtime.

“The objective is to achieve all the benefits of erbium ablative resurfacing,” said Yariv Matzliach, co-founder and executive vice president of Alma Lasers. “Due to the innovative Pixel technology, the procedure can be performed quickly, with minimal discomfort, and the healing time is very rapid. There is also literally no downtime. A patient can leave the office and immediately resume their normal routine.”

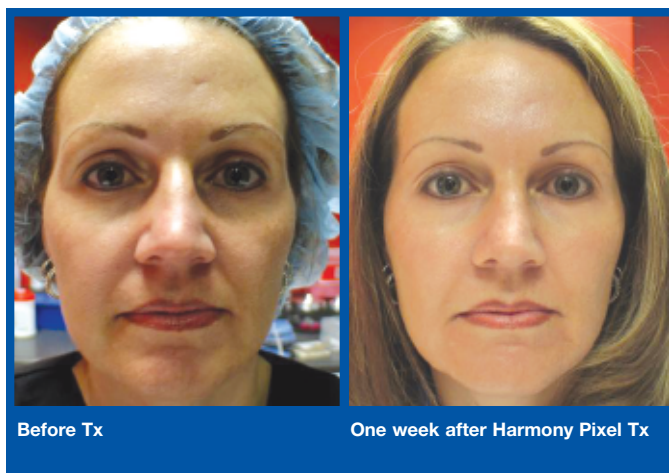
Mr. Matzliach noted that “one of the great advantages” of the Pixel module for the Harmony platform is that it is an easy upgrade for Harmony owners. On the other hand, for physicians new to Harmony, “they can start with one or two of the 11 available Harmony modules, and then add more modules, which cover over 60 different FDA cleared applications, as their practice grows.”

A gradual improvement in the patient’s skin occurs over approximately three sessions, spaced two to four weeks apart. “Seven days after the procedure, the skin itself is tighter and there is improvement in skin texture, fine lines, scars and wrinkles,” Mr. Matzliach said.

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The Pixel handpiece, which was introduced in March at the annual meeting of the *American Academy of Dermatology*, uses a single spot size of 11 x 11 mm. “However, within that area, the operator has two options: 49 or 81 pixels,” Mr. Matzliach explained. “The 49 pixel option allows for more aggressive treatment.”

According to Dwight Hiscox, M.D., who practices aesthetic medicine in Encino, Calif., “The most exciting



aspect of the Pixel 2940 erbium:YAG is ablative technology with no downtime. We are also able to adjust the power settings on the Pixel to easily adapt treatment for each patient’s individual needs.”

Dr. Hiscox normally schedules a treatment every three to four weeks. “The interval might be less, depending on a particular patient’s response,” he said. “Most patients require a total of three to four sessions. The ideal candidate is nearly anyone who needs some facial rejuvenation with improvement in fine lines, some skin tightening and reduced sun damage. After a series of treatments, patients can expect a truly glowing complexion, with significant improvement in skin smoothness and texture.”

A typical treatment session takes around 30 minutes. “Treatment is truly painless for most patients,” Dr. Hiscox stated. “They will hear a popping sound, but feel no pain. At maximal energy settings, though, some patients experience mild warmth. Patients tell us that treatment is awesome. I have also observed no adverse events to date.”

Dr. Hiscox has had the procedure performed on his own face – one session consisting of a triple pass at the highest energy settings. “I ended up fairly erythematous, like a mild sunburn. This is what I would have expected, so I don’t consider this an adverse event,” he said. The newest treatment head has an energy output of 1100 mJ/pulse.

“The device is very easy to use. The learning curve is also very shallow. It is hard to damage skin,” Dr.

Hiscox observed. "Other competing systems may use a blue dye to prevent overlapping. But the dye is messy and is hard to remove from patients. In contrast, the Pixel is gentle enough so it doesn't matter if you go over an area twice." Many patients can be comfortably treated with one or two passes at the maximum energy output. "Patients are amazed by the outcomes," Dr. Hiscox said. "Not only do they like the way they look, but they are receiving a lot of wonderful compliments from friends and co-workers."

"I like that the Pixel is erbium and partially ablative," said Greg Keller, M.D., a facial plastic surgeon in private practice in Santa Barbara, Calif. "There is no downtime whatsoever and no patient discomfort during treatment. We can achieve nice results in the neck and chest with resurfacing, which we really haven't been able to do before. Treatment is also cost-effective because of the interchangeable modules on the Harmony platform."

Dr. Keller recommends three to five sessions, spaced two to four weeks apart. "Patients can expect the color and the quality of their skin to improve in the neck," he said. "Treatment time is also amazingly fast. A full-face treatment takes about seven minutes, whereas the face and neck can be completed in around 15 minutes."

Like Dr. Hiscox, Dr. Keller has had treatment himself, performed by his wife, an experienced laser nurse. "I'm not pain tolerate and I felt virtually no pain," he reported. "There was also very minimal discomfort following treatment. Minor flaking is about all that you



Photos courtesy of Gregory Keller, M.D.

see. With just two sessions, I've seen a difference in my outcomes."

The number of treatment passes ranges from one to three. "Problem areas can be treated with additional three-stack passes," noted Dr. Keller, an associate clinical professor of surgery at the University of California, Los Angeles. "The device is easy to use and effective for what you are doing. There is very nice improvement in the neck and chest skin. Patients perceive a difference in their facial skin and patient feedback has been excellent. Everyone comments that the color, texture and pore size of their skin has improved. However, my experience with the Pixel laser is skewed by my patient population. Other physicians report that the handpiece is effective for acne scarring."

"As a company, we have chosen the Pixel 2940 Er:YAG laser because it delivers results that are on par with ablative lasers," said Mr. Matzliach of Alma Lasers. "But unlike other ablative lasers, there is no pain involved with the Pixel. It also eliminates possible side effects of ablative treatments, such as hypo- or hyperpigmentation, post-operative infections, swelling, and long-time erythema or edema. Furthermore, the Pixel can be used on the face, neck, chest, arms and hands – a much wider scope than the traditional ablative technologies."

The Pixel 2940 fractional ablative laser represents "the best of both worlds for skin resurfacing," according to Mr. Matzliach. "It combines the proven effectiveness of an ablative resurfacing with the patient comfort level and convenience of a non-ablative approach."



Harmony Pixel 2940 Module