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THE SKIN TRADE

In the past, if you wanted to dramatically improve your looks, it often meant going under the knife and spending weeks recuperating in pain and solitude. But these days, addressing nagging dark circles, age spots or the toll of stress on your body is simpler and faster. And procedures to make you look and feel your best aren't just the domain of women anymore. Men of all ages are flocking to clinics that offer the latest in age-defying procedures.

FACE TIME

For the modern man and woman, there are many options to keep at bay the inevitable signs of aging. While demand for more invasive, time-intensive procedures has waned with the recession, people still want to look good, says Julio Gallo, MD, FACS, a facial plastic surgeon at The Miami Institute for Age Management and Intervention. Whether they cumulatively lead to a healthier and younger face decades from now remains to be seen. But for today, here are our best options.

◆ **Botox:** Intended to remove those pesky frown lines and wrinkles on the forehead, Botox Cosmetic is the most popular option and works as a paralyzing agent designed to stop muscles from moving. Derived from the *Clostridium botulinum* bacterium (yes, the same toxin from canned foods that causes botulism), the purified protein acts on the nerve impulses that signal a muscle to contract, usually of only the muscle that is used for a specific expression, like squinting or frowning. Results are seen in about three to seven days and can last three to four months. Easily done in an average doctor's visit, you'll leave with half a dozen pinpricks on your face. Want a longer result? Dysport, also a *Clostridium botulinum* derivative, was approved by the FDA earlier this year. It takes about two days to begin working and lasts four to five months, but the research is early. Eva Ritvo, co-author of *The Beauty Prescription* and chair of the department of psychiatry at University of Miami Miller School of

Medicine, says the effects of Botox can improve a person's disposition. Its ability to take away frown lines makes a person appear happier and more approachable, she said, allowing improvements in the moods of patients who used it. While Botox injections were up 8% in 2008 from the previous year, with over 1.7 million injections, according to the American Society of Plastic Surgeons, be cautious. In April, the FDA issued a black-box warning for both products, cautioning users that the toxin can migrate from the injection site, causing paralysis in other areas and difficulty breathing and swallowing.

◆ **Fill Factor:** Great for adding back the volume to your face that you lose with age, fillers are especially good for areas around the eyes and below the cheekbones, jowl lines, crow's feet and laugh lines. "The filler market is still huge," with the quality of the material constantly improving, said Donn Chatham, MD, President of The American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery in Alexandria, Va. While Botox is ideal for the upper third of the face, fillers offer an option for the lower part because they don't have the same paralyzing effect, allowing expression. Most fillers can last six to nine months, but there are many different types, each appropriate for a different area of the face and composed of different compounds. Perlane, Restylane and Juvederm are all hyaluronic acid injectables, and are most commonly used to fill deeper wrinkles around the mouth. With results lasting up to 12 months, hyaluronic fillers are growing in popularity, but other products are coming forth. Evolence, a porcine-derived collagen filler, was recently approved to treat moderate to deep facial wrinkles, and got additional labeling from the FDA, which says it also lasts up to 12 months.

Carlos Wolf, MD, a facial plastic surgeon with Miami Plastic Surgery, uses fat as fillers, transferring fat from parts of the body where there is excess and injecting it into areas of the face. He says fat can survive

longer, since your body is less likely to reject your own tissues.

PICKING UP THE SLACK

Wrinkles are not the only foes of youth. As we age, natural plumpers and skin-firming compounds like collagen and hyaluronic acid decrease, resulting in less taut skin. But modern science is doing its part to eliminate the dreaded turkey neck.

◆ **Lasers:** Lasers provide various wavelengths of energy to different levels of the skin, depending on the outcome desired. Most use heat to stimulate collagen, rejuvenating the skin, minimizing wrinkles and tightening lax skin. Newer, nonablative lasers don't destroy the skin's surface. They work well for skin tightening and can also treat wrinkles, brown spots, stretch marks, scars and even precancerous lesions, says Joely Kaufman, director of lasers for the Cosmetic Medicine and Research Institute at University of Miami Miller School of Medicine. "There's less wounding, faster healing and less risk" with fractional lasers, Chatham says. He points to a new device called Pelleve, which was approved in May by the FDA to treat mild to moderate facial wrinkles, that uses advanced radiowave technology for skin tightening. Data used for FDA approval showed that after one 15- to 20-minute session, male and female patients had immediate improvements in skin laxity and wrinkles, with continued response six months later.

As its name implies, Thermage is another noninvasive, nonablative device that delivers heat to the lower layers of the skin using radiofrequencies resulting in collagen production. Studies show it improves skin laxity, especially around the eyes and jowl area, typically with one treatment. It's more expensive than Botox and fillers, but provides more dramatic effects, closer to those you would achieve with a facelift, Wolf says.

◆ **Facelifts:** If subtle tweaks aren't for you, or you don't want to get

"beamed up," the gold standard to eliminate severe wrinkles and sagging skin is still a facelift. But interest is waning; there were 5% fewer facelifts performed in 2008 than 2007. However, new techniques have made the process less invasive than previously, as physicians are making smaller incisions, resulting in quicker healing and less downtime. For example the minimal access cranial suspension (MACS) is a "short-scar" lift to address laxity on the lower and middle third of the face. It can be performed under local anesthesia in less than three hours, and has about a two- to three-week recovery period.

◆ **Liposuction:** Liposuction is becoming more and more common because "we're obsessed with obesity," Gallo says. However, the number of liposuction procedures fell 19% in 2008 compared to 2007. He cautions that lipo shouldn't be viewed as a solution for weight loss, but merely as a treatment for problem areas like saddlebags, the back, arms, ankles and hips. And most physicians recommend liposuction only if you are within 25 to 30 lbs of your recommended body weight.

Ultrasound liposuction, which has been used in the United States for many years, uses a high-frequency vibration or ultrasonic energy to melt the fat, making it more amenable to removal. SmartLipo, perhaps the favored technique, uses a laser under the skin to liquefy the fat deposits,

IN 2008, \$10.3 BILLION WAS SPENT ON COSMETIC PROCEDURES (DOWN 9%), AND 1.1 MILLION COSMETIC PROCEDURES WERE PERFORMED ON MEN.

- AMERICAN SOCIETY OF PLASTIC SURGEONS