

Clear and Brilliant Laser Treatments: Here's What You Should Know

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It's actually the perfect treatment for laser newbs.



By [Lauren Balsamo](#)

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If you're curious about skin lasers, then I'm sure you've already heard about Fraxel, the super-popular laser known for its ability to make your skin feel baby soft and look super smooth. But you may not know about its downsides: It doesn't work on all skin tones; it's *very* intense (think: somewhat painful with weeks of downtime); and it's not suitable for every skin type. Which is probably why the Clear and Brilliant laser is becoming so popular (hi, I personally love it).

Think of Clear and Brilliant as Fraxel's baby sister, says Ellen Marmur, MD, dermatologist and founder of Marmur Medical in New York City. "**It's a gentle, yet effective skin-resurfacing treatment that's ideal for most skin types,**" she says. Sounds good, right?

So keep scrolling for all things Clear and Brilliant—including how exactly the laser treatment works, what it can do for your skin, and how to take care of your skin before and after trying it.

What does the Clear and Brilliant laser do?

Clear and Brilliant is a laser treatment uses fractional laser technology to create a ton of microscopic thermal injuries to the skin, says Dr. Marmur. **These injuries trigger your skin's natural healing process, which, in turn, boosts collagen and elastin production** (the proteins responsible for keeping your skin smooth and firm) and replaces damaged skin with healthy tissue.

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Clear and Brilliant can be used on the face, neck, and chest, and is great at smoothing fine lines and rough texture, minimizing the appearance of large pores, and fading hyperpigmentation, like acne marks and dark spots. "It's really **the ideal treatment for anyone seeing early signs of aging or just wanting to improve their overall skin health**," says Dr. Marmur.

I've personally tried the OG Clear and Brilliant Treatment and the Clear and Brilliant Touch (a newer version of the laser that combines two different wavelengths for deeper results) and was super impressed by how smooth and even my skin looked after.

How long does Clear and Brilliant last?

You'll experience **softer, clearer skin for two weeks after your appointment, and that glow can be maintained for up to three months**, says Dr. Marmur. The longevity of your results depend on a few things, including your age, skin condition, and how well you take care of your skin post-treatment. Being consistent with a good skincare routine (check out the products below for a good place to start) is key for maintaining your results. "You can also prolong and amplify results by continuing to do more Clear and Brilliant treatments, or combining your laser with an in-office chemical peel or LED therapy," says Dr. Marmur.

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How many Clear and Brilliant treatments does it take to see results?

Most people notice that initial glow after just one Clear and Brilliant treatment, but the best results (aka a visible reduction in fine lines and dark spots) happen **after completing a series of four to six treatments spaced about a month apart**. "Your doctor can recommend the ideal number of treatments for you based on your specific skincare goals," adds Dr. Marmur, but it's important to know that benefits of Clear and Brilliant are cumulative so the more treatments you get the better your skin will look in the long run.

What does Clear and Brilliant cost?

Okay, so, Clear and Brilliant isn't exactly cheap. **A single treatment can cost anywhere from \$500 to \$750**, depending on where you live (expect to pay more in major cities) and who does your treatment. Some providers will offer a discount if you buy multiple treatments at once, which isn't a bad idea since most people benefit from multiple treatments anyway. P.S., You *may* find Clear and Brilliant advertised for less on Groupon, but steer clear of those deals—lasers come with risks (like discoloration and scarring), and you don't want someone inexperienced performing your treatment.

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What should I expect during a Clear and Brilliant treatment?

As soon as I rolled up to my Clear and Brilliant appointment, my provider removed any makeup on my face, cleansed my skin, and then applied a thick layer of numbing cream to my entire face. After I sat with the numbing cream on for about 45 minutes, my face was wiped clean with alcohol and my provider got to work.

During the treatment, **the tip of the laser makes multiple passes over each area of your face, which feels kinda hot and tingly, but isn't unbearable** thanks to the numbing cream. Once the treatment was over, a calming sheet mask was placed over my skin for 10 minutes to minimize heat and redness, and then I was on my way. The whole thing—including the numbing, lasering, and masking—took about an hour and 15 minutes.

How do I take care of my skin before and after my Clear and Brilliant treatment?

Pre-treatment care

Following these five rules is a must if you want to have a good Clear and Brilliant experience, says Dr. Marmur.

- Avoid the sun for two full weeks before your treatment.
- Stop using any products with retinol and AHAs/BHAs like glycolic acid and salicylic acid five days before your treatment.
- If you've ever had herpes or are prone to fever blisters, ask your doctor for a Valtrex Rx in advance to prevent an outbreak.
- If your skin is red or peeling from a previous treatment, skip Clear and Brilliant entirely until your skin has healed.
- If you're taking Isotretinoin (aka Accutane), wait at least six months before trying a Clear and Brilliant treatment.

Post-treatment care

Compared to other lasers and in-office procedures, **Clear and Brilliant requires minimal downtime**. Immediately after my treatment, my skin was red and felt hot (like I had gotten a bad sunburn) and stayed this way for the rest of the day. The following day my skin was pink and felt a bit dry, but looked fine enough to leave the house/do Zoom meetings with my camera on/see friends etc.

By the third day the redness was totally gone, and my skin had a rough sandpaper-y feeling which was def weird, but fixable with loads of hydrating moisturizer. And by the fourth day? Freaking glowing. To ensure your healing process goes smoothly like mine, Dr. Marmur recommends following the below rules after your treatment:

- Stay out of the sun for a week and always wear sunscreen with SPF 50 or more.
- Try to avoid working out for one to two days after if you can, as it's important to keep your skin temp cool post-treatment. Also, ice packs = your friend.
- No retinol, exfoliating acids, or aggressive face scrubs for 10 days after your treatment. Stick to gentle skincare only, like mild cleansers and fragrance-free face moisturizers.
- No picking or peeling at skin. It may be tempting, but just let your skin heal and do its thing.

Is Clear and Brilliant worth it?

If you can afford it, 100 percent yes. Clear and Brilliant is a great way to refresh, resurface, and brighten up your skin—plus, **it's one of the few pro laser treatments that doesn't require extensive downtime, which is a major plus IMO**. Again, as with all lasers, there is some risk for scarring, hyperpigmentation, and burns (especially if you have super-sensitive or melanin-rich skin) so it's incredibly important to see a board-certified dermatologist or plastic surgeon for your treatment. They'll be able to properly assess your skin before your treatment to minimize the chance of any negative side effects.

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Lauren Balsamo is the deputy beauty director at Cosmopolitan covering all things skin, hair, makeup, and nails for both the magazine and website.

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