

# Candela Lasers Optimize Fractional Treatments

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Before Tx      After Tx  
Photos courtesy of Richard Fitzpatrick, M.D.



Before Tx      After Tx  
Photos courtesy of Richard Fitzpatrick, M.D.

Fractional treatments have become a popular method of treating aging and sun damaged skin with good results. However, physicians are discovering that adding Vbeam and/or a Q-switched alexandrite laser such as AlexTriVantage, from Candela Corporation (Wayland, Mass.), during the same session can easily optimize overall results, enhance patient comfort and possibly even reduce patient downtime.

"I always include Vbeam (595 nm pulsed dye) for vascular ectasia and an alexandrite laser such as AlexTriVantage (Q-switched 755 nm) for dyschromia, lentigines and seborrheic keratoses, when performing fractional treatments," advised Richard Fitzpatrick, M.D., director of cosmetic dermatology at La Jolla Cosmetic Surgery Centre, in La Jolla, Calif. "Although fractional devices treat the component of sun damage that causes uneven brown pigment and variable amounts of erythema, I find that we are chasing this component to a certain extent when treating with fractional devices alone. I would much rather attain more complete treatment of these conditions."

Dr. Fitzpatrick often applies Vbeam first to avoid "covering or exacerbating the vascular ectasia." Then the Q-switched alexandrite laser is used to treat large lentigines, seborrheic keratoses and areas of hyperpigmentation.

For fractionated treatment, Dr. Fitzpatrick uses Fraxel ablative or non-ablative devices. However, Candela's QuadraLASE fractional CO<sub>2</sub> laser can be effectively substituted. "Depending on surface areas, combined treatments take 30 to 45 minutes." For ablative CO<sub>2</sub> treatments, Dr. Fitzpatrick usually completes treatment in a single session versus non-ablative, which requires four sessions in monthly intervals.

For multiple sessions with a non-ablative device, Dr. Fitzpatrick generally decreases the intensity of the Q-switched alexandrite laser and Vbeam because patients desire "little to no downtime."

These non-ablative devices are associated with "possibly three or four days of redness and swelling, plus a little superficial peeling of the skin." In contrast, treatment with fractional CO<sub>2</sub> involves a "solid week of healing, including crusting." However, "the downtime of the Q-switched alexandrite laser coincides well with the downtime of ablative fractional CO<sub>2</sub> treatment," Dr. Fitzpatrick reported.

"Candela lasers are definitely helpful in maximizing fractional treatments," concurred Suzanne Kilmer, M.D., director of The Skin Surgery Center of Northern California (Sacramento, Calif.), who prior to fractional treatments will often use Vbeam to treat vascular lesions, followed by a Q-switched alexandrite laser for lentigines. "By adding Vbeam and an alexandrite laser, you can usually reduce the number of fractional treatments since you can more specifically target vascular lesions and lentigines, and achieve textural improvement. Instead of three treatment sessions, you may only need to schedule two sessions or possibly just one."

Sessions are spaced four to eight weeks apart. "Downtime, which averages three to four days, is not increased by adding additional lasers to fractional treatment," said Dr. Kilmer, an associate clinical professor of dermatology at the University of California, Davis. "Patients can expect excellent results. By providing this combination therapy, you eliminate prominent vascular lesions and lentigines that are more difficult to treat with fractional therapy alone. The entire treated area looks much better by combining these three modalities."

However, at times, Dr. Kilmer may use just Vbeam or just a Q-switched alexandrite laser in conjunction with fractional treatment. Whatever the combination, "treatment is very safe on all skin types. In fact, QuadraLASE may allow you to treat at lower energy levels because you've already treated the lentigines and vessels. Treating less aggressively may also decrease a patient's overall downtime."