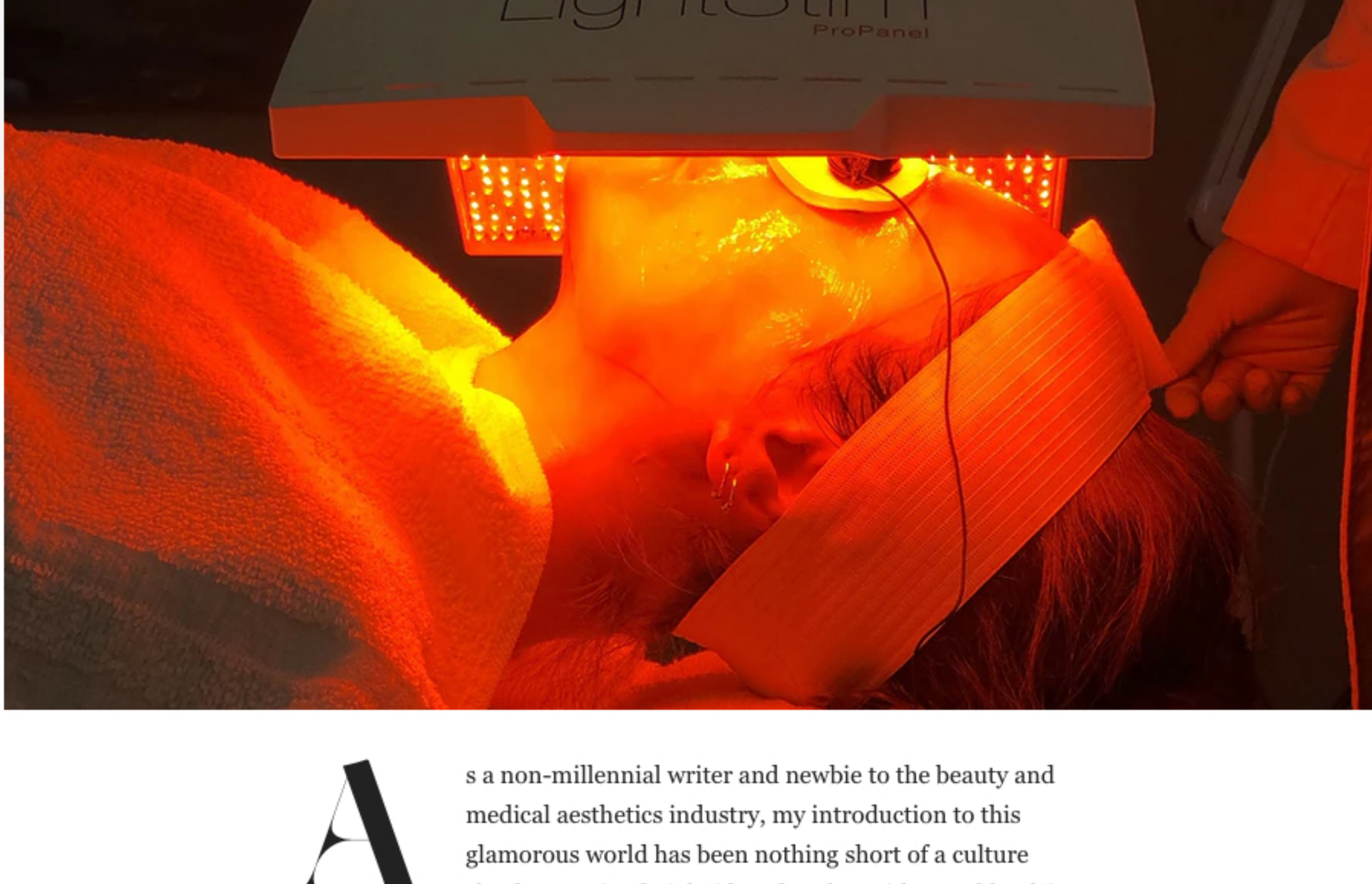
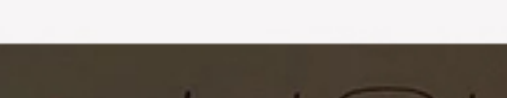


SKINCARE

I Dove Face-First Into 1 of Mother Nature's Most Powerful Forces With an "Electric" Facial — and Loved It

BY CAT MATTA | AUGUST 7, 2019



As a non-millennial writer and newbie to the beauty and medical aesthetics industry, my introduction to this glamorous world has been nothing short of a culture shock: vampire facials (they do *what* with your blood?), butt facials (that's a thing?), and facial injections abound (OK, I admit, I'm now indoctrinated). But never would I have imagined that one day I would willingly have electricity shot through my face. Yet, as the resident fact-checker at Spotlyte™, after digging through clinical studies on technology for a variety of articles we published, I could not deny the science.

Electrical muscle stimulation (EMS) or microcurrent devices have become quite popular lately, but the use of them is hardly new. The FDA first approved them in 1979 to aid bone growth, though they had been used in medicine without official approval since the first half of the twentieth century for a slew of ailments ranging from depression to pain, edema, neuropathy, and wound healing. As with many things, the aesthetics industry took notice and began harnessing their power, often sprinkling in some radiofrequency as a way to jumpstart collagen production and stir up blood flow, all while contracting elastin fibers. The results: more youthful, toned, and tighter-looking skin.

Currently approaching the final year of my thirties, I can definitely attest that my skin is neither as youthful and toned nor as tight as it once was. Add to that frequent battles with water retention due to a blood pressure medication that throws off my salt/water balance and a fondness for happy hour, and bring on the puff. Having armed myself at work with clinical studies, I decided that suddenly diving face first into one of Mother Nature's most powerful forces didn't seem as odd as I once thought. And, if it could potentially help deflate the bloat, well, I just had to give it a try.

Enter an opportunity to receive the NYDG Integral Health and Wellness® Contour Facial, which is based on the New York Dermatology Group's® Runway Facial™ by Dr. David Colbert, NYDG's founder and Head Physician, as well as board-certified dermatologist. It combines a multi-step facial with a non-invasive PureLift® Pro treatment to instantly, albeit temporarily, lift and sculpt.

When I arrive at my appointment, I am escorted into the treatment room to meet esthetician Elena Warzynski, who enthusiastically dives into the particulars of the facial and its benefits. The PureLift is said to be stronger and more comfortable than seemingly similar devices, since it operates with patented three-wave technology that includes both high- and low-frequency to penetrate deeper and gentler into the muscles, nearly to the bone. To me, it looks like a very elaborate "personal massager," but I'm new to this world and I am game.



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As soon as I lay down and get comfortable, Warzynski removes my makeup and begins to cleanse with the NYDG Oatmeal Cleanser (\$48). She then reaches for the PureLift device, and I instinctively feel myself sink back, trying to bury myself in the table. Whether my movement was visible or not, Warzynski seems to sense my nerves and assures me that the treatment doesn't hurt.

In fact, she says, EMS has so many benefits that NASA even uses it on astronauts in space to help heal wounds and prevent infection. (Of course, I later verify this, and interestingly discover that EMS is also used to help prevent muscle atrophy during extended stays at the International Space Station.) At the time, though, I take Warzynski at her word and try my best to relax; she explains she'll be applying a conducting gel to improve the facilitation of current, and as she spreads it over my face in a gentle massage, it helps with my attempt to de-stress.

When she turns on the device and begins gliding it across the right side of my face, from the center outward, I experience easily the strangest sensation I've ever had. As promised, it is not painful and not even uncomfortable; the only word I could use to describe it is *funky*. It's as if weightless, invisible fingers are playing with my face like putty, purposely causing me to make even stranger faces. As Warzynski moves towards my nose, I involuntarily sneeze; down to my chin, I grimace; up my forehead, and I probably look hopelessly confused, as my eyebrows twitch and bounce in an assortment of expressions. I giggle out loud at how ridiculous I must look. As well as the irony of it: in that, to an outsider, I must appear disgusted and even uncomfortable with the treatment, when, in fact, I'm actually enjoying myself.



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The strongest sensations come each time she nears my hairline, when the metal conductors slip slightly off the gel and onto my bare skin. They stimulate impulses in my nerves that crawl across my scalp, giving me goosebumps and a near shiver each time. When Warzynski is done with the right side, she encourages me to sit up to see the difference between it and the left. In the mirror, there is a slight, yet visible difference. The treated side is more defined, and (hallelujah!) some of the puffiness that haunts me has gone down. I eagerly lay back down to go after the rest.

After about 10 minutes in total, the PureLift portion of the facial is done — although my facial muscles don't seem to realize it. The movement isn't as drastic as it had been, but it feels like I'm making unintended microexpressions. Warzynski laughs when I inquire about them, and tells me not to worry, it's not noticeable and will dissipate. However, when she starts removing the access conducting gel from my face with a tongue depressor, I get a funny sensation as it feels like my muscles are engaged in a battle of strength with it.



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Next, she smooths two Colbert MD® Tone Control Facial Discs (\$80) over my skin. (Added benefit: the circular motion she uses helps to calm my muscles back to a more normal, less fighty, activity level.) She explains that it's formulated with star ingredients alpha-arbutin and even skin tone. Then, to amp up the brightening factor even more and pile on some moisture for my typically dry skin, Warzynski applies the vitamins C and E-, lactic acid-, and hyaluronic acid-packed Colbert MD Illumino™ Anti-Aging Brightening Mask (\$110).

To help ensure my skin gets the most nourishment it can from these products, as well as to encourage collagen production, Warzynski hands me eye goggles and places a combined yellow and red LED LightStim® (\$249) over my face. New to this kind of thing, and not realizing how close to my face it is, shortly after she positions it, I accidentally give it a gentle punch as I try to adjust my goggles. (Anyone that's spent an extended amount of time with me knows I have a tendency to be far from graceful.)

After five minutes, she moves on to the final step and applies Colbert MD Nutriify and Protect Day Lotion (\$130) and Nourish Eye Cream (\$135).



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When the luxe treatment ends, I pampered to the max. My facial muscles still feel remnants of those invisible fingers playing around, but I confirm in the mirror that I look completely expressionless. That is, until a huge grin spreads across my face as I see the difference: the puffiness around my eyes and in my cheeks has in fact gone down, and my cheekbones and jawline look tighter and more prominent. Add to that the renewed appearance of my skin, which has gone from dull to glowing, and a bit ashen to a healthy-looking, runway-ready tone.

Although I assume everything will go back to its normal state by morning, Warzynski assures me the effects of this treatment will last a few days. And, to my surprise and elation it does — right through a busy social weekend, during which I truly feel at the top of my game. (Beauty industry: I have arrived. And I'm sticking around!)

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