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Turning back the hands of time

New York women may be able to beautify their bods, but mangled mitts give away their age

Your Bod, Babe!

By DEBORAH SWANEY

Madonna clawed her way to the top - and her hands are there to remind us. In contrast to her otherwise youthful, how-does-she-do-it body, her paws are looking prematurely aged.

For looks-conscious women, hands represent the final beauty frontier. "I lost about 70 pounds. My body is in great shape, but my hands look like a weightlifter's, with veins bulging all over the place," says Judy Lederman, of New Rochelle. A permanent French manicure, she says, made matters only worse. "My nails got thin and developed ridges. Overall, I look about 10 years younger than I am, but my hands are a dead giveaway," she complains.

The good news is that women don't have to sport mangled mitts like they're some Madge, er, badge, of honor.

The reason the hands often look so much older than the rest of us is that they're the most exposed part of the body, other than the face and neck, according to Manhattan plastic surgeon Dr. Sydney Coleman. Aging and sun exposure - not to mention washing dishes - take their toll.

Skin loses elasticity

"When you're young, you have a subtle fullness to the skin on the back of your hands," Goldman says. "But as you age, that skin becomes less full and elastic. Then you start seeing blue veins and white tendons shining from under." Eww.

More bad news: "Women's hands tend to look older than men's, possibly because women's skin is thinner," he adds.

For those with plenty of determination - and dollars - Coleman has developed a technique called lipostructure, which he has performed on a number of celebrities. First, fat is harvested from a patient, most commonly from her inner thighs or abdomen. Then, using a blunt, needle-like device, it's injected in passes between the skin and veins, from the knuckles to the wrist.

The result: the lost fullness is re-created. But don't expect a five-finger discount - Coleman charges \$12,000 to \$15,000.

For the tight-fisted, there are less costly options. Women can get hand injections

of Sculptra (a chopped-up suture material) or Restylane (a type of acid naturally occurring in the human body; the treatment isn't approved yet by the FDA), says Dr. David Avram, a top New York dermatologist. The techniques run \$1,000-\$5,000, but may produce results lasting just several years or less. As for brown age spots and thin veins, Avram says laser treatments can help. Count on two or more visits at \$500 a pop.

Cheaper version

Don't want to blow your 401(k) on daintier digits? A dermatologist can discuss Retin-A cream. "It helps with wrinkles and pigmentation," says Coleman. Also ask whether a skin-tightening cream, such as Strivectin, can help, **suggests Avram.** **"Plus, there's a host of companies that have antioxidant skin creams, which can reverse the early signs of sun damage,"** he adds. **One of his favorites: the Vitamin C- and E-infused Prescribed Solutions brand (www.prescribedsolutions.com).**


Jo Ann Garner, director of Skin Care at Oasis Day Spas, suggests a luxurious two manicures a month. "The hand massage will stimulate circulation, getting blood to the root of the nail," she says.

For a homemade remedy, try this exfoliation tip from Marie Scalogna, of mobile spa Spa Chicks On-the-Go: Every other day, create a coarse paste of olive oil and kosher salt and rub it on your hands. Rinse, then reapply a light layer of olive oil (which has healing and antioxidant properties, she says).

The city's just too hot to wear gloves.

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