



A BEAUTY EDITOR'S BOTOX CONFESSIONS

When your 9-5 revolves around cosmetic innovation, it would be almost rude not to test out the latest anti-ageing therapies. Here, beauty writer Nadine Baggott gives a no-holds-barred account of the treatments she would – and would never – have again

Photographs by ELISABETH HOFF

I am a beauty editor of a certain age. In other words, I know more than most about what works and what doesn't when it comes to anti-ageing lasers, fillers and Botox. I'm also brutally honest, and can have any treatment I want, free of charge. But I don't often take up those daily offers. Why? Because I don't want to be the first to try anything: in essence, to become a human guinea pig – especially where my face is concerned. And neither should you.

I was one of the three beauty editors to have Macrolane, the hyaluronic acid filler, injected into my Kate Moss-esque breasts back in 2007. The manufacturer has now withdrawn it from use as a breast filler. I was lucky, in that I didn't get the lumpy scar tissue that some people did, but let that be a word of warning. New is not necessarily better. And while it's good to come first in an exam, it's never good to be the first on a surgeon's couch when he has just trained in an as-yet-untested technique.

So, what works and what doesn't? Despite the poor press, Botox and semi-permanent fillers can achieve wonders, and are the secrets behind the ageless, timelessly beautiful faces of the likes of Jennifer Aniston and Cindy Crawford. If someone hasn't visibly aged since their twenties or thirties and they are now in their forties or even fifties, trust me: they are having some work done. This needn't even involve going under the knife, as modern non-invasive procedures are so good.

Lasers and intense pulsed light (IPL), sound-wave and infrared treatments can heat and destroy skin imperfections. I've had the sun damage that I garnered in Saint-Tropez during my twenties blasted away (it resembled brown crusty scabs after IPL – oh-so satisfying when they fell off). Three times a year, I have baby Botox – the 'oh my eyebrows can still move, but I have no forehead lines' treatment that allows so many A-listers to deny having had anything done. I have also recently discovered subtle fillers and the now-infamous 'Dracula' platelet-rich plasma (PRP) therapy to give me the plump, pinchable skin that I enjoyed in my early thirties. But now, at 51, if I lost ►

my job, which procedures would I pay for? I mean, with my own hard-earned cash? Botox, definitely – twice a year is enough. A once-every-two-years liquid facelift of filler, certainly, plus a token zapping of any new sun damage. Beyond that, though, the jury is out. And I am happy to see others more eager – and, may I say, perhaps more gullible – than me lead the way with nerve-freezing, thread-lifting, temple-popping, cannulas-full-of-filler-type treatments. If I ever try them and they work, I promise I'll let you know...

BOTOX BENEFITS

Let me start by saying that, in the hands of a skilled, artistic doctor, Botox can erase forehead wrinkles, scowling and deep furrows between brows. It can also soften crow's feet, very subtly lift the outer corners of your lips and even relax those bands of muscles in your neck that can drag down your jaw line. That said, it is not something that I believe should ever – let me reiterate that, *ever* – be used preventively in young, flawless faces. Why any woman in their twenties or even early thirties (and yes, I'm talking to you, Kardashians and *TOWIE* girls) would want to paralyse their faces, I simply don't know.

I'm sure you're aware that Botox is derived from bacteria that cause food poisoning, but it's also been used in medicine for years, to treat eye squints and muscle tightness in young children with muscular dystrophy. It relaxes the muscles that cause the lines, but problems arise when it is used poorly – when eyelids can droop or, inversely, become Jack Nicholson-like. A word to the wise: don't expect perfect results in one trip. You should go back for revisions and tweaks if you're not happy, as not even the best doctor can predict how your muscles will react. They will err on the side of caution, so you might need a subtle top-up.

The downside of Botox is that a smooth, immobile forehead is a sure sign that you've had work done. Which leaves us all looking at some 'ageless' faces and wondering, 'Do they look good for their forties, or are they in their twenties and overdone?' And what young person would want that?

Expect to pay Between £200 and £350 per area, depending on the doctor you choose, but demand that this includes a second visit and a top-up if needed.

Who to see I like movable, 'mini' Botox – try Dr Frances Prenna Jones, Dr Anne Mendelovici and Dr Vicky Dondos.



FILL'ER UP

Fillers have had some seriously bad press recently, and with good reason. They are not regulated or controlled in any way, so anyone can pick up a needle and jab you. Never, ever opt for permanent fillers; always choose semi-permanent gels that contain hyaluronic acid, a substance found naturally in your cells, which attracts water to give skin that youthful 'pinch' factor. These will last for six months to a year and are injected into the deepest layer of the skin. Most contain an anaesthetic, and you can also have numbing cream applied first. They are usually injected under the cheeks, into the 'marionette' lines from nose to mouth, but also into temples and along the jaw line, and even into the tear troughs under the eye.

The effects can be subtle, but they can give a 'liquid facelift', especially to anyone with low body fat who looks drawn in the face. Ever wondered how Hollywood actresses can have 12 per cent body fat and a plump face? Facial fillers. The good news is that if you opt for a hyaluronic filler and you don't like it, you can have an enzyme called hyaluronidase injected into the gel, which will dissolve it naturally.

Expect to pay You usually pay for fillers per syringe or part syringe. Prices start at about £200 per area, rising to £1,500 for a full face.

Who to see Dr Maurice Dray for his famous 10-minute facelift.

LIGHT RELIEF

Lasers and IPL can be programmed to heat and destroy specific targets, including tattoo pigments, melanin skin pigments, the haemoglobin in blood and the water in skin cells, causing them all to vaporise. This means that, used in a controlled way, they can leave skin free of red veins, brown age spots, rosacea, fine lines and sagging. I've seen brilliant results – and I've also helped people to get their money back when treatments didn't work. It's not just a question of choosing the right machine, but the right practitioner turning the dials and flicking the switches. Radio-wave and sound-wave machines work in a similar way: both are designed to send energy into the skin to heat up and wound it, safe in the knowledge that skin can repair itself. Fraxel, a fractional laser, does this in multiple tiny 'pinpricks' and is the gold standard for skin resurfacing. Down time can vary from a few hours to a few weeks, ►

but redness and temporary pigment darkening can be covered with make-up.

Expect to pay Laser and IPL are charged for in 15-minute time slots, starting at about £100, so your final bill will depend on the size of the area treated. Resurfacing and fractional lasers cost more than IPL and hair/age-spot removal, with prices starting at about £550.

Who to see Dr Nick Lowe pioneered most laser treatments in the UK.

TREASURE CHEST

As a nation, we end our anti-ageing routine at our chins, leaving our necks and chests unaided. Then one day, in your forties, you glance down and, horrors, your chest is pigmented, lined and sagging. The skin is ultra-thin here, which is why it ages so quickly, but also why it is relatively easy to treat. Mesotherapy and PRP work well, especially combined with IPL or Fraxel. Mesotherapy is lots of tiny electronic injections of hyaluronic acid and vitamins and minerals into the skin, while PRP – the ‘Dracula’ therapy – adds your own white blood cells to the mixture. A vial of blood is taken from your arm and spun to remove the red blood cells, leaving a golden liquid that contains all the cells needed to speed up healing. Finish with IPL or, for older, more damaged skin, Fraxel, and you can take years off a sun-damaged chest. As a bonus, you

get a bit of a boob lift, too, as this skin keeps your breasts up where they belong. Davina McCall raves about her IPL chest treatments.

Expect to pay From £99 for IPL, from £100 for mesotherapy and from £950 for PRP.

Who to see Dr Frances Prenna Jones offers IPL, mesotherapy and laser treatments. Or try Benjamin Kauffholz at Dr Maurice Dray for PRP and mesotherapy.

LIP SYNCH

To fill or not to fill, that is the question. No one should want *The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills* ‘duck lips’, but a little bit of extra fullness in the upper lip can counteract the natural thinning and pucker lines that happen with age (especially if you’re a smoker), or just fill out skinny lips that can leave you looking pinched. Angelina Jolie has a lot to answer for, as her plump pout has driven many of us to want more lip volume. Restylane Lip Volume is a safe choice of filler for an area that is prone to feeling bumpy afterwards. Opt for lots of numbing cream or a dental block, as lips are super-sensitive and this is a painful treatment (no matter what you may have read). The finished look should give you a clear border around your lip – a clear sign of youth – filling in any smoker’s lines. Avoid any treatment that aims to fill the area between your top lip and nose, as this is a sure-fire route to a duck face.

Expect to pay Around £250 for a lip-filler treatment, but it could cost up to £500.

Who to see Registered nurses and lip experts Fiona and Marie Aesthetics.

THE FUTURE

Would you have the nerves in your forehead frozen to sub-zero temperatures? I know I wouldn’t. ‘Frotox’ is just one of the latest space-age treatments hitting the headlines. Offering a supposedly natural alternative to Botox, iovera – as it is properly called – is still being trialled in the UK. When you see the word ‘trial’, run for the hills – even if you have read how wonderful it is in the *Daily Mail*. The same goes for thread lifts – those barbed nylon wires that are threaded underneath sagging cheeks and foreheads, then pulled back to lift the skin. Not for me.

That said, Ultherapy has caught my attention. Aimed at women in their forties and fifties as an alternative to a facelift, it uses high-powered sound-waves as energy to heat the deepest layers of the skin and tighten it. If I ever have it, it shall be in the US, where they offer Valium and painkillers, not the UK, where they say it doesn’t hurt. Courteney Cox has already admitted she is a fan, and I like the way she looks.

Expect to pay Around £3,000 for a lower-face Ultherapy treatment, and up to £4,500 for lower- and mid-face treatment.

Who to see Alex Karidis for Ultherapy. ■

TRUSTED PROFESSIONALS

These practitioners have an A-list appointment book and are Nadine’s personal recommendations

Dr Anne Mendelovici is based at the famous Dr Jean-Louis Sebagh clinic in London, where you can bump into Elle Macpherson and Cindy Crawford. She specialises in natural-looking Botox and mesotherapy for women in their thirties and forties. Visit drsebagh.com

Dr Nick Lowe is the UK’s leading expert and pioneer in laser and IPL skin treatment, and specialises in treating redness, pigmentation and laser resurfacing of lines. Visit drnicklowe.com

Dr Frances Prenna Jones looks after the skin of Kate Moss and Louise Redknapp, and adopts a rounded approach to anti-ageing, including fillers, Botox, lasers and IPL. Call 020 7499 3848.

Dr Maurice Dray is an expert in a European technique that uses hyaluronic acid gel and a mineral/calcium blend – called the Mesolift – to create subtle volume in ageing and sagging skin. Visit drdray.co.uk

Alex Karidis is open and honest about the pros and cons of most treatments and is pioneering Ultherapy in the UK. Visit karidis.co.uk

Dr Vicky Dondos at Medicetics – visit medicetics.com

Fiona and Marie Aesthetics are two skilled, registered nurses who specialise in injectables and do a fabulous subtle lip. Visit fionamarie.co.uk for details.



This year Marie Claire launched Take A Good Look, a campaign for safe cosmetic surgery. Its aim is to ensure that women feel informed,

empowered and safe when they make the decision to have surgical procedures such as Botox, breast implants or liposuction. The cosmetic-treatment industry takes £3 billion a year from women, yet it is still almost entirely unregulated. For women to be protected, this needs to change immediately. Find out more about our campaign and how to stay safe at marieclaire.co.uk/TAGL.