



Forever Young

Botox for the nose? Fat injections for the neck? The latest cosmetic breakthroughs are coming from left field.

40 may be the new 30, and soon enough, 60 might be the new 40. But until aging becomes the hot new trend-in a parallel universe, perhaps?-people will still search for the best ways to look younger for much, much longer. In response, the past few years have seen a near-endless stream of new laser machines and wrinkle fighting fillers: nonablative (translation: no cutting or burning) lasers like the diode and pulse dye, as well as now famous injectables like Restylane, Hylaform and, of course, Botox.

Cosmetic dermatologist Pat Wexler, whose own skin looks younger than the drinking age, is reporting great success using a new radiofrequency technology-better known by its brand names ThermoCool, Thermage and ThermoLift -on her patients. "You can see the jowls diminishing, the neck tightening," she says. "I call it shrink-wrapping of skin."

Radiofrequency energy, which penetrates deep into muscle and bone, not only promotes collagen production but also causes collagen fibers to contract, making the skin firmer. (Lasers, which don't penetrate as deeply, are better at easing surface wrinkling and redness.) "We're doing a lot of research that we call `structural antiaging,'" says Manhattan cosmetic surgeon Neil Sadick. "We've found that muscle and bone are also significantly involved in the aging process."

Wexler has started spreading the technology to other parts of the body. "We're doing it to abdominal skin that's showing laxity," she says. "We've also used it on people who aren't good candidates for liposuction because their skin tone isn't good. And I'm just starting to play with doing upper arms. The laxity of the skin determines how many treatments you need; some people need just one, others might need more"-the same holds true for the face. "You don't see a difference immediately, but over the course of three to six months you definitely see a tightening." Cost of that tightening: about \$1,750 per treatment, says Sadick.

Another seemingly magical age-fighter is the light-emitting diode machine. Wexler extols the virtues of LED-or Gentle Wave-for its ability to promote collagen production and to even out skin tone. "Two thousand little lights at a specific wavelength modulate and flash on the skin for 40 seconds," she explains. "These lights target the blood vessels that create procollagen, which then becomes collagen. They also promote the reversal of sun damage. The result is decreased redness, more even pigmentation, diminished fine lines and better skin tone." She adds that the treatment can even decrease pore size. "A 67-year-old patient told me she was more pleased with LED than with her collagen injections and her Botox." Wexler recommends a series of two treatments a week for four weeks, at \$200 a pop. "But, for 40 seconds, it's sort of a no-brainer."

No-brainers-or at least, less-painers-are fortunately becoming more common in antiaging treatments. And the trick is often machine combo platters. Arielle Kauvar, cosmetic dermatologist and director of New York Laser & Skin Care, combines nonablative lasers-like diode and pulse dye-with intense pulse light to target discoloration and retexture skin. "The advantage is that except for a mild redness, there is no downtime, so these are often used in combination with Botox and fillers," says Kauvar. "You can actually inject them 20 minutes after nonablative laser work."

Another area that can scream "I'm aging!" is the neck. The platysma muscles, which extend from the neck to the face, can start to slacken as early as 40, resulting in those two unattractive bands on the throat. "It's a sure sign that a woman is over 45 when you start to see those bands hanging, and folds forming under the jowl area," says Manhattan and London plastic and reconstructive surgeon Michael Evan Sachs. While noses are his forte, Sachs now also specializes in "platysmaplasties." Resembling a mini neck lift, the procedure involves inserting a cannula into a tiny incision under the chin and suctioning the extra fat out of the neck and jowl area. The platysma is then constricted by suturing what's left. Sachs likens it to tightening a suspension bridge.

Fat injections, though an older procedure than Botox, are still popular thanks to their high success rate. "Up to 50 percent of the freshly harvested fat injected to areas like the cheekbones and chin stays permanently," says New York plastic surgeon Gerald Imber. "The procedure is quick, there's almost no downtime and you get smooth, natural results."

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Imber goes both ways, so to speak. He not only fills up but also takes out. He's recently taken his successful microsuction technique (which fixes trouble spots like double chins and jowls) down to the abdomen. Best for someone in otherwise good shape but with a bit of a belly, the procedure targets the fatty pouches around the stomach with an extremely small cannula. The resulting scar is practically invisible. All that's required afterward is wearing an elastic waist binder for five days, and recovery time is usually no more than 48 hours. If things were different, Brandt, Wexler and their colleagues would be redundant. "No one would've needed me if they'd used the right Patricia Underwood hat, sunglasses and sunscreen," Wexler says. "Everyone thinks they can use and abuse, then come to people like me, and I'll say the magic words and it'll all vanish," she says, laughing. "Unfortunately, we're not there quite yet. You're just going to have to help. For starters, I never met a self-tanner I didn't like."

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