



Experts Reveal the Winning Combination of Thermi's Secret Makeover and Silhouette InstaLift

By Jeffrey Frentzen, Executive Editor

In practices worldwide, the meteoric rise of widespread combination procedures has led to the 'Secret Makeover,' a head to toe, non-surgical full body rejuvenation protocol that utilizes devices from Thermi, an Almirall company (Dallas, Texas), as well as Silhouette InstaLift™, which is composed of absorbable (dissolving) suture material to lift sagging mid-facial skin.

“Much of the innovation that created the Secret Makeover is coming from physicians that combine modalities and therapies for synergistic effects.”



Gregory A. Buford, M.D., F.A.C.S.
Plastic Surgeon
Denver, CO

As Gregory A. Buford, M.D., F.A.C.S., a plastic surgeon in Denver, Colo., pointed out, the aesthetic field has begun to embrace the total body makeover concept. “This is definitely the direction of aesthetic medicine, to look at the overall patient and come up with a ‘secret’ total makeover. The reason it is secret is that a lot of people don’t want it be known that they had some work done. At the same time they want results that are noticeable, but also natural looking.”



Brian M. Kinney, M.D., F.A.C.S.
Cosmetic Surgeon
Beverly Hills, CA

The firm’s ThermiRF® platform, used for ThermiTight®, ThermiRase® and ThermiSmooth® Face procedures, delivers minimally invasive, temperature controlled radiofrequency (RF)-based energy for both micro-surgical and non-surgical aesthetic applications in soft tissue and nerves. Thermi250™, which includes the ThermiSmooth Body procedure, non-invasively treats aesthetic indications with low downtime. Patients report little to no pain after treatment and consistent non-surgical results. ThermiVa® addresses many women’s concerns in the vulvovaginal area by heating tissue with controlled RF.



Z. Paul Lorenc, M.D., F.A.C.S.
Plastic Surgeon
New York City, NY

The ThermiRF platform delivers multiple applications at the physician’s finger tips, and when combined with Silhouette InstaLift lifting sutures, enables practitioners to artfully combine treatments for a maximum result. This is ‘the Art of Thermi’.



Michael H. Gold, M.D., F.A.A.D.
Dermatologist
Nashville, TN

According to Brian M. Kinney, M.D., F.A.C.S., a cosmetic surgeon in Beverly Hills, Calif., “Much of the innovation that created the Secret Makeover is coming from physicians that combine modalities and therapies for synergistic effects. And as far as the underlying technology goes we are not tapped out yet.”



Jennifer Walden, M.D.
Plastic Surgeon
Dallas, TX

Z. Paul Lorenc, M.D., F.A.C.S., a plastic surgeon in New York City, N.Y., has embraced the Secret Makeover with open arms. “Even though I’m a surgeon this non-surgical therapy is actually increasing my surgical practice. The innovative thing about Thermi devices is that they are very well controlled and extremely safe. We want the ability to deliver as much energy as possible, and the capacity to measure the temperature internally with the thermocouple and infrared camera gives us double safety.”



Jeffrey S. Dover, M.D., F.R.C.P.C.
Dermatologist
Chestnut Hill, MA

According to Michael H. Gold, M.D., F.A.A.D., a dermatologist and researcher in Nashville, Tenn., the Secret Makeover concept is here to stay. “We have had the Mommy Makeover in the past, but there are plenty of women out there who are not yet mommies or are years removed from that and they want to improve these body areas without major surgery.”

For instance, the Thermi Secret Makeover features ThermiBreast®, which employs the minimally invasive ThermiTight applicator. “When the breasts are treated circumferentially, we have seen up to a 4 cm lift in the breasts,” said Dr. Gold. “In addition, when using either ThermiTight or the non-invasive Thermi250 platform one can achieve incredible abdominal contraction.”

“Instead of making potential patients search high and low for one-off procedures that address specific areas, with Thermi products and devices my practice offers a ‘one stop shop’ that covers everything.”

ThermiVa’s non-invasive addition to the Secret Makeover is what sets Thermi apart from other device manufacturers in the aesthetic space. “By putting all of these modalities together, the improvements can be remarkable,” noted Dr. Gold.

Practitioners are taking full advantage of the many Thermi modalities, expressed Jennifer Walden, M.D., a plastic surgeon in Dallas, Texas. “ThermiSmooth Body utilizes heat to ‘knead’ and smooth out cellulite,” she said. “ThermiTight focuses more on the lower face and neck, and the midface and jowls that tend to lose elasticity and become lax as we age. Other treatable areas include the abdomen and arms.”

To deal with concerns around the eyes, Dr. Walden uses ThermiSmooth Face. “This thermal modality helps to non-surgically stimulate collagen with heat for the treatment of periorbital, brows and upper face areas. It is like receiving a warm gentle massage while restoring a youthful look,” she noted.

Dr. Kinney, who worked on development of the Thermi technology, feels the success of this kind of multi-device therapy has physicians looking at common aesthetic procedures from a new angle. “As physicians we have been trained to approach the healthcare field in terms of anatomy,” he said. “Now we have started to think in terms of tissues rather than regional anatomy. That is why we are all of a sudden able to say, what about the banana roll, the arms or the vagina? It’s another conceptual breakthrough. We have these brushes and this canvas and this huge palette of paint and we can create these treatment algorithms for the whole body.”

The Secret Makeover and other Thermi-centric combination therapies are attractive to cosmetic and plastic surgeons, as well as non-invasive specialists, noted Dr. Lorenc. “Thermi products fill a void. They provide a reliable, consistent way to apply heat to tissue, contract collagen molecules and stimulate collagen production, which creates patient satisfaction without surgery and may give the appearance of lifting,” he said. “This can be achieved by using ThermiTight, where you are actually going under the skin, or the ThermiSmooth procedure, in which you are staying on the surface and doing multiple treatments.”

“I have been using Thermi with a lot of my surgical procedures, as well,” Dr. Lorenc added. “The Secret Makeover is an exciting protocol, because it allows us to refine our approaches and consider treatments in the context of treating the person as a whole.”

Perhaps Dr. Walden put it perfectly, “Instead of making potential patients search high and low for one-off procedures that address specific areas, with Thermi products and devices my practice offers a ‘one stop shop’ that covers everything.”

Dr. Buford concurred. “This combination therapy is very powerful because patients can choose from an a la carte menu of procedures,” he stated. “If they have a budget and need to do treatments over time, that is an opportunity for the practitioner to really work with them and give them something that is more than a one-off. I want to find ways to make the patient look more rejuvenated overall.”



Before Tx



After ThermiTight Tx

Photos courtesy of Gregory A. Buford, M.D.

“Silhouette InstaLift can be combined with any of the Thermi procedures. One can see volumizing, facial re-contouring and lifting of the skin with these sutures. With proper training, one can truly change and transform lives.”

The newest addition to these treatment offerings is Silhouette InstaLift sutures, which were developed by Sinclair Pharma plc (London, U.K.) and are currently being distributed in the U.S. exclusively by Thermi.

“Silhouette InstaLift sutures are a nice addition to my practice and complement many of the other Thermi procedures,” said Dr. Walden. “They lift deeper layers of facial tissue than non-invasive modalities, and are used in the midface to fixate the cheek’s subdermal tissue in an elevated position. This resorbable suspension suture features bidirectional cones. Each cone has a smooth 360° surface, which immediately provides an anchoring point in the subcutaneous tissue. Proper patient selection and suture placement are very important for a real difference to be appreciated.”

Silhouette InstaLift can be combined with any of the Thermi procedures, said Dr. Gold. “One can see volumizing, facial re-contouring and lifting of the skin with these sutures. With proper training, one can truly change and transform lives. When you treat the whole patient one needs to look at the eyes and the neck and sometimes the perioral area, which are all wonderful indications for the various Thermi devices. So, combining them is the best of all worlds,” he said.

While the first effect of Silhouette InstaLift raises the skin on the cheeks, a secondary effect is bio-stimulatory, expressed Dr. Kinney. “You are getting collagen stimulation – it’s like a turbo boost to collagen production. Our experiences show that we can do the Silhouette InstaLift sutures, follow up with a series of Thermi treatments and achieve the Secret Makeover. The results are very natural looking.”

Dr. Lorenc employs the sutures in different ways, depending on the preferred outcome. “We can reposition the tissue, of course, because they are bidirectional cones that are more or less holding the tissue up,” he explained. “In addition, the sutures volumize the tissue because they are made out of 82% PLLA and 18% PLGA, which peak at about five to six months post-procedure. You see a tremendous volumization of the face, as well as a change in the quality of the skin due to the bio-stimulatory effect.”

Successful implementation of the Silhouette InstaLift portion of the Secret Makeover will also depend on timing, Dr. Lorenc added. “If I am doing the lower face and the neck with ThermiTight, I will put three Silhouette InstaLift sutures in the midface nasolabial folds, right by the malar fat pads at the same time. That is only if I’m working in the same area. On the other hand, if I am working on the jaw I usually do a ThermiTight treatment first, and then wait about six to eight weeks before I put in the sutures. In some cases, I like to wait and give it some time. Ultimately, I make the choice based on what is best for the patient.”

The range of therapies grows exponentially with the addition of the Silhouette InstaLift sutures, noted Dr. Buford. “There are pioneers out there that will be using the sutures in combination with other modalities, such as products that stimulate

“By lifting with Silhouette InstaLift and using Thermi devices in the other areas, one can address all of the patient’s needs. With the Secret Makeover, we are addressing multiple needs without surgery. I expect it to become extremely popular.”

collagen formation, microneedling, PRP and the Thermi products to treat laxity and other conditions. In this way, we yield far better outcomes than what would be possible using a single modality.”

Combination therapies clearly meet an unmet need among both patients and practitioners, Dr. Buford continued. “At each age, from the 20s going forward, there are very predictable changes that occur with aging, such as changes in the bones, skin, fat, etc. For instance, we lose fat in the midface. As we lose fat we lose structure, such as volume in the mid-cheek,” he said. “A few early pioneers in those days said we need to add volume, but most physicians were just pulling up the face and re-suspending; however, you need a multi-modality method to look at all of the changes that are going to occur and try to encompass those changes in your anti-aging approach.”

Patients’ desire for non-surgical procedures has grown in recent years, noted Dr. Walden, and the industry has responded to this. “While surgery is still the gold standard when it comes to face and neck lifting, the fact remains that many women and men do not want the downtime or visible recovery signs like swelling and bruising with incisional scars that come with surgery,” she said.

“By lifting with Silhouette InstaLift and using Thermi devices in the other areas, one can address all of the patient’s needs,” Dr. Gold remarked. “With the Secret Makeover, we are addressing multiple needs without surgery. I expect it to become extremely popular.”

When choosing these procedures, patients should have realistic expectations, as well, Dr. Gold added. “I will tell them, I am not going to give you a face-lift with Silhouette InstaLift sutures, but I am going to improve things a great deal. I am not going to make every wrinkle disappear when I use the Thermi250 or keep the skin smooth forever. Maintenance therapy will be needed in almost every case and one must make sure that patients understand these realities before you treat.”

When it comes to approaching any elective procedure, “You have to be part practitioner and part psychologist, and maybe mind reader, as well,” stated Dr. Buford. “A very important question to ask is, why are you doing this now? This gives you an idea of their underlying motivation. Often times, they want subtle, natural looking changes. I also need to evaluate how good a candidate they are, and are their expectations in line with what I can and cannot achieve?”

Physicians must be qualified to apply combination procedures, Dr. Gold emphasized. “For instance, a physician that does breast augmentation is an ideal choice to do the ThermiBreast procedure. That physician needs to be comfortable with breast augmentation and what it entails, because if they do not offer breast surgery as an alternative it could lead to bad and unrealistic results.”

Carefully guiding the prospective patient through proposed treatments is paramount, expressed Dr. Walden. “Be very honest with them and really



Before Tx



After ThermiTight Tx

Photos courtesy of Z. Paul Lorence, M.D.

“Thermi has dedicated itself to this clinical environment. You get training before your system is delivered; there are online sessions and other services. The company listens to its users.”

explain how your services can benefit them. We create a welcoming, judgment free, understanding environment for all of our patients and try to guide them based upon their desires and wishes, also taking into account their anatomy and the limitation of each procedure since we are talking about non-invasive therapies,” she said.

“As a plastic surgeon, I usually talk about the pros and cons of each Thermi procedure and contrast it to surgery in that specific area in order to put things in perspective,” Dr. Walden continued. “This way, the patient is fully informed and usually picks one treatment to do, which is fine by me since I offer both non-invasive services performed by my medspa aestheticians and cosmetic surgical procedures performed by me, whether it is a face-lift with neck-lift, liposuction or labiaplasty.”

Patient awareness of all aspects of the impending combination procedure is a primary goal, noted Dr. Gold. “We always have a thorough consultation and examination prior to any of the procedures, and we always make sure patients are aware of what we can and cannot do. As soon as we are comfortable that the patient fully understands this, and that they are also suitable candidates, then we are ready to advance to treatment.”

Although the Thermi Secret Makeover is designed to address all body areas, some creases and curves might be challenging to treat. According to Dr. Lorenc, “The upper back is a particularly challenging area for body contouring, simply because of its structure. The fat is very fibrous and the skin is very thick. Everywhere else, though, it’s pretty straightforward.”

Every case is different, but not necessarily challenging, Dr. Walden reported. “Though we perform a very thorough consultation to make sure the patient is a good candidate for the service of interest, cellulite is notoriously difficult to make better. Therefore, when cellulite is present on the less forgiving areas like medial and posterior thighs it can be more of a challenge.” To deal with challenging cellulite physicians have an effective solution in Thermi250, which is FDA cleared for temporary reduction in the appearance of cellulite.

As stated by Dr. Gold, “None of the areas are particularly challenging if the physician is well trained and has knowledge of the sutures, the devices being used and the structure of the areas being treated. Thermi does a great job of training physicians in the use of their products, and we should all realize that you must learn them well before starting on your own. One must be comfortable with performing these procedures. Make sure that you know what you are doing before applying the Secret Makeover. If you are performing ThermiVa, learn the area and the treatment well. You, the physician, are always responsible for what you do in your office, so learn well.”



Before Tx



Six months after ThermiTight Tx
Photos courtesy of Brian M. Kinney, M.D.

“ThermiSmooth can reduce under eye bags with just three sessions, and many love this result. Also, ThermiVa has had a very good response rate from my patients. They regularly tell me that it has been life changing for them.”

To that end, Thermi is dedicated to training and after sale support, noted Dr. Kinney. “Thermi has dedicated itself to this clinical environment. You get training before your system is delivered; there are online sessions and other services. Oftentimes we have 50 to 75 people on for two hour conference calls. The company listens to its users.”

In addition, the company has continued to rack up positive clinical trial results around the world. Jeffrey S. Dover, M.D., F.R.C.P.C., a dermatologist and researcher in Chestnut Hill, Mass., recently conducted a study of ten patients experiencing neck sagging that was presented at the 2017 *American Society for Laser Medicine and Surgery (ASLMS)* meeting.

According to Dr. Dover, the goal was to see if we could achieve moderate collagen remodeling in people with moderate neck laxity. “These subjects had too much laxity for most energy-based tightening devices, such as Thermage or Ulthera, but did not want surgical procedures, such as a neck-lift. We weren’t going for a home run with the study, but nine out of ten subjects showed quite profound improvements of their neck laxity after a single ThermiTight treatment.”

“We thought it would be good to do a proper study to try and assess the degree of effectiveness. It seems to work as well as people have been saying, so it is not just marketing hype,” Dr. Dover added.

The Secret Makeover and other Thermi-related combination protocols are highly efficacious, Dr. Walden expressed. “Our office performs hundreds of Thermi treatments every year. ThermiSmooth Face can reduce under eye bags with just three sessions, and many love this result,” she said. “Also, ThermiVa has had a very good response rate from my patients. They regularly tell me that it has been life changing for them.”

As a result, patient satisfaction is high across the board with Thermi procedures, Dr. Walden added. “Or else I wouldn’t spend my money or my patients’ time on them. Our aestheticians perform many of the Thermi non-invasive treatments daily and we continue to evaluate their efficacy.”

In Dr. Lorenc’s practice, “The main reason we like the Thermi Secret Makeover is there is very little downtime involved,” he said. “The other attraction for patients is that these modalities are typically done under local anesthesia or local with oral sedation, which makes for an easier recovery. It’s also easier on their pocketbooks.”

Patients love these treatments, reflected Dr. Gold. “The ‘wow’ response we get from patients makes it worthwhile,” he shared. “These therapies work well and we are continually improving our techniques and obtaining better outcomes in our procedures. We work hard to make these procedures as efficacious as possible. In addition, we team with Thermi to ensure that we are all teaching the proper techniques.”



49 year old male before Tx



Three months after one ThermiTight Tx
Photos courtesy of Gregory A. Buford, M.D.

“Talk about a very good investment. I found it almost hard to believe how quickly I was able to pay for that investment. The fact is that when we got the Thermi system business really took off.”

Not surprisingly, return on investment (ROI) has been very good, according to practitioners. “Due to the relatively short treatments times and noticeable results, the ROI has been positive with the Thermi products and devices,” Dr. Walden reported.

“Talk about a very good investment,” stated Dr. Lorenc. “I found it almost hard to believe how quickly I was able to pay for that investment. The fact is that when we got the Thermi system business really took off. It delivers incredible ROI. There is nothing new about using RF-based energy in medicine, but this is a new application of RF that is very well controlled. You are able to really maximize the effect because you have a safety net, as well as reliable parameters for internal and external temperature measurement,” he said.

While some Thermi treatments involve disposables, the cost is negligible, said Dr. Kinney. “With quite a number of other devices, you have to buy custom, disposable pieces that can be expensive. Conversely, with Thermi devices, there might be only a grounding pad you have to use. All of the devices have a very favorable ROI.”

When it comes to the potential effects of these products and the Secret Makeover in the marketplace, “Thermi is changing the game as far as rejuvenation goes for many of our patients who opt not to have surgery,” stated Dr. Walden. “Combination therapies that are packaged in such a turnkey manner and at a reasonable price point can have great impact in the aesthetic marketplace.”

Dr. Kinney agreed, adding, “I think of this as disruptive technology. First, the company has done a good job connecting with practitioners through its clinical advisory counsel. Second is the technology, in which the unique temperature control is key. Third, physicians working with this technology have embraced the concept of thinking in terms of tissue rather than just about anatomy. And last, but not least, we are facing an exciting future because you learn one basic core technique and then begin to improvise and apply your core knowledge to other portions of the body.”

It’s all about combinations and synergy, Dr. Buford recounted. “It’s like most things in life. One usually does not achieve success through a single variable. There are usually a host of variables. It’s the same with aesthetic medicine – to identify what your end goal is and how you can get there. By combining the therapies, such as the Thermi treatments and the Silhouette InstaLift sutures you are really able to create a much better result. It’s essentially one plus one equals three,” he said.

The Thermi-Silhouette combination has ‘legs,’ Dr. Gold stated. “The Thermi Secret Makeover may become THE procedure of the year. This combination protocol will continue to grow and have a wonderful impact for us and what we can offer to our patients.” ■



Before Tx



After ThermiTight Tx

Photos courtesy of Brian M. Kinney, M.D.