

The thyroid is a tiny endocrine gland in your neck with a huge job: secreting the hormones responsible for metabolism and protein synthesis. Unfortunately, it's estimated that roughly 20-27 million Americans—5% to 8% of the population—suffer from some type of thyroid disorder. [1] These are a few of the most common:

Hypothyroidism: An underperforming thyroid doesn't produce enough hormones, leading to symptoms like fatigue, depression, memory problems, and weight gain. [1]

Thyroiditis: A general term for inflammation of the thyroid and related pain. It includes **Hashimoto's Thyroiditis**, which is the most common cause of acquired hypothyroidism, and **Postpartum Thyroiditis**, which is common after pregnancy. [1]

Conventional treatments for thyroid conditions include medication, surgery, and radioiodine therapy. In some cases, a person has to take thyroid medication throughout their entire life to manage their hormone levels. For years, the most widely prescribed drug in the United States has been Synthroid (or levothyroxine) [2], which comes with potential side effects like hair loss, abnormal heartbeat, cramps, insomnia, weight gain, vomiting, and many others. [3]

Given the known side effects and dependency issues with traditional treatments like Synthroid, many people with thyroid conditions are looking for natural alternatives. **In recent clinical research, red light therapy is showing potential to be a natural and effective treatment option for thyroid conditions and their symptoms.**

Encouraging Clinical Research Shows Promise for Light Therapy and Hypothyroidism

Clinical research on light therapy's effects on the thyroid is in its early stages, but initial clinical trials, as well as laboratory research on the thyroids of other mammals, are extremely encouraging.

A team of researchers based in Brazil conducted a 3-year, randomized, placebo-controlled trial of 43 patients with a history of levothyroxine intervention for hypothyroidism caused by Hashimoto's thyroiditis (or CAT for chronic autoimmune thyroiditis). As mentioned before, this type of thyroiditis is the most common cause of acquired hypothyroidism, so this trial was a nice window into a large population of people with thyroid conditions.

The researchers, led by Dr. D.B. Höfling of the University of Sao Paulo Medical School, have published a series of studies in medical journals outlining their findings, which included a 9-month follow up with all patients.

Less need for levothyroxine: After light therapy, patients need for the common thyroid drug declined, and in some cases went away entirely. The average dose required for the placebo group was nearly three times as high. Amazingly, 47% of participants in the light therapy group no longer needed levothyroxine at all during the entire nine-month follow-up after light therapy. [4]

Decline in thyroid peroxidase (TPOAb): Study participants also showed a decline in levels of thyroid peroxidase (TPOAb), which are antibodies indicating an autoimmune problem—further demonstrating the benefits of near infrared light therapy. [4]

Thyroid vascularity: Using color doppler ultrasounds, researchers found that light therapy treatments led to higher rates of vascularization of the thyroid lobes and increased systolic peak velocity (SPV) of the inferior thyroid arteries (ITA). [5]

Overall thyroid health: The researchers concluded that light therapy is “effective at improving thyroid function, promoting reduced TPOAb-mediated autoimmunity and increasing thyroid echogenicity in patients with CAT hypothyroidism.” [4]

The same researchers performed a separate pilot study in 2010 with light therapy treatments on 15 patients with hypothyroidism who were taking levothyroxine. The doctors concluded: *“results indicate that LLLT promotes the improvement of thyroid function, as patients experienced a decreased need for LT4, a reduction in TPOAb levels, and an increase in parenchymal echogenicity.”* [6]

More and larger light therapy trials are needed for people with thyroid conditions, but these initial Brazilian trials, studied over a number of years, are extremely encouraging.

Laboratory Research on Mammals

There has been laboratory research on natural light’s effects on thyroid conditions in other mammals too. Human thyroid function is similar in rodents and rabbits, so these trials provide insight into biological mechanisms that haven’t been fully studied in humans yet.

A 2015 study published in *Photochemistry & Photobiology* found that administering light therapy to the thyroid gland of lab rats “revealed improvement in thyroid function, liver function and antioxidant levels, and blood cell count after light therapy.” [7]

Hypothyroidism & healing: People with hypothyroidism can experience problems with the healing of wounds and scars, taking longer than if thyroid levels were normal. [8] Outside of a specific thyroid context, light therapy has been found in numerous clinical trials to speed wound and scar healing. [9] To test light therapy and wound healing in a thyroid context, a recent 2018 study in the *Journal of Lasers in Medical Science* assessed rats with hypothyroidism. The rats were given skin incisions and treated with various wavelengths of natural light, in conjunction with receiving levothyroxine. Researchers found that the combination improved the elasticity of healing wounds. [8]

More trials on light therapy and thyroid health will tell us more in the coming years, but the initial results are very positive. In addition to clinical trials, [renowned health and fitness leaders are using Contour Light](#) for their personal light therapy and reporting pretty incredible results.

The founder of Wellness Mama has [documented her struggles raising kids and running a business while battling Hashimoto’s Thyroiditis](#). Like 20+ million Americans, Katie has had to

take a thyroid hormone medication. She tried light therapy after her husband had hernia surgery, because she read the research on how effective it is for wound healing. Katie was thrilled to see her skin health improve with continual use, but said she's most excited about the hormonal benefits she's experienced in her first year of use.

Treating Fibromyalgia & Thyroid Issues with Light Therapy

Many people with hypothyroidism end up also being diagnosed with fibromyalgia, and they share symptoms, like depression, exhaustion, muscle & joint pain, and "brain fog." [10]

Dr. Sarah Ballantyne, aka Paleo Mom, has spoken about her struggles with fibromyalgia and years of dealing with inflammation & joint pain. Dr. Sarah started using a full-body Light device for 20 minutes every morning after her workout, and [told us it's been a life-changer](#). For the first time since she started experiencing symptoms over a decade ago, Dr. Sarah says she hasn't felt pain in 6+ months, in addition to [faster muscle recovery](#) and [better sleep](#) that come from light therapy.

Conclusion: Light Therapy Shows Promise for Naturally Boosting Thyroid Function

Red light therapy has the potential to be a natural and effective thyroid treatment that doesn't rely on drugs or come with a host of side effects. Even though the Contour Light devices aren't specifically indicated for thyroid-related benefits, early clinical research is extremely encouraging, as are anecdotal accounts from health professionals and Contour Light users across the world. If you want to learn more about how light therapy can treat symptoms like [joint pain](#), [skin issues](#), and [sleep problems](#), click on those links for dedicated articles.

Scientific Sources and Medical References:

[1] American Thyroid Association. What you need to know about the thyroid.

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[4] Hofling DB, Chavantes MC, et al. Low-level laser in the treatment of patients with hypothyroidism induced by chronic autoimmune thyroiditis: a randomized, placebo-controlled clinical trial. *Lasers in Surgery and Medicine*. May 2013; 28(3): 743-53.

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- [10] Shomon, Mary. Hypothyroidism and Fibromyalgia--What’s the Connection? *Verywell Health*. May 2018.