

## Laser Cosmetic Skin Treatments Skyrocket in Popularity



In the current economic doldrums, with droves of Americans unemployed or fearing they'll be laid off, one medical procedure seems to be recession-proof, according to a recent survey: laser resurfacing of the skin. In its annual Procedural Survey, the American Academy of Cosmetic Surgery (AACCS) discovered a dramatic shift in the field of cosmetic treatments toward non-invasive laser procedures.

In fact, over the past three years, the number of patients seeking laser resurfacing has skyrocketed 456 percent among men and 215 percent among women. The treatment uses a "super-pulsed" carbon dioxide laser to reduce facial wrinkles and other imperfections. And laser hair removal has advanced to become the overall No. 2 most-performed non-invasive cosmetic treatment.

"Cosmetic surgery technology is advancing at the speed of light," said AACCS President Patrick McMenemy. "As we learn more about the cosmetic uses for lasers, the more patients benefit from effective results and quicker recovery time. It is an exciting time for both cosmetic surgery patients and physicians."

Despite the continuing problems with the economy, laser resurfacing's popularity appears to be unsinkable – especially since the procedure has declined in cost by about \$450 since 2002. "As long as these procedures are effective and affordable, I don't see their demand dropping," said McMenemy.

The survey also found that, during 2008, there was a 29 percent increase in women seeing cosmetic surgeons. At the same time, men have reduced their visits to cosmetic surgeons by 2 percent. This showed that women place a high premium on cosmetic medicine, despite economic hard times, while men see it as one of the first things to be cut when belt-tightening.

The survey also revealed that the top three most common cosmetic surgical procedures in 2008 were liposuction, blepharoplasty (reshaping the eyelid) and breast enhancement. The most widespread non-invasive cosmetic procedures were Botox injections, laser hair removal and wrinkle-reducing injections of hyaluronic acid.

Michelle Hardaway, M.D., a cosmetic surgeon from Detroit, adds, "Combining different laser modalities that treat different layers of the skin can give dramatic results. But also, by combining laser treatments with fillers (products that fill deeper lines) or Botox, a person could look years younger without undergoing a surgical procedure."