

## How Fat-Blasting Devices Work

By [MELINDA BECK](#)

Two medical procedures tout the ability to rid the body of fat without the need for surgery. Here's an overview of how they work.

With Zeltiq's CoolSculpting device, you sit in a chair while a technician sucks a handful of fat into a gizmo the size of a paperback that holds on tight and starts chilling. The area goes cold, then numb while you read, sleep or relax for about an hour while your fat cells receive a fatal, freezing dose. It isn't painful—just slightly uncomfortable—and the area may feel stiff, with mild bruising or redness for several days.



Erchonia Medical

Zerona laser

The freezing technology causes the fat inside fat cells to crystallize, and then the cells die an early, natural death, and wait to be reabsorbed into the body. It takes three to four months to see results. Once gone, the fat cells don't grow back—or grow back very slowly, says Mitchell Levinson, the company's founder, who adds that some patients have been followed for three years now without seeing fat deposits return. To date, more than 7,000 patients have had the Coolsculpting Procedure worldwide safely, Mr. Levinson says.

Each Zeltiq treatment costs between \$1,500 and \$3,000. You'll need one for each love handle; a large belly or muffin top may require two. As of now, the device is only for use on "discreet bulges"—not large areas of fat, Mr. Levinson says.



Zeltiq CoolSculpting

Zeltiq

Rival technique Zerona doesn't kill fat cells. The low-energy laser device—it looks like a high-tech spider—creates tiny pores in the cell membranes that cause the fatty contents to seep out and the cells to deflate, like squishing a grape, says Ryan Maloney, chief research officer of the manufacturer, Erchonia Corp. The cell is still viable and can still secrete beneficial hormones.

Patients lie on a table while the device rotates around the waist, hips and thighs. The procedure takes 40 minutes—20 minutes on each side—and is repeated three times a week for two weeks, for a total of \$1,800 to \$3,000. There's no pain, skin irritation or blistering. Results are visible in about two weeks.

In a placebo-controlled double-blind trial with 67 patients, those who had Zerona lost an average of 3.65 inches from their waist, hips and thighs (that is, about an inch per area), compared with only a half-inch in the placebo group. "It's not going to give you ripped, defined abs, but it will create an obvious slimming," Mr. Ryan says.