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Can new non-surgical face treatments really take years off your looks?

By LEAH HARDY - [More by this author »](#) Last updated at 11:40am on 11th April 2007

Inspired by celebrities such as Demi Moore and Sharon Stone, more women than ever are going to great lengths to stay looking younger. But revolutionary new treatments mean it is no longer necessary to face up to the scalpel to lift sagging skin and eliminate wrinkles.

Instead, scientists have developed new ways to lift the skin from within by stimulating collagen growth using lasers, infra-red light and radiofrequency waves.

Meanwhile, injectible fillers are now more sophisticated, smoother and offer not just a more natural result, but also work to stimulate the development of younger, plumper skin.

Most of these treatments are not instant, and many doctors agree that the results are not as drastic as those of facelifts, but the companies behind them claim these non-surgical treatments can take five or more years off your appearance - without the risks of surgery and anaesthetics. But do they work?

THE SKIN BOOSTER

Restylane Vital: The natural skin booster

CLAIR CHRYSLER, 55, lives in Marlow, Bucks, with her husband Andy. She is an actress and stand-in for stars such as Sharon Stone and Annette Bening. Clair says:

I often get to see my face on the big screen, and believe me, that can be a depressing experience.

At 5ft 8in and a size eight, my figure looks young, but my face didn't match.



I have very fair skin and growing up in California I got a lot of sun damage. I became lined and started to look drawn and tired. But I'd seen famous people who had had surgery and they just looked inhuman.

I visited cosmetic doctor Tracy Mountford who suggested a new treatment from the U.S. called Restylane Vital, which involves using a fine needle to inject a moisturising gel containing hyaluronic acid, a natural component of young skin, under the surface of the skin to hydrate it.

Unlike most other fillers, it attracts moisture to the skin, making it dewy and plump so the improvement would continue for months and last for up to two years.

I had an anaesthetic cream applied to my face, then lay on the couch and Dr Mountford made about 30 very tiny pinpricks around my cheeks and chin.

It took about 15 minutes and was painless. There were no red marks or bruising. I could have gone straight to work. After four weeks my skin looked plumper and fresher.

All the lines had softened and some old acne scars had vanished. I was thrilled. I had a second treatment in December to boost the effect. I feel years younger.

Cost: Around £450 for a course of 3 Restylane Vital treatments.

THE INFRA-RED FACE PLUMPER

Titan: The infra-red face plumper

PATRICIA HALE, 46, is married and has three children aged 17, 16 and 15. She and her husband run their own construction business and live in Buckinghamshire. She says:

About three years ago, I noticed my skin was beginning to sag, particularly my neck. I used expensive creams but they made no difference.

So when I saw a TV programme about a new kind of laser facelift called Titan, I was intrigued.



I contacted the company that made the equipment. www.gplasers.co.uk, and was told I could be one of the first women in the UK to have the procedure.

I went to The Old Barn clinic in Beaconsfield for my first treatment in January. Titan uses infra-red light rays to heat the dermis, the deep layers of the skin, which causes the skin to become tighter and firmer.

I put on goggles to block out all the light, then felt the machine move over my lower face and neck.

I felt a warming sensation followed by a cooling one. I was nervous at first and flinched, expecting a lot of pain, but it was more like holding a hot-water bottle to your face. It all took about 40 minutes.

By the next day I could already see an improvement, and as time went by my lines and 'turkeyneck' disappeared and my jawline became taut. A top-up a month later consolidated the effect and I am told it will last for up to two years.

I was sceptical at first, but I think Titan has taken seven or eight years off my face. Apparently, it can work wonders on saggy skin anywhere - and now I want it all over!

Cost: £750.

THE RADIOWAVE REVAMP

Accent: The radiowave facelift

LISA MORAN, 44, lives in North London and is a director of an internet company. She has a long term partner, David, who is a sound technician. She says:

I have always looked really young for my age, but a couple of years ago, I caught sight of myself in the mirror and was shocked at how saggy and lined I looked, especially in profile.



At the same time, I felt too young for a surgical facelift. I read about a new procedure called Accent, which uses radiofrequency waves to deeply heat the skin to stimulate the underlying tissues to tighten and lift, and to produce more collagen which plumps out the skin.

I looked into the science and it seemed to make sense, so I booked into the Court House Clinic in Harley Street, London. The radiofrequency waves are transmitted by a hand held machine that is moved over your face.

It feels like lying in hot sun. A couple of times I felt it sting, but I got used to it. The treatment took about 30 minutes and afterwards my face felt hot for about ten minutes, and was slightly red around my nose.

When I first looked into the mirror I couldn't see any change. But over the following months the pouch under my chin disappeared and my neck looked younger and less saggy.

I had three treatments, a month apart, and people have paid me compliments. I'm nearly 45 and I think I look great.

Cost: £350-£400 per treatment.

THE INJECTABLE LIFT

Laresse: The super-injectable lift

LISA DALE, 35, is a clinical assistant working in a private hospital. She is single and lives in Manchester. She says:

Last year I had two big shocks. My longterm relationship ended badly and I suffered a bereavement in the family. I didn't eat or sleep properly and within a few months I was horrified by the toll events had taken on my looks.



I looked haggard, tired and old. A local company, The Blemish Clinic, offered nonsurgical cosmetic procedures, so I made an appointment in the hope something could be done.

The owner, Jan Birch suggested a new type of filler called Laresse, which is extremely pure, very fine and smooth.

Because the texture is so fluid, it can be used with great accuracy and gives a natural effect.

This allowed her to fill in the deep lines from my nose to mouth, add subtle volume to my lips and even use a brand-new technique to fill in the hollow circles under my eyes called the 'tear trough', without making me look fake, lumpy or overdone.

Because the injections were in sensitive parts of my face, Jan first gave me a dental anaesthetic, which hurt, but the rest of the treatment was painless.

The whole thing took less than 40 minutes. When I first looked in the mirror afterwards I could see that my lines were much better and my whole face looked younger.

There was some swelling and minor bruising, but when that wore off a couple of days later, I could see a major difference in my before and after photographs.

Several people have commented on how good I look, and I think the result is still improving. Apparently, the filler stimulates your own skin to regenerate itself so I am getting some of my youthful glow back and my skin feels bouncier and healthier.

I am told the effects will last up to a year, and I will definitely go back for more. I don't want to have a facelift, and believe that when it comes to ageing prevention is much better than cure.

I always said I'd never have anything done to my face, but I have been converted by this treatment.

Cost: From £250

THE LASER SKIN REJUVENATOR

Palomar: The laser skin rejuvenator

KIM TOWNSEND, 45, is a travel agent. She lives with her partner Ian, a golf professional, in Essex. She says:

I used to be a real sun worshipper and never wore sunscreen. The legacy of that was a lot of deep crows feet around my eyes, and wrinkles on my cheeks and forehead.



In my job I have to meet a lot of people and it was affecting my confidence. I tried Botox but hated not being able to move my face. Then a friend told me about a new laser rejuvenation treatment called Palomar, available at The Woodford Medical Clinic near me in Essex.

Dr Mervyn Patterson explained Palomar would use microbeams of light that could penetrate the skin to rejuvenate it from the inside.

I lay down, was given goggles to wear and the doctor moved the hand-piece over my face.

It was slightly uncomfortable on sensitive areas such as under the eye and around my top lip, like being pinged with an elastic band.

But on other parts I could barely feel it. The treatment took around 40 minutes. Immediately afterwards my skin was slightly red and puffy and I looked quite piggy-eyed.

The redness and swelling lasted a couple of days, but during the following weeks, I started to see some quite dramatic improvements - my wrinkles were vanishing.

I've had two treatments and think they have taken five to eight years off my looks. A friend has booked to have Palomar after seeing my results. It has given me a new lease of life.

Cost: From £350 for one area to £1,000 for the full face.