

Revolutionizing Autologous Fat Transfer: VASER® Lipo System and Shippert Tissu-Trans®

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Background

Fat transfer, although first documented more than 100 years ago, was not generally adopted until the 1980s when liposuction became widely available.^{1,2} However, as commercial fillers entered the marketplace, interest in autologous fat transfer (AFT) declined due to technique limitations, including unpredictable results, lack of procedural standardization, and the need for time-consuming processing. Today's increased demand for mid- and large-volume procedures, including buttock, breast, and pectoral augmentation and full hand and face rejuvenation, has renewed interest in AFT and driven improved instrumentation and technique.³ The American Society of Plastic Surgery (ASPS) released an advisory in 2009 supporting AFT, stating, "Fat grafting can be considered a safe method of augmentation and correction of defects associated with various medical conditions."⁴

The combined use of the VASER Lipo System (Sound Surgical Technologies), an advanced ultrasonic body contouring technology, and Tissu-Trans (Shippert Medical Technologies Corporation), an unprecedented fat transfer system, offers physicians the next generation in body sculpting – an efficient, simple system that eliminates mess and prep work and delivers sterile, viable fat for injection.

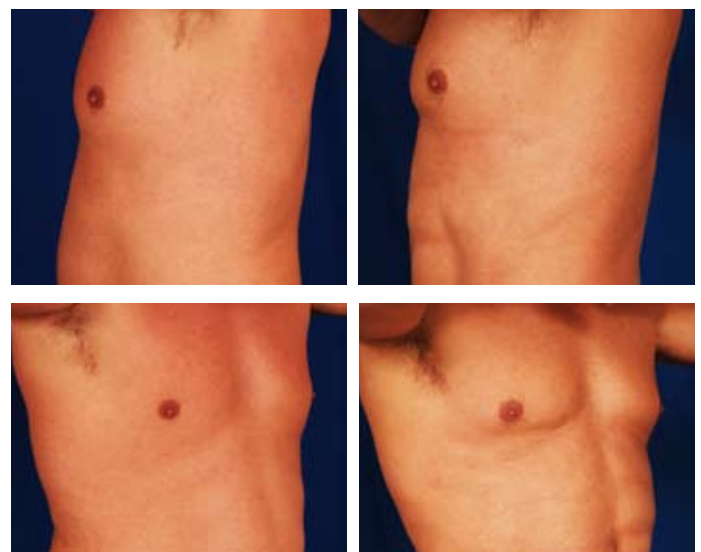
The VASER Lipo System - The First Step in Body Contouring

The VASER Lipo System was designed to advance liposuction procedures by improving safety and efficiency, reducing complications and physician fatigue, and allowing for faster patient recovery.⁵ VASER probes are constructed with a proprietary, solid, side-grooved design. The probes are blunt and

pass through tissue easily with minimal trauma, redistributing ultrasonic energy from the tip to the region immediately proximal. This results in a 50% lower energy requirement as compared to older ultrasound-assisted liposuction systems. The minimized ultrasound output associated with VASER provides greater tissue fragmentation while decreasing the probability of complications.^{6,7}

The VASER Lipo System is an all-inclusive platform for infusion, emulsification, and aspiration of targeted tissue. VASER ultrasonic probes are available in a variety of sizes and tip grooves, allowing for versatility and precision. In general, more grooves provide greater fragmentation efficiency, while fewer grooves are more appropriate for penetration in sites with more fibrous tissue. Additionally, the VASER system offers a choice of continuous or pulsating ultrasound energy, allowing the procedure to be customized for debulking of fibrous tissue or sculpting of softer tissue.⁸

Physicians begin the procedure by infusing a treated wetting solution. Next the appropriate VASER probe is applied smoothly through the tissue, remaining parallel to the skin. The amplitude may be adjusted to assist in even penetration. Cross-tunneling may help achieve uniform fragmentation and emulsification should continue until the probe achieves minimal resistance in the target area. The VASER System effectively liquefies the fat,



Pre and postoperative images of a male pectoralis fat transfer procedure using the VASER Lipo System to remove fat from the abdomen and Shippert Tissu-Trans System to harvest and graft the fat to the pectoralis muscles.

Revolutionizing Autologous Fat Transfer

allowing for the use of low pressure vacuum during aspiration, which reduces trauma to the adipocytes. The uniquely designed VentX[®] cannulas, which minimize trauma to the tissue matrix, may be used to remove the emulsified fat (Figure 1).⁸



Figure 1: VASER Lipo ultrasonic probes and VentX atraumatic cannulas

The aspirate collected during a VASER procedure is a uniform emulsification of viable fat cells. This is possible as VASER utilizes acoustic forces to cause cavitation within the infused tumescent solution, resulting in displacement of adipocytes. The tumescent solution, which contains millions of dissolved microscopic bubbles at atmospheric pressure, envelopes the fat cells within the target area (Figure 2). The VASER probe distributes ultrasound energy, causing the individual bubbles to expand, contract, and grow. As the bubbles, known as cavitation nuclei, reach their resonant size, they collapse, dislodging fat from the tissue matrix, and the process begins again (Figure 3). The displaced fat is typically released in 2-3 cell packets, ensuring abundant exposure to blood supplies upon reinjection. The resulting aspirate is uniform, clean, and bloodless, even in tight, fibrous anatomical areas. While

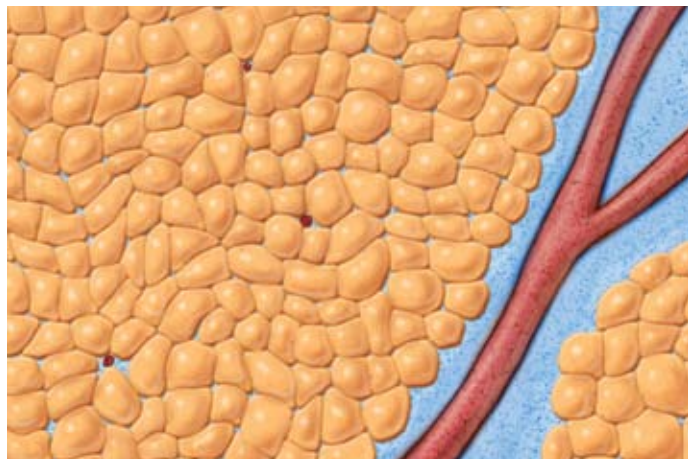


Figure 2: Fat cells surrounded by infusion fluid

conventional lipoplasty techniques are associated with destruction of fat cells and surrounding tissues, aspiration of large packets of fat cells, and the potential for central necrosis upon reinjection, the VASER Lipo System ensures tissue selectivity and the collection of small packets of viable fat cells for reinjection.

Shippert Tissu-Trans - Redefining Autologous Fat Grafting

The Tissu-Trans systems, which offer a simple, sterile, non-traumatic harvest of lipocytes and stem cells with customizable reinjection volume (10cc, 60cc, MEGA 1500, and FILTRON 2000), may be integrated with VASER lipoplasty. The Tissu-Trans does not change the normal flow of the physician's technique during VASER lipoplasty. Standard tumescent solution is infused, fat is emulsified, and upon aspiration, the Tissu-Trans is placed on a canister stand between the harvest cannula and the vacuum source. To reduce trauma to the lipocyte, the vacuum source is reduced to approximately 15 inches of Mercury, which is 50% of the maximum of 1 atmosphere. Fat is collected, filtered, or decanted all within the sterile Tissu-Trans containers without transfers or exposure to ambient air. The waste (blood, epinephrine, Xylocaine, and plasma) is either filtered out during the harvest or decanted and drained after the harvest. Sterile fat is then drawn out with a luer lock syringe and is ready to inject to the recipient site without further preparation or centrifuge (Figure 4). Reinjection volume per site is recorded for operative records. The Tissu-Trans is compatible with standard Luer locks, suction tubing and cannulas. A 3 mm cannula is recommended for the best fat harvest.

A 2006 study identified 12 traumatic events during AFT that result in damage to the lipocyte.³ With the Tissu-Trans systems

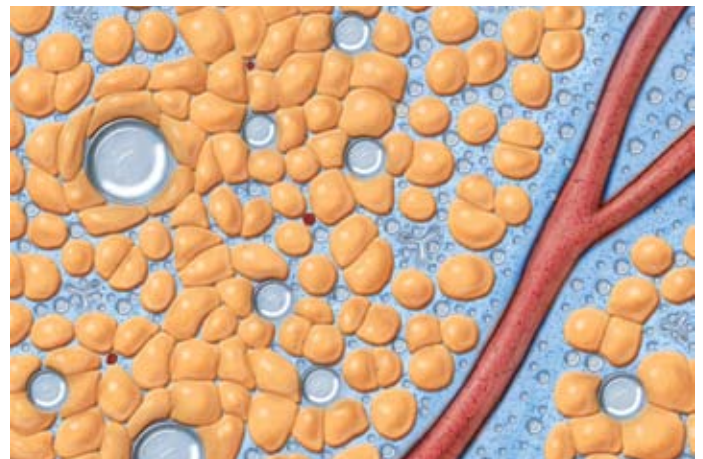


Figure 3: Fat cells being dislodged via cavitation



Figure 4: Tissue-Trans MEGA 1500 (left); draining waste from sterile bag (center); drawing out fat for transfer (right)

each of these 12 traumatic events have been eliminated or reduced, resulting in an improved fat specimen for reinjection. The reduction in time, procedure steps, lipocyte trauma, and contamination potential are a direct result of replacing the centrifuge with an effective filter system.

The Tissue-Trans systems aid in the standardization of the two major variables in AFT – instrumentation and technique. The Tissue-Trans systems offer the right instrumentation for every procedure, with models available based on volume – the 10cc model for rejuvenation of small areas of the face and body, the 60cc model for medium volume areas, and the MEGA 1500 and FILTRON 2000 for large-volume procedures such as buttock and breast augmentation. Additionally, the Tissue-Trans allows the surgeon to seamlessly integrate AFT with lipoplasty, both saving time and eliminating many of the trauma-inducing steps historically associated with fat transfer.

Partnering to Revolutionize Body Sculpting

The VASER Lipo System and Shippert Tissue-Trans products work together to simplify AFT and ensure delivery of sterile, viable lipocytes. As part of the AFT procedure, the VASER Lipo System offers the benefit of providing viable, emulsified fat that is less bulky than with other techniques and more conducive to reinjection. When combined with Shippert Tissue-Trans products, fat is directly suctioned off, separated, and kept sterile, making reinjection simpler and more efficient.

The VASER/Tissue-Trans technique is applicable across a wide range of procedures, including enhancement of male pectorals, rejuvenation of the face, enhancement of the shape and form of the buttocks, and as an alternative to or an addition to female breast implants. Furthermore, the technique has been utilized

with VASER Hi Def™, an advanced body sculpting technique that removes both superficial and deep fat around specific muscle groups to enhance visibility of underlying musculature.

Over 20 AFT procedures have been performed by the author (Dr. Millard) using the VASER Lipo System and Shippert Tissue-Trans technologies in combination. All procedures demonstrated transplantation of viable fat with lasting results. Long-term outcomes have been assessed for pectoral and gluteal augmentation procedures with results equal to or better than outcomes with other techniques.

Summary

Until recently, AFT technology has not kept pace with patient demand. Today, the improved technique that combines the VASER Lipo and Shippert Tissue-Trans systems revolutionizes instrumentation and procedure, addresses cost issues associated with large volume fat transfer procedures, caters to patient requests for more natural fillers, saves time, significantly reduces lipocyte trauma, and standardizes the procedure to allow the physician to have confidence in the mechanical aspect and outcomes of the procedure. The VASER Lipo System and Shippert Tissue-Trans products work together to create the ultimate body sculpting system. This is truly the next generation of body contouring, simplifying and eliminating numerous timely and messy steps involved in current AFT procedures.

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John A. Millard, MD is board certified by both the American Board of Plastic Surgery and the American Board of Surgery. He received his Doctor of Medicine degree from Georgetown University School of Medicine and completed both a surgery and plastic surgery residency. Dr. Millard is nationally and internationally renowned for his expertise in breast and liposuction procedures and was a pioneer of the VASER® Hi Def procedure in the United States. Dr. Millard has been named one of the world's top cosmetic surgeons by Tatler's 2008 Beauty & Cosmetic Surgery Guide.

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