

Style advice, opinions and observations from

TODD CARGO, the Style Guy



Sprucing Up

Now that fall is here and I've been spending more time indoors, I've begun to notice a lot of worn out old things in the house that need sprucing up: the paint in the living room, the tiled kitchen backsplash, my 38-year-old partner's face. Micah has always been young and beautiful, but especially in the last year-and-a-half since we became dads, I've noticed that he's not as young as the 24-year-old I first met. There's nothing wrong with getting older of course; it's just that I don't want to have to look at it. All of my own efforts at thwarting the ravages of time have been well documented in these pages over the years, so I thought it was time Micah took some of my advice. I sent him to Dr. Seiler of Seiler Skin and Laser in Homewood for a laser facial.

I went to Dr. Seiler a few years ago when I needed a tune up, and I had great results, even though I had a long recovery period. Wouldn't you know it though—just as it always has been—Micah had a much easier time than I did. When I had my laser treatments, my face was red and swollen like a giant ugly tomato, and I had to rub oozy gel all over my face for days and days. I also had to pack my face in ice for several days to combat swelling. Oh, but not Micah, his treatment was a breeze.

I discovered that during the short amount of time between my laser treatments and Micah's, technology has changed. Now there are new laser options to combat the damage we've done over the years. One of these revolutionary new skin treatments is what Micah utilized. It's called Fraxel. The technology behind Fraxel is as revolutionary as the results you can get from it. Unlike other laser treatments, Fraxel is able to precisely treat thousands of microscopic areas of skin, using pinpoint laser beams to penetrate the skin to eliminate old, damaged cells. The body's natural healing process is stimulated, including the stimulation of collagen, which over the subsequent months will replace damaged skin with fresh, glowing, healthy skin.

Since Fraxel is a great way to reverse sun damage, Micah chose it since he spends a good amount of time outdoors. Micah also had a couple of areas where he had some residual acne scarring from his teen years. It was nothing anyone really ever noticed but him, but it has always bothered him. Micah loved his Fraxel, and his experience was really great, although he was a little nervous at first. He'd never been lasered before, but he

popped a Xanax before the appointment and was fine.

Of course he didn't know this at the time, and neither did I, but he didn't even need to take anything to relax—his treatment was easy. He was in and out of Dr. Seiler's office in a couple of hours (it might have taken less time if Micah wasn't the type to stop and talk with everyone he sees). Dr. Seiler has a very friendly staff, and all it takes to get Micah going is a smile and a hello, and then before you know it he's whiled away 30 minutes gabbing with people. I guess it's that friendliness that's given him the tools to put up with me for 15 years!

Anyway, once Micah stopped gabbing with the staff, he was taken into a treatment room where Dr. Seiler's assistant applied a thin numbing cream to his face. He brought his iPad, so he watched a movie while the cream took effect. There were two applications of numbing cream during the course of an hour. After that hour, his face was ready for the laser. Dr. Seiler came in and got started. Micah told me about the sensation the laser gave, and it was WAY milder than what I have experienced in the past from various treatments. He said that although he could feel the laser at work, and it did sting a little, he wouldn't describe it as painful. This totally disappointed me because I had told him over and over how painful it was going to be. When I had my lasers years ago and went on and on about my discomfort, he accused me of milking it, so I will admit I was looking forward to his feeling some amount of discomfort. He never did. He said that the sensation isn't pain as much as it is more like a short stinging, and then the moment it's over the stinging stops and all you feel is a something akin to having a sunburn. He said his face felt dry, but that was it. Dr. Seiler gave him a moisturizing gel, and he was fine. The treatment took 10 minutes, and the entire visit could have just lasted an hour-and-a-half (had Micah not felt so compelled to socialize).

His at-home care was pretty simple as well. He applied the gel to his face several times during the next day and a half whenever his skin felt dry, and by the third day he stopped using the gel completely and just started using the skincare kit he had purchased from them for around \$200.

He said it didn't hurt at all. Of course he wouldn't

feel any pain. I was so happy for him. (I wanted to replace his cream with lemon juice so that he would feel the burn, but I didn't.) His face was swollen for two days, and then the swelling went away. Dr. Seiler told him that icing his face down with an ice pack that first day would help ease the swelling, but he never did it and still didn't swell all that much. Micah had the procedure on a Friday afternoon and was able to go out in public that Monday without anyone staring at us.

His results are technically not supposed to show up for about six months, time for the collagen to rev up and make the changes to the new skin developing underneath the current layers. However, he has already seen great results. He's only two months out, and already his pores are smaller, his skin is fresher and smoother and cleaner and his acne scars have already improved by about 30 percent. I can't wait to see what he looks like six months from now. Dr. Seiler says that to get the full benefits of what Fraxel can do, a person should have between three to five treatments over the course of two years. Micah will only need three to get the results he wants, and his second one is scheduled in a couple of weeks.

I know this sounds like some kind of paid commercial for Dr. Seiler, but it really isn't. I have just always liked Dr. Seiler and always had great results with him and so he was the only person I trusted with Micah's face—although it wouldn't have killed the doc to make it hurt a little more. Micah is notoriously hard to please and since he left happy with his treatment, that says a lot. So take it from the Style Guy, if you have some unsightly blemishes, skin damage or a mate whose skin needs perking up, give Fraxel a try. It might be the easy, inexpensive way to spruce up that tired old thing around your house!

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