

Face Value

Dr Nestor gets under the skin of the ageing process – and looks at the best cosmetic ways to target it



At what age does a woman's face start to show signs of ageing? Genetics obviously play a part, and much depends on how well the skin has been cared for and particularly how much sun exposure it has had. However, it might come as a bit of a surprise to know that from your mid-twenties, skin will start to show the first signs of ageing dryness.

If you suffered from excess oil and acne as a teen and young twenty-something, this might sound like great news, but it also means the first faint lines around the eyes and mouth could now begin to show. Once in your thirties, collagen and elastin levels start to break down, with skin becoming less elastic, thinner and less 'plump' looking, while skin under the eyes is dryer and more delicate. You might start to notice deepening lines between the eyes and fine crow's feet around them. At the same time, fat pads – think of these as beautiful structures that hold everything up – start to deflate and to some extent, migrate south. Think of a big bunch of helium-filled balloons with a thin sheet over them. As the balloons deflate, the sheet begins to fall. This is pretty much what starts to happen in our thirties.

In your forties, those fine lines have become much more pronounced. Our fatty tissue continues to be lost, particularly around the cheeks, above and below the eyes and around the mouth, and as a result we start looking saggy, our skin becomes drier, and more pigmented. Dark spots and duller-looking skin can be major concerns now, while declining levels of oestrogen can also start to affect the look and texture of the skin. It's at this time of life that our bone architecture starts to change, with hollowing of the eyes and bony resorption at the base of the nose, jawline and chin.

Once into your fifties and sixties, those fine lines will have bedded in more deeply. Depending on sun exposure over the years, sunspots can increase, while the jaw area and eyelids may start to droop. Our facial proportions at this point are also changing. As our hairline recedes (in both men and women), our foreheads

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appear larger, our jaw and chin are smaller and our cheeks are much lower. The beautiful “V” or “heart shape” a woman once had, is now more of “U shape”.

Don't despair, though. There are, fortunately, steps anyone concerned with the effects of ageing can consider. Concerns such as an uneven skin tone and a dull complexion, both of which will age appearance, can be helped with good, medicated skin healthcare. Products containing ingredients such as vitamin C, like ZO Skin Health Ossential C-Bright Serum, will help to brighten skin, while fillers help restore lost volume in the deeper tissue to lift the face and give skin a youthful boost. For those with deeper concerns, Silhouette Soft Thread Lifts are recommended where appropriate. All treatments should only ever restore what has been lost, to achieve natural results.

When used effectively, fillers should restore some of this lost tone and volume in a natural-looking way. For example, to keep the jawbone defined and the face looking youthful, I would recommend filler in the cheek and chin area to lift and elongate the face, and a very smooth, thin filler to restore lost volume under the eyes. A soft sheet of a thin filler in the forehead helps to create a youthful convection in faces that are looking a little tired, where subtle fillers can also be used on cheeks to add height and plumpness.

The key is to think about your own face and when you felt like it looked its best. The aim is to retain the way you look with slight enhancements to make you look as good as possible, rather than dramatic alterations that look unnatural. It is a process that should be undertaken by a qualified specialist in a medically controlled environment, and all of the issues and expectations should be discussed in full before any treatment begins. **SW**

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