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# ARE YOUR HANDS AGING YOU?

*It's not uncommon for your hands to look older than your face. Emily Listfield investigates the latest antiaging treatments that address the problem.*

YOUR EYES MAY BE A WINDOW to your soul, but when it comes to your age, it's your hands that will give you away. Hallie\*, 56, a screenwriter in Los Angeles, had been getting Botox in her face for years when she had this realization: "I knew if I didn't do something, my hands would reveal my true age. I was a maniac about sun protection but they were still aging, and I just didn't want wrinkly, veiny hands." These days, L.A. dermatologist Karyn Grossman takes fat from Hallie's backside and injects it in her hands. "It only takes about 10 minutes, and the results are instantaneous," Hallie says effusively. "I hardly swell, and if there's a bruise I just say I bumped into a door."

She's not alone in singing the praises of the buzzed-about hand lift. "There's been an explosion in women treating their hands," Grossman says. Having conquered the unlined look above the neck, many women want bodies to match, and hands, which are unavoidably out in the open 24/7, are the new focus du jour. All women, even the resolutely Botox-less, are apt to notice that their hands age differently from (and often sooner than) their face. "The dermis thins, causing veins to become more prominent, and as collagen decreases, the skin wrinkles up," explains New York and Miami dermatologist Fredric Brandt. "Plus, because most women don't protect their hands from the sun, they get age spots." The arsenal of treatments available includes lasers to remove brown splotches and eliminate crepey skin, and a variety of injectables that reduce a bony appearance. "Together they can take 10 years off," Brandt says.

Fillers are usually the first weapon. Grossman prefers to use a patient's fat, which has minimal or no risk of causing an allergic reaction. New York dermatologist Patricia Wexler agrees. "The stem cells in fat give you plumpness as well as radiance," she says. Wexler, who is a big proponent of restoring volume, adds, "You can have a beautiful, smooth, plumped face, but if your hands are shriveling with veins sticking out, people will wonder if you had a



head transplant. It's silly to stop treatment at the neck."

While fat injections can be permanent, the process requires monthly injections for up to a year and costs between \$3,000 and \$8,000. There is also some swelling and bruising at the injection site, though it typically dissipates in a week.

For women with less free time (or disposable income), Wexler and Grossman both turn to the filler Radiesse. Injections begin at \$1,000, but patients need just one or two treatments a year. All fillers (Brandt prefers Restylane) have the bonus of diminishing the look of prominent veins by filling out the surrounding area. And the most cutting-edge injectable, LaViv, actually helps your hands help themselves look better. "We take skin from behind your ear, process it for two to three months to grow your own collagen-producing cells, and then inject them into your hands to stimulate collagen growth, which makes them look younger," says Brandt. (Cost: \$800 to \$2,000 per monthly session; three are recommended.) There may be bruising for the first week; results last up to a year, possibly longer.

But while injections can plump up the skin, they won't correct telltale age spots. Applying Retin-A religiously can help, but for real results there's the Fraxel Dual and ActiveFX, fractional lasers that penetrate the top layer of skin, blasting brown spots and stimulating collagen production so skin looks smoother. Afterward, hands are red and swollen for a day or two, and the brown spots flake off in a week to 10 days. (Cost: \$1,000 to \$2,500 per monthly session; one to three are recommended.) "If you have significant sun damage," says Grossman, "we go up the arms with the laser as well to avoid a clear demarcation," which leads to even more smooth, rejuvenated skin. Who says you can't beat the hands of time? ■ \*Name has been changed