

The Diners Club International Magazine

Signature

*CRUISING
THE DANUBE*

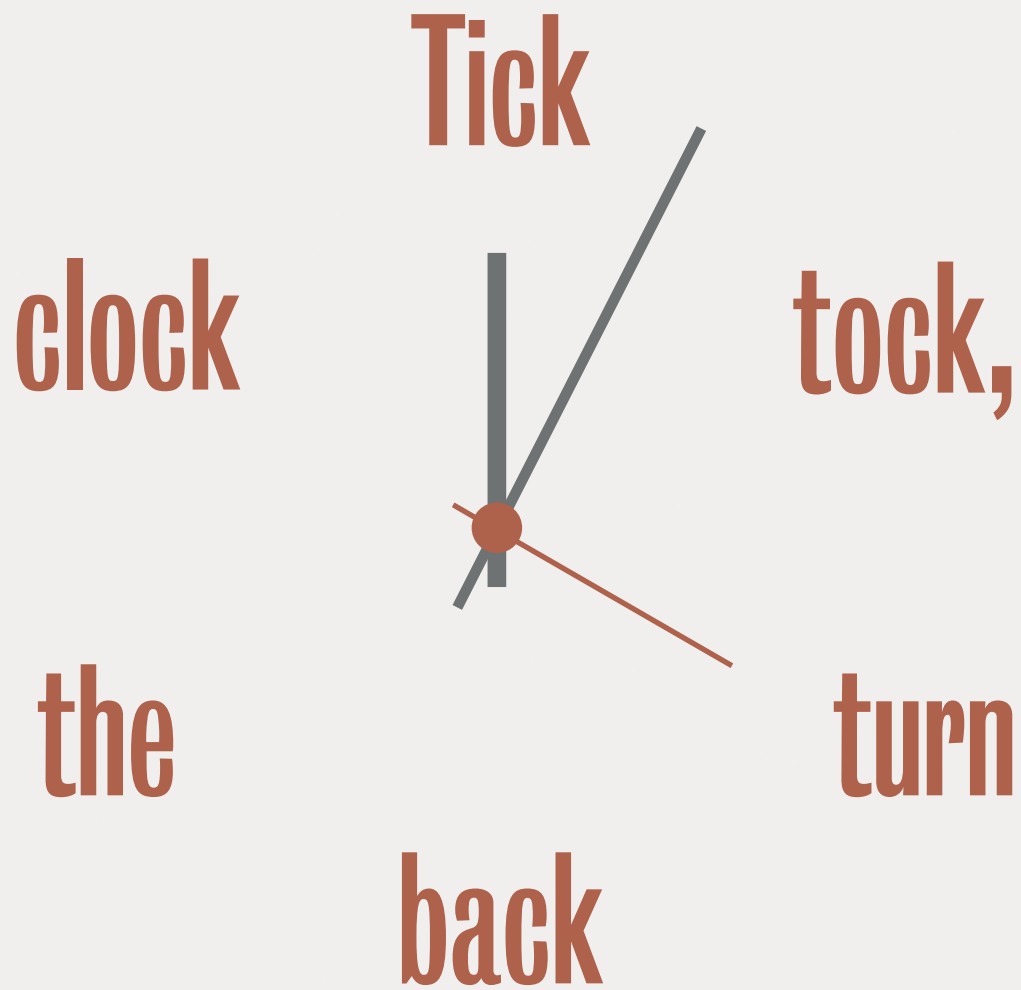
*West Coast charm
in Paternoster*

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*Want to look like you did five or 10 years ago?
Jackie Cameron investigates some of the latest
trends in facial rejuvenation*



If you opt for cosmetic procedures, bear in mind there is a fine line between doing nothing and doing too much

HAVE YOU NOTICED HOW PEOPLE SEEM TO be ageing so much better these days? Fifty is the new 40, while 40-somethings look barely a day over 30.

You don't need good genes to sustain the fresh look of youth – a good doctor can help you defy both gravity and the ravages of time.

Medical technology and dermatological advances have developed to the extent that you can be injected, lasered, filled, snipped and pulled in a way that no one can actually be sure you've had any work done. Experts agree, the best procedures are the subtlest.

As Cape Town plastic surgeon Dr Paul Skoll, notes: 'A 90-year-old with her face pulled back, doesn't look 20; she looks like a 90-year-old with her face pulled back. That's not good plastic surgery.'

Dr Skoll says there aren't any major changes in the types of facial cosmetic surgery favoured, but there have been advances in the way things are done. The move is towards more conservative facelifts. The younger set is going for short-scar facelifts, which involve an incision into the sideburn at the point where the hair meets the skin. Muscles are tightened vertically, so features move up rather than sideways, avoiding that wind-swept look.

There is also a new trend towards concentrating on the deeper tissues. A popular technique is the superficial musculoaponeurotic system (SMAS) facelift, which allows free movement of the facial skin after the sagging bits have been pulled up, so you can still smile and appear animated when you talk.

Essentially, the pull is on the deeper tissues, allowing for a more sustained result, and lessened scars on the skin. SMAS lifts have many variations. They generally reduce jowls, elevate cheek-fat pads restoring the curve of youth, and improve the appearance of the neck. They are often used in conjunction with facial fat fills to add volume, says Dr Skoll.

Turn on the TV and there's barely a presenter who doesn't look Botoxed up to the, well, hairline. That goes for men as well as women. Foreheads and cheekbones are as smooth as ironing boards. Nothing moves except the commentator's over-plump lips as he or she speaks.

Dr Skoll says it doesn't have to be this way. If you opt for cosmetic procedures, you should bear in mind there is a fine line between doing nothing and doing too much.

Some procedures are overrated, and very often overdone, such as brow lifts, says Dr Skoll. 'The brow is a very dynamic structure. If you disturb the balance, you can create a bizarre look.' But in the right hands, it's possible to create a very natural, soft look. 'The problem with minor facial interventions is there is no real control over who is doing the injecting, and many people get it wrong,' he says.

Laser expert Dr Ean Smit of the Cosmetic Dermatology Centre in Cape Town agrees. He says that not all specialists are good at everything. If you want Botox, for example, you should go to someone who has been doing it well for a long time.

The best Botox of all, Dr Smit says, is the Hollywood Botox. 'That's where you still have a bit of movement, but that's a talent not everyone has.'

Although Botox is all the rage, consider other procedures first. For starters, a clear complexion – blemish-free and with no pigmentation problems – is an advantage.

Laser treatments are a major drawback, in particular for women who overdid the tanning earlier in life or have hormone-linked discolouration problems. Men with ruddy complexions, such as rosacea, also go in for laser therapies. There are many different types of laser treatments, ranging from highly effective to likely-to-do-more-harm-than-good ones.

A QUESTION OF COSTS

The pricing of procedures varies considerably between practices and can depend on your unique requirements. As a rough guide, though:

- Botox: R1 500 for one treatment area
- Fillers/injectable gels: R2 000 per jab
 - Facelifts: from R45 000
 - Eye lifts: from R14 000
- Fraxel laser treatment: from R6 000
- Ultherapy (skin-tightening): from R7 000
 - Chemical peel: R1 000

Sources: www.plasticsurgeon.co.za & anecdotal

WELL-BEING

A skin rejuvenation method called fractional resurfacing is one of the more exciting developments in laser technology. This entails carefully targeting strong beams at key areas to eradicate pigment spots, remove unsightly blood vessels and improve skin elasticity.

Dr Smit warns that there are risks if the laser is off target. Instead of hitting a blood vessel, for example, the laser can hit and activate melanin, causing pigmentation problems.

Chemical peels also need to be undertaken with caution. 'You need to be very careful with anything that damages your skin. Anybody can paint some acid on your face [a chemical peel], but if it goes wrong, it is effectively a burn,' cautions Dr Skoll.

If you want to keep looking good, do not overlook subtle changes that alter the angles of your face. Dr Smit notes there are conclusive studies linking perceptions of beauty to the way facial features measure up in relation to one another. There is

a certain ratio universal to people widely regarded as the world's most beautiful. 'You need to keep your features as close to these defined proportions as you can. If you lose that ratio, you start losing your attractiveness. So, you need to keep the angles more or less preserved,' he says.

Start with the jawline, is the message from Dr Smit. For this, he recommends a deep ultrasound process (Ultherapy) to pull up sagging skin and sharpen the area around the mandibles. This non-invasive skin sculpting can be combined with laser, Botox and fillers, so that more than one job is done at the same time.

Dr Nerina Wilkinson, a plastic surgeon at the Renaissance Surgical Clinic in Cape Town, says eyes remain the most popular area for treatment, after breasts. They are one of the first areas to show signs of ageing and a vast improvement can be made easily – maybe not so you look 10 years younger, but certainly more refreshed.

Like Dr Skoll, Dr Wilkinson says the approach has changed. In the case of

the area surrounding the eyes, she still removes extra skin and protruding fat pockets, but also lipofills – injects your own fat – to improve the contour and hollows of the lower lid. Laser treatment to tighten skin and improve its elasticity is also important, she says.

So, what do you opt for? Surgery or non-surgical procedures? And at what age do you start?

Dr Smit says surgery doesn't improve skin elasticity and doing surgery without improving skin condition is like painting on a dirty canvas. On the other hand, surgical procedures can make permanent improvements that you could never achieve otherwise.

With surgery, advises Dr Skoll, if it is unlikely that you will achieve a significant improvement, then reconsider, as there are always risks. You can be too old, but, more often than not, you can be too young for it. 'Only opt for surgery if you think you will look much better, not just slightly better,' he adds. **Ⓜ**

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