CASE STUDY

How Two Aesthetic Practices Made Ultrasound Pay Off

Safer injections, faster ROI, and a premium patient experience

Two leading aesthetic practices share how ultrasound changed the way they assess anatomy, manage complications, and unlock new revenue.

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AESTHETICS

INTRODUCTION

Why Leading Aesthetic Practices Are Turning to Ultrasound

For many practitioners, the question is no longer if a complication will occur, but when. This case study follows two practitioners' journey integrating ultrasound into daily practice. Discover how they transformed patient safety into a competitive advantage with measurable ROI in under 8 weeks, proving that patient safety and business growth reinforce each other.

akin SKIN AESTHETICS

At Akin Skin Aesthetics, every treatment begins with precision. Our approach creates results so natural they're only noticeable for how they make you feel.

Dr. Jordan Atkinson, ND - Dr. Jordan Atkinson ND has a focus in medical aesthetics with advanced training across North America and Europe. With over 12 years of injecting experience, he is recognized for his precision, artistry, and commitment to natural, balanced results. He teaches advanced techniques in Botox, dermal fillers, PRP, biostimulators, and injectable cadaver anatomy courses. As a strong advocate for safer injection practices, he integrates ultrasound-guided techniques into his treatments and training programs to enhance precision and safety.

Passionate about continuous education, Dr. Atkinson regularly participates in global medical conferences and training to ensure his patients benefit from the most current, evidence-based treatments. His approach blends a deep understanding of anatomy with a patient-centered aesthetic philosophy—always focused on creating confidence through subtle, harmonious enhancement.

ERASABLE MED SPA

At Erasable Med Spa, we specialize in advanced, results-driven aesthetic medicine delivered with the precision of a medical practice and the hospitality of a luxury brand.

Laura Osterweil, PA-C - has enjoyed her career as a board-certified Physician Assistant in Tampa for over 20 years. With a skill for enhancing natural beauty and instilling confidence at any age, she is a renowned aesthetic injector dedicated to delivering superior results. Laura uses a client centered collaborative approach to understand each client's unique goals and aspirations, crafting personalized treatment plans tailored to their needs. Her utilization of ultrasound technology adds another layer to her treatment experience that helps her stand out in her field.

Michael Zanetti, Chairman - serves as the Chairman of Erasable Med Spa and Aesthetics Institute, an aesthetic organization that delivers highly rated results while training business and clinical operators around the globe. In addition, Michael serves as the Co-Chair of AmSpa in Florida, along with being a Key Opinion Leader to Nextech and Sciton. Previously, Michael spent nearly a decade serving as an officer in the US Army, rising to the rank of Major, deploying overseas, and receiving the Bronze Star Medal along with the Combat Action Badge. A native of New York City, Michael holds an MBA in Global Management from the Thunderbird School of Global Management, an MA in Human Relations from the University of Oklahoma, and a BA in International Studies from the Virginia Military Institute.

Why Ultrasound for Aesthetics?

When a patient's skin turns ashy after an injection, most practitioners face two stressful options: wait and risk necrosis or dissolve the filler and lose trust. Laura Osterweil at Erasable Med Spa and Dr. Atkinson at Akin Skin Aesthetics, discovered ultrasound offered a third, safer alternative.

With neuromodulators and hyaluronic acid (HA) fillers dominating as the two most popular minimally invasive cosmetic procedures in 2023 and 2024, according to the American Society of Plastic Surgeons, the question isn't if you'll encounter a patient complication—it's when[1,2].

Erasable Med Spa and Dr. Atkinson share how they adopted ultrasound in their practice and the impact it has made, offering real-world insights for any Med Spa or practitioner considering this technology.

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They chose to invest early in ultrasound, driven by a commitment to predictable outcomes and evidence-based protocols rather than trends. Physician Assistant Laura Osterweil, with a background in interventional radiology and a passion for aesthetics, saw ultrasound as a way to enhance safety and deliver superior results. From a business standpoint, Michael viewed ultrasound as an opportunity to introduce a new revenue-generating service, demonstrate regulatory compliance, and differentiate Erasable Med Spa as a clinic that prioritizes patient safety.

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Dr Atkinson specializes in facial balancing, which includes high-risk injection areas, and makes ultrasound essential to his practice. He uses ultrasound to screen regions such as the temples and nasolabial folds, guiding his balancing techniques, and determining whether a patient is a suitable candidate. Facial anatomy varies widely, so while textbooks provide a useful foundation, they cannot replace understanding each patient's unique anatomy. Ultrasound also allows him to offer a patient focused experience.

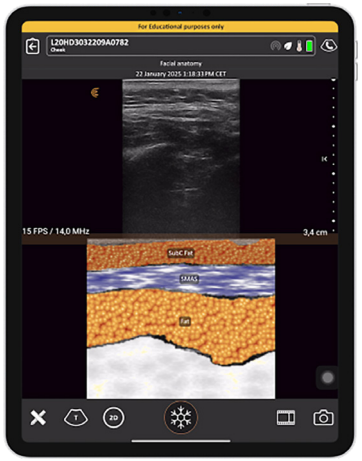
4-Year Growth

HA Fillers ↑56.4%

Neurotoxins ↑26.5%[3]

Ultrasound Learning Journey

Learning ultrasound doesn't have to be difficult, especially since aesthetic practitioners already have a strong foundation in facial anatomy. The main challenge is simply finding the time to get comfortable with the device and learn to recognize anatomy on ultrasound.



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Recommended Learning Resources:

- Clarius webinars
- Clarius classroom videos
- Hands on Workshop
- Courses at Congress
- Peer to ask questions

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Laura found that learning facial ultrasound came naturally by combining her passion for imaging with her work in aesthetics. She practiced 15 to 30 minutes each day on herself and on patients, becoming the team's ultrasound champion. She recommends first becoming familiar with the device and its settings to consistently achieve optimal image quality.

Not all ultrasound education is equally useful. Laura suggests focusing on aesthetics-specific training that provide practical, targeted instruction and covers not only the technical aspects of ultrasound but also the market value of offering the service.

Erasable Med Spa's team had no ultrasound experience and learned ultrasound through Laura's dedication. From Laura's experience consistency is key to implementing ultrasound into your practice. To help her team learn, she created a standard operating procedures (SOP) or a 'cheat sheet' to support the workflow when using ultrasound to make it easier to learn. Laura's ultrasound expertise strengthens the entire team, providing colleagues with immediate access to imaging support when they need it.

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Dr Atkinson initially learned ultrasound 10 years prior so he could perform ultrasound guided joint injections for his sports medicine practice, but he stopped using it because the machine he purchased was heavy, wired, and hard to use. He was reintroduced to ultrasound when he transitioned into aesthetics and met Dr. Steven Weiner at a hands-on course for using ultrasound in aesthetics. When he first learned ultrasound, he focused on the techniques specific to his application. He applied the same mindset when learning for aesthetics.

He said, "I would practice on every patient coming in for filler. After I applied the numbing cream, 15 minutes was a great excuse to practice, because they have nothing to do during that time and I could ultrasound their temples and explain to the patient how I can identify their blood vessels and map out the anatomy. Many of the patients would hold the iPad to watch and learn as I did the screenings."

Daily Workflows Including Ultrasound

Every patient who sits in Dr Atkinson's chair has a vision. What they don't have is textbook anatomy. Their vessels might be superficial or on the bone, their angular artery might not exist (it's absent in 1 in 3 people[4]), and previous filler might be hiding where you least expect it. By mapping their anatomy with ultrasound, you turn the invisible into actionable insight—giving them the look they want, safely tailored to the anatomy only they have.

"I honestly think it's going to be in every single clinic. It's going to be just the norm to have an ultrasound machine in your office."
Dr. Atkinson

Distance measurement from skin to vessel

Top 5 Minimally Invasive Procedures 2024[5]

- Neuromodulator Injections
- Soft Tissue Fillers / Hyaluronic Acid Fillers
- Skin resurfacing
- Skin Treatments
- Lip Augmentation

Top 5 Apps for Ultrasound in Aesthetics[6]

- Vascular Mapping
- Ultrasound Guided Dissolving of HA Filler
- Ultrasound Guided Injections
- Complication Management
- Skin Assessments for Procedures

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Laura primarily uses ultrasound for new client facial assessments and complication management. Ultrasound is another tool in their toolkit, reflecting the practice's conscious investment in technology to enhance outcomes. Before incorporating ultrasound, assessments were limited to the naked eye and patient histories. Erring on the side of caution, this often led to dissolving filler unnecessarily, resulting in a suboptimal patient experience.

For example, A Visia skin analysis machine, not only produces a report, but the mere act of getting your photo taken creates a different experience for the patient and the feeling that something unique was done. Ultrasound works much the same way, where for the appropriate injectable patient, ultrasound is an opportunity to subtly demonstrate that we are very good at what we do and have multiple tools in our toolkit to get our patients where they need to be.

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Dr Atkinson uses ultrasound for patient assessments, screening for high-risk procedures, ultrasound guided injections, and complication management. Initially he purchased it as an insurance policy for complications, but he always wanted to use it as a screening tool. He likes to record patient anatomy in his charts, like the location depth of the facial artery or if the angular artery is missing or not found along the nasolabial fold. He is referred other practitioners' complications because he is one of the few practitioners in the area with ultrasound.

Dr. Atkinson says, "Some nodules can be difficult to treat, even when you are flooding the area the nodule does not dissolve. When using ultrasound, you can literally see the needle enter the nodules and watch it dissolve in front of you."

Why Clarius?

When the European Federation of Societies for Ultrasound in Medicine and Biology recommend at least 15 MHz for aesthetic and dermatologic applications[7], what ultrasound do you choose?

Average price of ultrasound:

$20,000 USD to 100,000 USD

$10,000 USD to $30,000 USD

$4,200 USD to $12,000 USD

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Michael was looking for "a good value proposition based on the intuitiveness of the device, image quality, and the use cases in the aesthetic space." Image quality affects both the practitioner and the patient, who needs an easy, intuitive image to quickly interpret. Additionally, ease of use is critical, as all technology involves a learning curve. Since aesthetic practices may not use all device features, it's important to offer a tool that doesn't overwhelm potential users.

A small footprint is also essential for mobility and space in treatment rooms. Laura appreciates the wireless design of Clarius, saying, "I love the portability and ease to bring it to any room in the practice. The L20 fits comfortably in my hand. Aesthetics is fast-paced, and patients may change their mind when they arrive, so maximum flexibility is critical."

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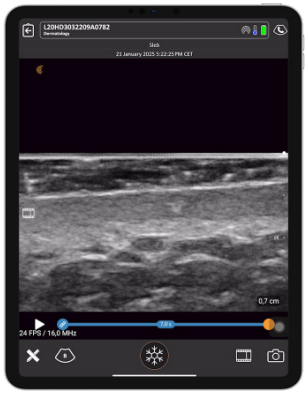
Dr Atkinson chose Clarius because it was an upgrade from the laptop-based ultrasound machine he learned on. "I have PTSD from that machine," Dr Atkinson exclaimed, "the laptop was bulky even though it was supposed to be 'portable'. It was very grainy, challenging to use, and huge. It was loud, noisy, and cumbersome. I wanted something smaller, something more lightweight. Every time I had to wrap the cable for the probe around my hands, it started off as fine, but then when I wanted to let go, I couldn't."

Dr. Atkinson notes that new ultrasound machines can vary in price from $5,000 to $60,000 or more, which is enough to buy a car. He wanted something "practical," with "better image quality," and a device he "didn't have to drag down the street to a different clinic." He planned to use it daily but also didn't want "something that was going to break the bank."

Passive Business Impact

Patients love seeing what's beneath their skin—their unique vascular anatomy, existing filler, the roadmap that makes their face distinctly theirs. That moment of discovery builds trust in a way words alone never could. For practitioners, it's not just a clinical advantage; it's a business differentiator. Erasable Med Spa and Dr. Atkinson explain the unexpected impact this patient experience has had on their practices.



SLEB Assessment

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Michael added ultrasound facial assessments and filler evaluations as service offerings. Most patients are excited and love the added technology, which gives them a sense of a premium experience. This service is offered to new patients with existing filler or for those seeking filler dissolution.

Uniquely, they've found new patients coming to their business because plastic surgeons are requiring filler dissolution before procedures, creating an unexpected revenue stream. For existing clients, they do not charge for ultrasound assessments because ultrasound is part of their value-added services to differentiate themselves in the market.

They are now able to accept patients from other practices who are referred to them for managing complications. Before ultrasound, they would err on the side of caution and often dissolving the filler, leading to suboptimal experiences. Now their protocol is to scan, observe, and monitor—offering a better patient experience focused on safety and outcomes.

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Dr Atkinson finds his clients are always blown away by Clarius' ultrasound. He uses it daily with patients to enhance their experience and demonstrate his dedication to safety and outcomes. "You may think you're injecting into the right plane, but you don't know for sure until you have ultrasound." The value he offers from ultrasound is reflected in his service pricing, which is higher than other regional clinics and includes an ultrasound-guided dissolving fee. His higher fees are justified by fewer sessions, better outcomes, and less bruising.

Average Aesthetic Ultrasound service fees[8]

New Patient Facial Assessment	Ultrasound-Guided Filler Dissolution	Facial Assessment with Ultrasound	Ultrasound Guided Filler
$0–150 USD	**$300-1,000 USD**	**Up to $450 USD**	**Varies**

The Ultrasound Pay-Off

Ultrasound Guided Injection

Will adding ultrasound to your aesthetics practice really make a difference—clinically and financially? It's a fair question. For many practitioners, the investment feels significant, and the ROI uncertain. But for those who've integrated it into their workflow, the returns extend far beyond what they initially calculated. Here's how Erasable Med Spa and Dr. Atkinson measured the business impact of adding Clarius to their practice.

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Dr Atkinson's ultrasound investment delivered two unexpected returns: 90% less hyaluronidase per procedure and a new service line. Both improving patient experience and outcomes.

"Five years ago, you just flooded the area every 15 minutes. You kept flooding and checking for tissue reperfusion and blood flow," he explains. "I use a tenth of the dose now, and with ultrasound we can see instantly that the blood vessels have returned to normal. Proof that the hyaluronidase is working.."

This precision allowed him to charge CAD$450 for ultrasound-guided dissolution—recouping his L20 HD3 investment in 22 sessions. Today, it's both a clinical advantage and an ongoing revenue stream.

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Michael added ultrasound to deliver better clinical outcomes through data-driven treatments. The new $300 facial ultrasound guided assessment service offering came as a bonus. A service Erasable Med Spa didn't offer before Clarius. They offer this to prospective or referred patients. Averaging three assessments weekly, they recouped the scanner cost in six weeks (24 scans). After the initial learning period, this became a steady cash flow stream.

Ultrasound also reduces costs while improving outcomes. "When dissolving filler, I can use less hyaluronidase because I'm more precise with product placement," Laura explained. "We use roughly 50% less hyaluronidase because of the ability to visualize more clearly with the device."

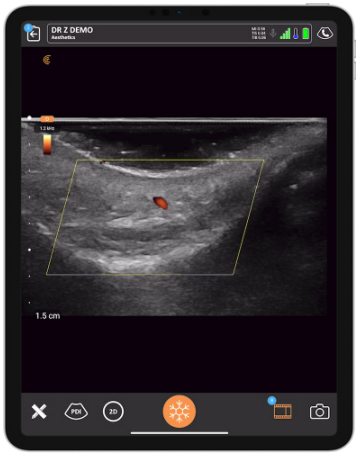
Impact of ultrasound on dissolving filler

Average reduction in hyaluronidase[9] **50% to 90%**

Average # of vistis to dissolve with Hyaluronidase **1-2**

Before vs. After Ultrasound Implementation

Erasable Med Spa and Dr. Atkinson represent a new standard where patient safety and business growth reinforce each other. Here's what ultrasound changed in their practice.



Vascular Mapping of the Nose

Category	Without Ultrasound	With Ultrasound
Complication Management	• Flood area with hyaluronidase every 15 minutes • Err on side of caution, dissolve filler unnecessarily • Rely only on visual assessment and patient history • Refer patients to other practitioners or hospitals if complication can't be resolved	• Scan, observe, monitor protocol—better outcomes • Use 50-90% less hyaluronidase per procedure • Precise, targeted dissolution inside nodules • Instant visualization of tissue reperfusion
Revenue Streams	• Standard filler/neuromodulator services • No additional assessment offerings	• Premium pricing justified by superior outcomes • New facial ultrasound assessment revenue stream • Complication referrals from other practices • $300-$1,000 ultrasound-guided dissolution fees • 6-8 weeks to achieve ROI
Workflow Integration	• Limited to naked eye assessment • Guesswork on vessel location and filler placement • Reactive approach to complications	• 15-minute patient numbing time used for scanning • Vascular mapping recorded in patient charts • Screen high-risk areas before procedures • Verify anatomy for each unique patient • Proactive prevention and enhanced patient experience

The Take Aways

REAL RETURNS

Fast, measurable ROI with multiple revenue streams: Practices recouped their investment in 6-8 weeks (22-24 procedures), added $300-$450 billable services, reduced hyaluronidase usage by 50-90%, and attracted referral-based patients, turning ultrasound into a long-term revenue driver.

CLINICAL CONFIDENCE

Enhanced safety through precision visualization – Ultrasound enables practitioners to map each patient's unique vascular anatomy (including the angular artery, absent in 1 in 3 people), avoid unnecessary filler dissolution, and deliver targeted treatments that reduce complications in high-risk areas like temples and nasolabial folds.

PRACTICAL LEARNING

Accessible learning with 15-30 minutes daily practice – Aesthetic practitioners leverage their existing facial anatomy knowledge to achieve proficiency through short daily scanning sessions during patient numbing time, supported by SOPs, aesthetics-specific training, and intuitive wireless devices that fit comfortably in hand.

[1] 2024 American Society of Plastic Surgery Industry Report
[2] 2024 McKinsey, Here to stay: An attractive future for medical aesthetics
[3] 2024 American Society of Plastic Surgery Industry Report
[4] Siwetz M, Widni-Pajank H, Hammer N, Bruneder S, Wree A, Antipova V. Course and Relation of the Facial Vessels-An Anatomical Study. Medicina (Kaunas). 2024 May 13;60(5):805. doi: 10.3390/medicina60050805. PMID: 38792988; PMCID: PMC11123074.
[5] 2024 American Society of Plastic Surgery Industry Report
[6] Cavallieri FA, Balassiano LKA, Munhoz G, Tembra MF, Wortsman X. Ultrasound in Aesthetics: Filler and Non-Filler Applications. Semin Ultrasound CT MR. 2024 Jun;45(3):251-263. doi: 10.1053/j.sult.2023.11.005. Epub 2023 Dec 10. PMID: 38072289.
[7] Ifageme, F., Wortsman, X., Catalano, O., Roustan, G., Crisan, M., Crisan, D., Gaitini, D. E., Cerezo, E., & Badea, R. (2021). European Federation of Societies for Ultrasound in Medicine and Biology (EFSUMB) position statement on dermatologic ultrasound. Ultraschall in der Medizin, 42(1), 39–47. https://doi.org/10.1055/a-1161-8872
[8] Clarius sampled 5 U.S. clinics with public pricing and compared to the pricing shared from practitioner interviews.
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