



Looking Younger

Growing older may bring considerable comfort and contentment through experience and wisdom. But it also brings with it the visible signs of ageing that make us look tired, unhappy and 'old', even if we don't feel it! We all want to look our best, perhaps a little younger, especially if this is achievable safely and naturally. So let's rate a few of the more popular and safe anti-ageing treatment methods.

Daily moisturiser

Good skin hydration will reduce the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles, especially if you suffer from dry skin. An inexpensive moisturiser will often deliver equivalent results to an expensive one. Regular use of any moisturiser will prevent dry skin. Individuals with oily skin may not need a moisturiser at all! Many expensive cosmetic moisturisers irresponsibly promise miraculous rejuvenation that is simply not evidence based.

The importance of Sunscreen

Sunscreens are a proven weapon against the ageing effects of ultraviolet radiation. Choose a broad spectrum SPF-30 sunscreen that will shield the skin from both UVA and UVB rays. These can damage the skin and cause mottled

pigmentation, broken capillaries and wrinkles. In Australia the UV levels run high and sun protection will also minimise your skin cancer risk.

Should I exfoliate?

An exfoliant scrub - facial cleansers or sponges - can remove the outermost (dead) skin layers to produce a temporary glow to the complexion. Individuals with sensitive skin may experience excessive skin irritation and should not exfoliate. Overzealous exfoliation can also cause irritation and should be discouraged.

Fruit acid peels

Cleopatra knew of the skin rejuvenating effects of milk baths even if she may not have been aware of its active ingredient - lactic acid in milk. Today, there are numerous fruit and related acids such as glycolic, salicylic and lactic acids that are being exploited as superficial peels to subtly smoothen the skin and even out irregular pigmentation. These can be applied as high-concentration, short-contact time peels in a clinic, or low-concentration, extended (overnight) applications at home. Once again, individuals with sensitive skin may be more prone to excessive irritation which may limit its use.

Micro-dermabrasion

This is a popular device for turbo-exfoliating the skin. It circulates inert micro-particles through the uppermost layers of the skin to produce a chemical peel-like effect resulting in more radiant and uniform complexion. The results are likely to be temporary despite claims that micro-dermabrasion may stimulate increased collagen production and lasting skin rejuvenation.

Fractional laser resurfacing

This has been hailed as a significant breakthrough in cosmetic dermatology. Fractional lasers deliberately target only 5 to 20 per cent of the skin through multiple arrays of laser beams (finer than a hair shaft) onto the skin to create microscopic holes which heal quickly and have little down time. The results are scientifically proven and impressive, particularly for acne scars and reversing some of the signs of the ageing skin.

Miracle cure for puffy eyes?

Puffy eyes can be a sign of allergy, eczema, or rarely, internal problems such as thyroid or liver disorders. In most cases however, it is merely a sign of normal ageing where the lower eyelid skin, fat and muscle are all weak and sagging, resulting in puffiness or 'bags'. A balanced diet, adequate rest and healthy life style may be beneficial but may not significantly improve the appearance. Despite relentless marketing hype, there are no 'miracle' eye creams that truly work. The real miracle is the tangible behavioural transformation that comes with inner confidence and feeling good about oneself, even if it is through a pot of eye cream. Ultimately, we have to feel younger to look younger!

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