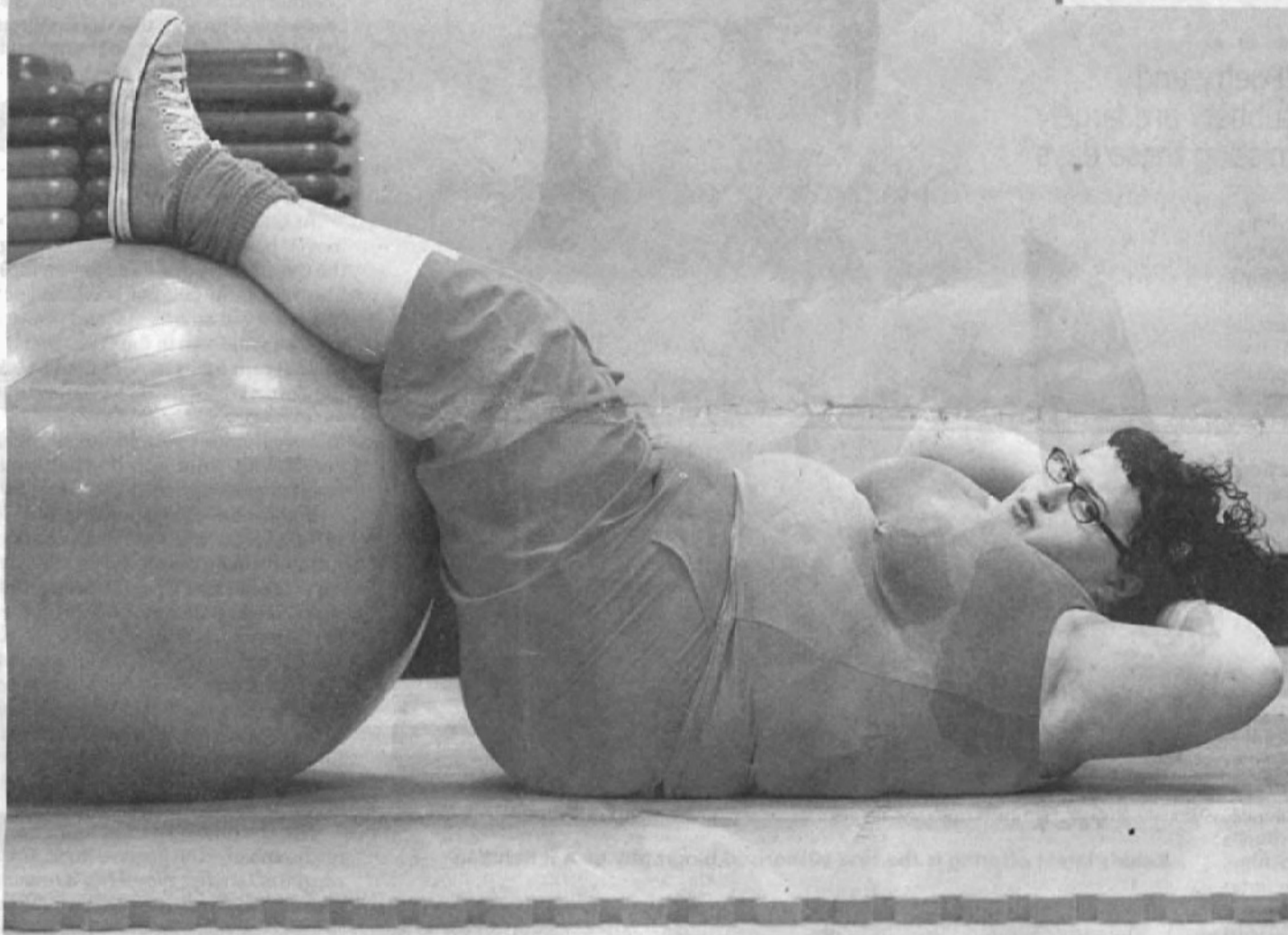


# Cut out the flab

**Gargi Gupta** finds some new age fitness mantras to lose weight without sweating in the gym or going on a diet



## OTHER WAYS OF LOSING FAT

**Bariatric surgery:** This is the only procedure that works for the seriously obese, and involves primarily reducing the size of the stomach — either a large part of it is cut out, or stapled or a silicone band inserted to lessen hunger and absorption of food, and thus restrict weight. Adnan Sami and Deigo Maradona are two celebrity examples of the difference the surgery can make.

**Liposuction:** Other than exercise, this is the only way to remove fat from the body, says Dr Abhijit Desai, who runs Evolve Medi Spa in Mumbai. Simply put, a hole is made in the body and fat is sucked out with the help of vacuum.

**Lipodissolve:** Largely discredited now with USFDA warning spas and wellness clinics that advertised its benefits, Lipodissolve or mesotherapy as it is also called, involves injecting small doses of medicine (in Carboxytherapy, carbon-dioxide is injected) that help to dissolve or burn fat.

through the lymphatic system. It costs about the same too — ₹5,000 for each 45 minute laser session dedicated to the abdomen. The difference is that in i-Lipo laser pads are used so there's some amount of contact between machine and the patient's body.

First introduced in India in July last year by Abhijit Desai of Evolve Medi Spa in Mumbai, the USFDA approved device has since become quite widespread. "I have used it on 400 patients in the past 10 months with very encouraging results," says Desai, "provided the patients then follow it with a balanced diet and good exercise." Exercise is a prerequisite in i-Lipo because you need to exercise to turn the free fatty acids into energy or they will be stored again in your cells. Desai recommends eight sessions of i-Lipo over four weeks with a two-day gap between each to give the body the time to metabolise the fat.

## CoolSculpting

It is a potentially revolutionary therapy based on the insight that fat cells die when exposed to intense cold. Developed by Zeltiq, a US-based medical devices company (CoolSculpting is the brand name), it got the USFDA approval the same day as Zerona. CoolSculpting entails applying fist-sized gel patches on areas with stubborn fat, and freezing them to sub-zero temperatures. The procedure is not available in India as yet, although Banerjee informs that Avi Pharma had approached Zeltiq for a licence.

## Focussed ultra-sound

Instead of lasers, low frequency ultrasound waves in the 30 to 70 KHz range are used in this treatment to break down fat cells and expel them from the body. There are various companies offering this treatments under various brand names — Proslimelt, UltraShape, UltraFocal, Liposonix, etc. Skin Alive in Delhi has been offering Proslimelt for three years now, and charges around ₹5,000 per session, depending on the area.

**L**ose weight without having to sweat it out, half-starve, pop dubious pills or go under the surgeon's knife — does it sound too good to be true? But that's exactly what a number of weight loss and obesity centres around the country — or "aesthetic medicine" clinics, as they are now called — are promising. These are non-invasive, non-surgical procedures that have passed the stringent norms of the US Food and Drug Administration and the European Union CE Marking. Of course, none of these procedures has been approved in India as yet, says Rohit Kumar, consultant at the Moolchand Bariatric Clinic in New Delhi, and their efficacy is yet to be proved on Indian patients.

Still, given the rise in obesity, especially in the metros, because of the sedentary lifestyle, many people are ready to try anything that promises to relieve them of the extra fat. The caveat here is that these new

methods won't work if you are truly obese, but they do very well for the moderately overweight who need to shake off that little paunch, the love handles and the double chin. "They cannot be a replacement for a healthy lifestyle," says Chiranjiv Chhabra who runs the Skin Alive chain of clinics in Delhi, which offers two of these procedures, i-Lipo and Proslimelt.

## Zerona

This brand-new procedure uses something called "low-level lasers" to melt fat under the skin. It's based on research by Ene Mester, a scientist at Budapest's oldest medical college, Semmelweis University, who stumbled upon the curative properties of light beams in the 600-1,000 nanometre range in 1967 as he researched the effect of lasers on skin can-

cer. Zerona, the brand name given to the procedure by the US-based company Erchonia which developed the laser scanner used here, was approved by USFDA in September last year.

By November, it was being offered in India through its distributor, Avi Pharma, and seems, in less than six months, to have become a hit with weight-management physicians, despite its stiff ₹45-lakh price tag. "We already have 10 installations in India: two in Mumbai, and one each in Chennai, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Ludhiana, Raipur, Rajkot, Solan and Chandigarh," says Tushar Banerjee, national sales manager for Avi Pharma.

Deepak Chaturvedi offers Zerona to his patients at the Lokhanwala and Santa Cruz, Mumbai, branches of Amaya Clinic which advertises itself as the "Anti-aging Weight Loss & Zerona Clinic". Each Zerona ses-

sion here costs ₹5,000; eight sessions are recommended, one every alternate day, says Chaturvedi, for the results to begin showing. But he's also had patients who have taken as many as 15 sessions. "Patients lose between 1 inch and 2 inches every session, depending on how overweight they are, and I have even had one who has lost as much as 35 to 40 inches overall." Being a no-touch technique, Zerona, says Chaturvedi, not just works on the abdomen, arms and thighs but also on the face, breast and other delicate and harder to reach body areas.

## i-Lipo

i-Lipo, developed by British company Chromogenex, works on much the same technology as Zerona — applying low-level lasers between 500 nm and 600 nm to break down the triglycerides stored in fat cells and convert them into free fatty acids which are then expelled

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**These treatments work for the moderately overweight**