

The HANDS of TIME

Hands have long been the betrayer of a woman's real age. Not anymore: New treatments and procedures are giving youth-obsessed New Yorkers a secret antiaging boost where it really counts. By Beth Landman

When 52-year-old Sharon Blair* married Mark Burrows*, 44, she thought they made the perfect couple. She had always taken care of her appearance, had a facelift at 48 and kept a regular regime of Botox and injectable fillers. But when the wedding pictures came back from the photographer, she was mortified. "You know that shot they always have with the couple holding hands and wearing their rings?" says Dr. Howard Sobel, the cosmetic dermatologist who for years had been caring for Sharon's face. "It was one of those *uh-oh* moments. She looked great—younger than her husband—but her hands had a lot of sun damage, hyperpigmented spots and wrinkled skin with prominent veins."

Sharon quickly photoshopped the wedding pictures before anyone saw them, and booked some treatments: Aurora laser to get rid of sunspots, eMAX laser with radio frequency to tighten the skin's surface, and injections of the filler Radiesse to make blood vessels less noticeable. "I don't think her husband's family knew her true age, and after she fixed the photos and her hands, they weren't about to find out," says Dr. Sobel.

Hands give away age more than any other body part, but until recently, not much could be done

about it. "I always told my clients, 'If you want to look younger, hold your hands up—sit with them raised during dinner so the blood flows down and veins appear smaller,'" says Josephine Allen, a celebrity manicurist who works at the Upper East Side's Samuel Shriqui salon and tends to the dainty digits of Julia Roberts and Heidi Klum.

"Women who are thin and those with fair skin have hands that look older because you can see the veins more easily. And if you've had enough sun exposure, you can have liver spots on your hands in your early thirties," adds Dr. Robin Ashinoff, a dermatologist at Hackensack University Medical Center.

"Look at Angelina Jolie," continues Sam Rizk, an Upper East Side plastic surgeon. The actress is 33, but "you can see those dorsal veins on her hands. She should soften them up." Now she—and anyone prepared to shell out a few thousand bucks—

can. Cosmetic dermatologists, plastic surgeons and spas are becoming increasingly conscious of finding ways to match hands to a youthful-looking face.

Berenice Electrolysis & Personal Beauty Center, the



Guess the celebrity hands



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God only knows how much work Madonna, 50, has had done on her face to look young—but the hands give her age away.

their hands," says Dr. Brandt. "But lasers really work on skin that is thin or wrinkly or sallow."

Dr. Andrew Kornstein, a Fifth Avenue specialist, prefers to plump the hands with fat, a process that requires harvesting cells from your own butt, hips or belly. "In order to control the aging process, you have to restore volume to the hands the way you do in the face. Not only does fat last 10 years, but there is strong scientific evidence that it acts like stem cells, increasing circulation and causing new cells to grow." Skin looks smoother and tighter, and veins are camouflaged with the \$7,000 procedure (which requires "twilight" anaesthetic and a week or two of recovery time). For those who don't want to go through the surgical process of transferring fat, Dr. Kornstein uses Radiesse, a filler made from bone matrix, which lasts up to a year.

Jackie Jones, who lives in Queens and works as an office manager, is a believer in fillers. "I've always been bothered by my hands," she admits. "Last year, when I turned 40, I had the hands of a 70-year-old." So she visited Park Avenue dermatologist Neil Sadick and had her hands injected with Radiesse (\$1,500 to \$2,500). "I was out of his office in 45 minutes," Jackie says. "Before, I was too embarrassed to even

"When I turned 40 I had the hands of a 70-year-old. I was too embarrassed to get a manicure." But after a new treatment, "I'm wearing bright polish."

beauty emporium on East 61st street that caters to New York socialites, has just added a machine that uses light to stimulate collagen and eliminate age spots.

"The clients stick their hands under the machine for 15 minutes before they leave the spa," explains owner Berenice Rothenberg.

Dermatologist Lewis Feder has been fixing up Big Apple hands for several years, and started offering finger treatments 18 months ago. "I've been doing a lot of rejuvenation recently," he says. "I come in with fat at the wrist and massage it into the tissue. You must do the fingers too, or they won't look good. Finally I use microdermabrasion or a light peel to soften and even out the skin, and intense pulsed light for dark spots."

Dermatologist Dr. Fredric Brandt has developed his own cure (\$1,000 to \$3,500, depending on the damage) that deals with sunspots or discolorations, prominent veins and loss of volume. For problems two and three, his solution is fillers like Perlane, which lasts six to eight months. He addresses the first problem with lasers and peels, which improve texture and have a fading effect. "A lot of actresses wear makeup on

get a manicure. Now I'm wearing bright polish."

Men, too, have begun to seek cosmetic improvement for their extremities. "Guys love this new machine called Storz: it delivers high-energy shock waves," says Suzanne Levine, a podiatrist who also treats hands. "It was originally used for pain, but it plumps up skin, gets rid of wrinkles and slims knuckles." Women likewise are clamoring for the \$250 machine. Says Suzanne: "I have one actress who ordered a [Storz] for her home, and a couple of others who have asked me to bring it to L.A. to use on them before the Academy Awards."

Some couples are even having his and hers treatments. "I just did a husband and wife team that came in from Palm Beach and had their hands done together," says Dr. Brandt. "He is 39, she is a bit older, and it was his idea. He gave her a huge diamond for their wedding anniversary and now she's proud to wear it."

Adds Dr. Kornstein: "People ask me if cosmetic enhancement of the hands is expensive. It's a few thousand dollars, but really it winds up costing a lot more. After all, the plastic surgery is nothing compared to the jewelry that is bought afterward, once someone is happy with her hands."

**Names have been changed.*