

Physicians Prefer BTL Vanquish ME as Stand Alone or Adjunctive Tx



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Aesthetic practitioners are still looking for just the right energy-based technology or combination of treatments that will achieve better outcomes with little to no downtime. Most practices have likely acquired more than one device to address various aesthetic indications – the non-invasive elimination of fat being among the most requested.

Popular fat reduction energies include electromagnetic waves, ultrasound and lasers as well as two other unique technologies: cryolipolysis, which reduces fat by freezing it, and Selective Radiofrequency™ (RF), which is proven to eradicate fat and recently FDA cleared for circumferential reduction. The BTL Vanquish ME platform from BTL Aesthetics (Boston Mass.) represents an advanced implementation of Selective RF. During treatment, the unit's non-contact device (or applicator) is positioned over the area to be treated and delivers RF-based energy, initiating induced apoptosis in the fat layers.

By comparison, the cryolipolysis fat reduction technique freezes a specified area of fat using a cooling applicator that when applied to the target area cools the underlying fat tissue without damage to the skin or surrounding tissues.

Many physicians that purchased the CoolSculpting cryolipolysis device from ZELTIQ Aesthetics (Pleasanton, Calif.) later bought BTL Vanquish ME as a complementary treatment to augment the system's feature set. In some cases the Vanquish ME replaced it altogether. Notably, many of the same key opinion leaders that have lauded CoolSculpting for several years have also noted that the BTL Vanquish ME is a fast, safe and effective way to treat unwanted fat without downtime or complications. As well, it complements the BTL Exilis device, which is used for skin tightening.

According to Robert W. Kessler, M.D., F.A.C.S., a plastic surgeon in Corona Del Mar, Calif., who uses both systems, "One of the things that is really appealing about BTL Vanquish ME is that due to the large spot size, it can cover broader areas in essentially a shorter period of time – a whole abdomen, flank to flank. Also, it provides excellent efficacy."

Jeff Russell, owner of Beleza MedSpa in Scottsdale, Ariz., and executive director of the *International Association for Physicians in Aesthetic Medicine*



Before Tx



After BTL Vanquish ME Tx

Photos courtesy of Amir Moradi, M.D.

(IAPAM), added CoolSculpting in his practice two years ago, followed by the BTL Exilis and then BTL Vanquish. "We needed the ability to treat skin laxity, which CoolSculpting doesn't provide," he said.

The BTL Exilis comes in at this point, noted Dr. Kessler. "CoolSculpting has been very nice for my healthy patients, but my older patients were getting laxity. I researched skin tightening technologies and chose the BTL Exilis. I've been using it over three years."

When he upgraded to the BTL Vanquish ME, Dr. Kessler also saw its value as a kind of aesthetic "finishing tool," he added. "We've been able to smooth out any irregularities resulting from cryolipolysis with the BTL Exilis and BTL Vanquish ME. For instance, if you do both flanks on a person, one flank is going to respond better than the other. Sometimes it's a noticeable difference. It has nothing to do with the technology of CoolSculpting; it's just that everybody's body is different."

As well, patients increasingly desire treatments on different areas of the body and BTL Vanquish ME is a good adjunct to cryolipolysis in these situations. "For instance, you can treat the inner thigh with CoolSculpting and the outer thigh with BTL Vanquish ME. You can also treat the arms with Vanquish ME. You would have to invest in additional applicators to treat these areas with cryolipolysis.

For Peter J. Jenkin, M.D., F.A.A.D., a medical and cosmetic dermatologist in Seattle, Wash., "The cryolipolysis science and technology made sense. It was quite effective and we obtained consistent results," he said. "But some patients were uncomfortable, especially with the large handpiece when it was used in the central abdomen."

After three years of performing CoolSculpting treatments and having also implemented the BTL Vanquish during that same period, Dr. Jenkin found that he was using the Selective RF device more often and decided to replace his cryolipolysis device with the BTL Vanquish ME.

According to Dr. Kessler, "With CoolSculpting it is one hour per site per application, so when you're looking at six areas with one device, it is six hours of work. With the BTL Vanquish ME, you could conceivably do six areas with the abdominal handpiece in four, 45-minute sessions. Yes, patients might have



Before Tx



After BTL Vanquish ME Tx
Photos courtesy of Anna Pare, M.D.



Before Tx



After BTL Vanquish ME Tx
Photos courtesy of Melanie Palm, M.D.

to come back in four times, but not many patients are willing to stay for one six hour treatment either.”

Since it can do a much larger area in less time, for Dr. Kessler, the BTL Vanquish ME is much more time effective. “Also, it allows for a larger patient pool and we haven’t had any complications or side effects with BTL Vanquish.”

“There is never a pain issue with BTL Vanquish ME, and it is not messy. You can turn a room over in five minutes. There are no oils, gels or marking up involved with treatment,” Mr. Russell maintained.

Ultimately, for many the bottom line in choosing BTL Vanquish ME comes down to cost and return on investment. Specifically, Dr. Jenkin felt that, “With CoolSculpting, the cost of consumables were high, so as the BTL systems came along, the cryolipolysis device rapidly became marginalized in my practice.”

In terms of business models, there is a clear advantage to employing the BTL Vanquish ME, Dr. Kessler agreed. “Rather than paying a fixed fee for each consumable that we use, which requires us to charge the patient a certain amount for each area we treat, I have control over the price point,” he said.

“Both systems are around \$100K, so your per-month cost is going to be the same,” Mr. Russell pointed out. “The big difference really is with BTL Vanquish there are no consumables. The only other cost to consider is the expense of your operator.”

BTL Vanquish has become a workhorse in the office, Dr. Kessler stated. “It is user and time friendly. From the patient’s experience, it’s also very comfortable.”

Recently, Mr. Russell considered purchasing a second CoolSculpting unit. “Having two units working together is popular. It’s call ‘dual sculpting,’” he said. However, after comparing the benefits of the cryolipolysis and Selective RF technologies, he decided to purchase the BTL Vanquish ME. “We have cut our treatment time in half and can help patients that we weren’t able to treat before.”



Before Tx



Four weeks after fourth BTL Vanquish ME Tx
Photos courtesy of Karen Harkaway, M.D.

However, Dr. Kessler pointed out one of CoolSculpting's most important benefits, from the practice business perspective. "You or someone on your staff can position the patient, initiate the treatment, and then step away and leave the area," he said. The system has a pager button that patients can use to summon staff. "With the BTL Vanquish ME device, the temperature is building and adipose tissue is getting hot, so somebody has to be stationed nearby in order to lower the power or change the position of the handpiece if the temperature gets too hot. Somebody has to be within earshot of the treatment room."

Patient safety and correct patient choice are a priority, Dr. Jenkin stated. "With any energy-based device, it comes down to proper education of the patient, giving them realistic expectations and also making sure they are the right candidates for the device."

Mr. Russell concurred, noting that it's better to under promise and over deliver. "Managing patient expectations is critical," he said. "The ideal candidate wants to lose a few inches and also has to have realistic expectations. This patient cares about the measurable changes, and we see people that run from very firm to overweight."

Ultimately, patient satisfaction is key, but so is practitioner satisfaction. "I'm very pleased with both the BTL Exilis and BTL Vanquish ME," Dr. Jenkin reported. "They both have their own niche, patient satisfaction is very high and the virtual complete absence of side effects and consumables makes it very easy to deal with in terms of price point."

According to Dr. Kessler, the complementary nature of CoolSculpting and BTL Vanquish ME points the way towards more practitioners embracing energy-based technologies that interoperate well with other systems and modalities. "We will never have that singular magic bullet kind of device that is going to do everything we need to do," he said. "This also goes for plastic surgery procedures. How many different types of face-lifts, breast lifts and other lifts are there? There is so much variability out there. If you work with different technologies and techniques, then you learn the best ways to use them."



Before Tx



After four BTL Vanquish ME treatments
Photos courtesy of Trevor Born, M.D.



Before Tx



After BTL Vanquish ME Tx
Photos courtesy of David Goldberg, M.D.