

Will Getting Botox in My Traps Slim My Neck and Make Me Look Younger?

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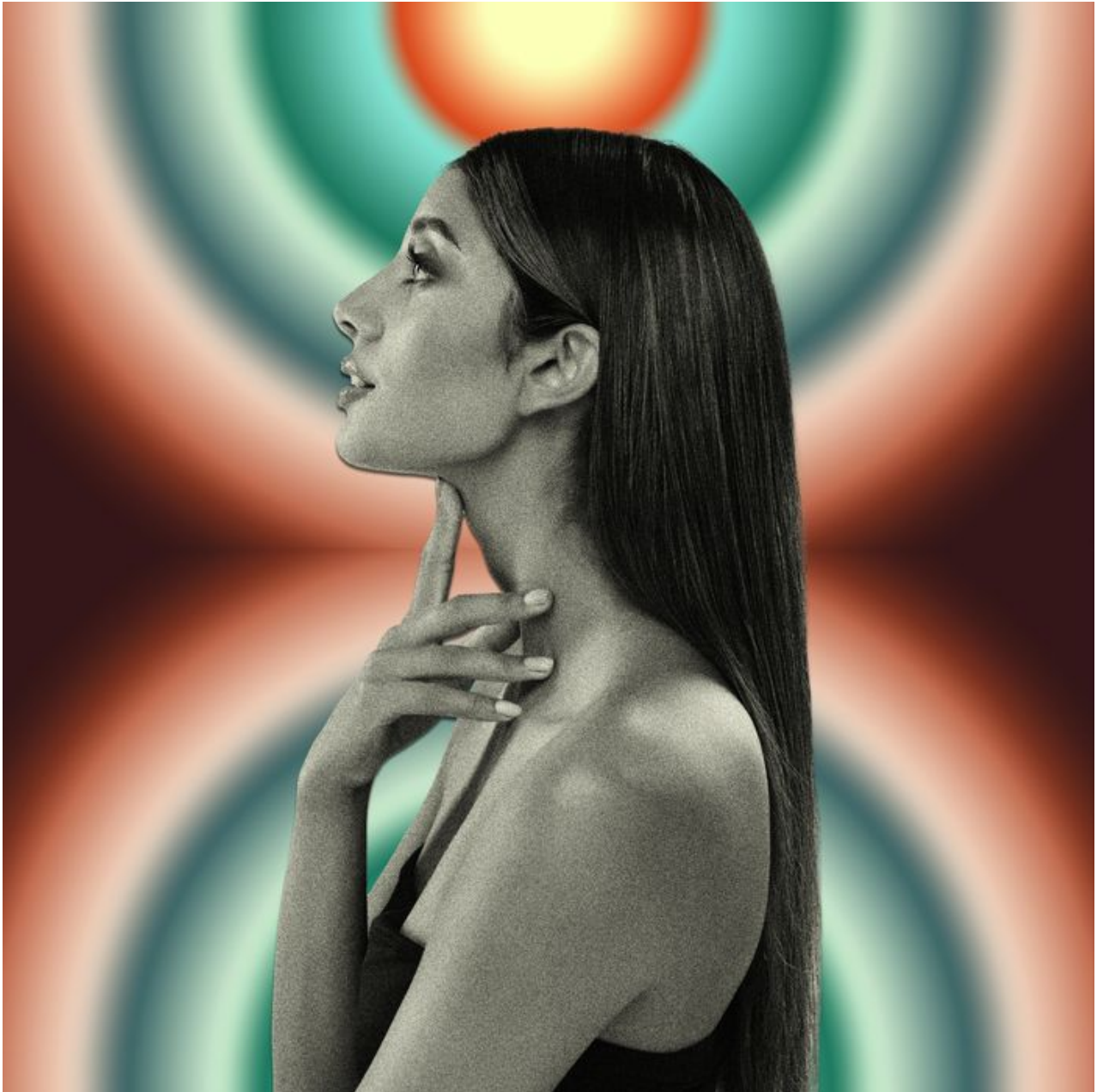


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Hats off to the ingenuity of TikTok creators, who can make [any beauty trend go viral](#) by giving it a new name. This summer, I’m tipping a pink-trimmed Stetson to [@isabelle.lux](#), who may be one of the first people to refer to trap tox — or the injection of botulinum toxin

A in the trapezius muscles to elongate the appearance of the neck — as Barbie Botox. (FWIW, this is the same creator who captioned a YouTube Short “[Non toxic living — moving in that direction at least, learning as we go](#)” two months before she posted about getting Barbie Botox — a cognitive one-eighty that’s enough to send me to the doctor for my own Botox injections, which, incidentally, can also treat whiplash.)

Even though trap tox is having a moment, it’s nothing new. In Korea, the trapezius is the second-most-popular region for Botox after the face, according to [Flawless: Lessons in Looks and Culture From the K-Beauty Capital](#), by Elise Hu. And as far back as 2017, Korean researchers [were studying](#) the best spots to inject botulinum toxin A into the trapezius for a “smooth shoulder line.” But despite what you might have read or seen in viral videos, this procedure isn’t a simple fix for bulky shoulders or a short neck, and it won’t [flatten your belly](#), but it may “accentuate preexisting neck aging,” according to [Dr. Sam Rizk](#), a plastic surgeon in New York City.

So how does it work? As you may know, [Botox](#) is a brand name for botulinum toxin, a neurotoxin, or neuromodulator, that weakens muscle function for three-to-four months. Doctors sometimes inject the drug into your trapezius — a large muscle on both sides of your body that runs from the base of your skull to the outer point of your clavicle and down to the center of your back — to reduce pain. “I originally injected Botox into the traps for patients who had chronic migraines or chronic tension in the area,” says [Dr. Stafford Broumand](#), a plastic surgeon at [740 Park Plastic Surgery](#), in New York. But — and this is where [Barbie comes in](#) — “it can also give the appearance of a longer neck.” Think about it: You exercise your muscles to make them bigger, and if they can’t contract as much as they used to, they get smaller. So as the trapezius at the base of your neck shrinks down, your neck seems to lengthen.

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However, this particular beauty benefit comes with other changes. “Any time you’re knocking out a muscle for aesthetic reasons, you have to stop and think about what that muscle is used for,” Rizk explains. “The trapezius is an important one. Not only is it responsible for posture, but it allows you to tilt and turn your head, shrug your shoulders, lift your arm, throw a ball — the list goes on. By weakening it with Botox, you run the risk of limiting a lot of really important functions.” So that’s definitely something to talk to your doctor about. Another thing to consider: If your neck appears longer, the [skin may look saggier](#). “It isn’t as much of a concern for people in their 20s and 30s, but for those who are starting to see drooping and laxity in the lower face and neck, that’s not the way to go,” Rizk says.

Still, if you feel your neck or shoulders look bulky and you want an elongated look, it’s worth considering trap tox. The effects typically kick in about two weeks after injections and last three-to-four months. But since trapezius muscles are big, it takes a lot of Botox

(“We’re talking 100 units or more,” says Rizk) to weaken them and make your neck appear longer — and that can be pricey. In the United States, the per-unit cost of Botox ranges from \$10 to \$25, [according to RealSelf](#), so the upkeep for trap tox is somewhere between \$3,000 and \$7,500 a year. And this is not a procedure to scrimp on; you definitely want to see a board-certified plastic surgeon or dermatologist, not one of those [drop-in Botox bars](#) that may not have a medical director on-site.

So knowing all that ... should you get trap tox? If you can swing the cost and have thought about why changing your appearance will make you feel more relaxed, confident, or happier, then sure. But I have a feeling Barbie — or at least [Greta Gerwig’s interpretation of her](#) — would also ask you to consider the role the patriarchy plays in your decision before you head off to the doctor’s office.

[Jennifer Sullivan](#) answers all your beauty-related questions with practical advice and zero judgment. Send your questions to AskABeautyEditor@nymag.com. (By emailing, you agree to the terms [here](#).)