

LASHES 101: Long and Luscious

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THE BEAUTY EXPERT

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Losing Leg Veins

Warning: If you're squeamish, don't read this. The newest material for plumping up thin lips and deep smile lines is one's own varicose veins. Not everyone has these unsightly swollen veins in the backs of their hands or legs—the malfunctioning valves that cause them are often hereditary—but many who do choose to have them removed. Instead of throwing away the tubular tissue, which is almost pure collagen, says San Diego vein-therapy expert Michael P. Goldman, it can be soaked in a solution to destroy any cells that could regenerate into blood vessels, separated into small sections, and threaded into the patient's smile lines or lips. (Leg veins are preferable to hand veins because they contain more collagen, Goldman says.) The tissue can also be pulverized into an injectable substance and stored frozen, just as fat is after liposuction, for future use by the donor. The possible complications—infection, swelling, and bleeding—are the same risks involved with injecting or implanting any filler in the face, whether it is collagen, fat, GoreTex threads, or hyaluronic acid gel. Goldman, a dermatologist who published an article about vein recycling in *Dermatologic Surgery*, has performed it on more than 100 patients. One person's tissue cannot be used in another person, he says; it would be rejected.

Smoother Skin, Less Downtime

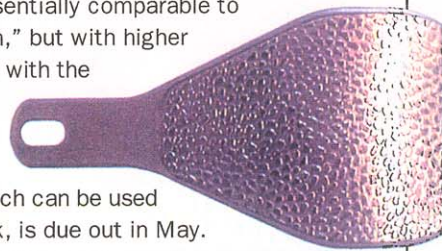
Coblation, a new skin-resurfacing treatment, may smooth fine wrinkles and acne scars and rebuild collagen with substantially less recovery time than traditional laser peels. The coblation device delivers radio waves (one-quarter as hot as laser energy) to the skin, removing a fine layer with each pass. The procedure, which costs from \$1,000 to \$4,000 and is not yet widely practiced, takes 5 to 10 minutes to peel around the eyes and mouth and 20 to 30 minutes for the full face. Local or topical anesthesia is required. According to David Goldberg, director of laser research at Mt. Sinai School of Medicine, the skin is red and raw for three to five days (during which time makeup cannot be worn) then turns pink for six to eight weeks—versus up to four months of redness after a CO₂ laser peel. Among 15 patients studied by Goldberg, measurable improvement was visible in one week. Time will tell if the benefits last longer than two years, he says. Like all skin-resurfacing techniques, which can lighten pigment, coblation is safer for those with fair skin. And because scarring is a potential with any peel, physicians, not nurses, should perform coblation.

EXFOLIATION INNOVATION

The next generation of skin exfoliation may be vibration.

Unlike the popular microdermabrasion—which improves fine lines with a spray of aluminum oxide or salt crystals—vibration employs an abrasive vibrating paddle. In a study by its inventor, Brian Zelickson, an assistant professor of dermatology at the University of Minnesota, 20 patients underwent microdermabrasion and vibration on either side of their faces. After six weekly sessions, judges saw slightly more improvement with vibration, and 90 percent of the subjects said it caused less discomfort, redness, and swelling. New York dermatologist Roy Geronemus has also found visible results “essentially comparable to microdermabrasion,” but with higher patient satisfaction with the feeling of the skin.

An at-home vibration device, the Vibraderm, which can be used three times a week, is due out in May.



55% of breast augmentation patients are ages 19 to 34.
—American Society of Plastic Surgeons

Wrinkle Wipeout

The N-Lite laser promised to eliminate wrinkles in one 30-minute session with no recovery time. But after a year on the market, the laser is proving to be a disappointment, say Dallas plastic surgeons Harlan and Todd Allen Pollock, who published a survey of local colleagues in *Aesthetic Surgery Journal*. Initial high expectations were based on one clinical study in Wales that found the N-Lite to be 84 percent as effective in reducing facial wrinkles as the CO₂ laser, which can cause pain and prolonged redness. But doctors haven't been able to duplicate that finding, the survey of eight Dallas cosmetic surgeons and dermatologists reveals. The physicians, who had each treated between 18 and 250 patients, all reported “subtle, minimal, or no improvement” after 90 days, and found that patients were “generally displeased with results.” Three of the eight doctors no longer offer the N-Lite, and the one who has done the most treatments now tells patients that they will need a series of sessions to achieve the hoped-for results.