

Lessen wrinkles without surgery

A range of non-surgical cosmetic procedures are available to give skin a lift.

Are your wrinkles starting to get you down? When you look in the mirror, do you notice more frown lines than laugh lines?

People no longer have to go under the knife to help give skin the appearance of looking younger.

Cosmetic specialists offer dozens of treatments to refresh skin, without a blade in sight. But where do you start?

With so many options available, do some research to find the treatment that is right for you.

Here's a few of the most common cosmetic procedures.

Chemical peels Many women swear that chemical peels minimise wrinkles, reduce the appearance of sun-damage spots and plump out fine lines.

Chemical peels remove old skin with an acid solution so that new skin may grow in its place. Peels can be undertaken in less than an hour, with minimal recovery time.

Deeper peels use trichloroacetic acid (TCA),



Injections of dermal fillers or botulinum toxin may rejuvenate appearance.
Photo: AAP.

which causes the skin to feel tight for 24 hours: it may flake or scab afterwards. Some clinics offer deep peels that reach all the way to the reticular dermal level. These will require at least a week off work and can cause the skin to blister.

Anti-wrinkle injections Hello, Botox (although that's not the only brand name). A favourite of Hollywood celebs, botulinum toxin is injected into the muscles associated with specific skin creases, causing wrinkles to relax and soften in appearance.

The effect wears off after several months. The cost of a single shot is usually about \$9-\$15, but you will need multiple shots to de-crease a forehead. This is a prescription-only drug, so make sure the clinic you choose is appropriately qualified.

Dermal fillers Dermal fillers are commonly injected into the face to create an appearance of fuller lips, fill in deep fold lines and pad out hollow cheeks and eyes. Collagen was previously the standard filler, however these days injections of hyaluronic acid are common. This treatment is expensive: expect to pay about \$500. Another, more expensive, option is a fat transfer, in which fat is removed from one part of your body and injected into the face.

Thread facelifts Dubbed the "lunchtime facelift", a thread facelift is a minimally invasive procedure that seeks to "raise" the brows and cheeks, neck, jowls, and soften the appearance of lines. During the procedure a cosmetic surgeon makes tiny incisions into the skin and then

inserts thin threads into the face. The threads attach to the skin tissue and are then pulled back to lift and smooth skin. The procedure is performed in less than two hours and costs on average \$1700.

Laser treatments Most people have heard of laser hair removal. However, laser treatment can also be used to reduce acne, the appearance of wrinkles and pigmentation. Laser therapy directs short, concentrated pulses of light at the skin surface, removing irregular skin layer by layer. In the first 24 hours after treatment the skin may feel as though it has been sunburnt.

Deeper treatments can cause skin to flake or peel. With the old skin gone, fresher-looking skin may surface.

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