

If dermatologists wore black capes instead of white coats, you might mistake them for magicians. The experts wave infrared wands and prescribe seemingly supernatural ingredients, radically reversing signs of aging. But they also have subtler, more nuanced tricks up their sleeves. In a matter of hours, and sometimes minutes, doctors can perform quick, comfortable procedures that leave you looking brighter, tauter, and years younger. Believe it or not, they can even refine the shape of your nose (with absolutely no skin off it). Sun spots, spider veins, droopy jowls, dullness—now you see them, now you don't.

1.

They Can Offer Serious Firming

The most effective fix for droopy skin, radio-frequency waves, requires a bit of fortitude: It burns like the devil. Treatments such as Thermage work by delivering sound waves deep into the skin, causing microscopic fissures that stimulate collagen production, which in turn firms up loose and sagging areas (face, jowls, neck, knees, and so on). The results are impressive—most patients see significantly tauter skin within six months—but the procedure can be hard to take. “Some of my patients find radio frequency too painful, even with heaps of medication,” says dermatologist Howard Sobel. For those of us whose pain thresholds land somewhere between moderate and mouse-door level, there's an easier alternative. Sobel recommends the nonablative eTwo laser, which directs a much milder combination of radio frequency and infrared-light pulses into the skin. “The results are comparable to Thermage but not as painful,” says Sobel, who recommends three sessions spaced one month apart.

2.

They Can Turn Small Lines Into No Lines

A new hyaluronic acid filler, recently approved by the FDA, can diminish the tiniest and most superficial of

lines. And that's big news. “Belotero Balance spreads out evenly instead of clumping up like other fillers, so you don't have to inject it deep into the tissue,” says Fredric Brandt, a dermatologist with offices in New York City and Miami. The small particles and malleable texture make it possible to smooth shallow lines instantly while maintaining a bump-free surface. “It's perfect for filling in fine lines around the lips and even crow's-feet,” says Brandt. And because the needle only penetrates the skin's top layers, there's far less bruising involved.

3.

They Can Give You a Ten-Minute Nose Job

One common sign of aging is as plain as the nose on your face. Actually, it is the nose on your face. “The nose flattens and widens as we age,” says dermatologist Jody Comstock. “One of the quickest and easiest ways to look younger is to reshape it with a filler.” A hyaluronic acid filler (Perlane, Juvéderm, Restylane) injected right into the dorsum (the bony line straight down the center) slims the nose and even corrects bumps and imperfections. Doctors can also add a tiny dose of Botox under the tip for a more youthful profile. “Your nose becomes more hooked as you age, which drags down the entire face,” says Brandt. “Botox lifts it up and takes off years in about ten minutes.”

4.

They Can Save Your Neck

Neck muscles can start to enlarge and protrude as we age, resulting in the appearance of thick, tight cords. And as if that weren't hard enough to swallow, “the muscles in the neck and the superficial muscles of the face are connected to one another,” says Brandt. “That means your neck actually pulls your face downward.” It's a depressing thought with a surprisingly easy fix (that doesn't involve buying stock in a turtleneck emporium). “I relax the neck muscles with Botox,” says Brandt. “It softens the wrinkles, gets rid of the cords, and lifts the face. Basically, it's a nonsurgical face-lift.” Botox breaks down every three to four months, so repeat visits are necessary.

5.

They Can Painlessly Clear Spider Veins

Sclerotherapy—the procedure that can eliminate spider veins and the leaky blood vessels that cause them—was once the literal equivalent of rubbing salt in a wound. “Before, we had to use a saline solution that stings and is extremely painful,” says dermatologist Amy Forman Taub. But the latest alternative procedures, which involve injecting veins to inflame them, close them, and allow

the body to absorb them, have made real advances in the past few years. "Newer detergent-like drugs such as Asclera and Sotradecol are just as effective as saline but don't cause as much discomfort," Taub says. (Doctors use a tiny needle "the width of a strand of hair," says dermatologist Arielle Kauvar.) "It's a very quick, very effective procedure that covers a lot of territory," says Taub. There's no downtime, but that doesn't mean there are no side effects: There is often bruising, some redness, and a bit of swelling in the veins, which compression stockings can help minimize. Sometimes patients see brown staining from inflamed veins that can last for several months.

6. They Can Get Rid of a Bruise

When your face makes contact with an open kitchen-cabinet door, there are two things that will help ease the imminent black-and-blue (and purple and yellow) mark. The first is cursing like a sailor. The second is dialing your dermatologist. "It takes about 48 hours for a bruise to develop fully," says Brandt. "At that point, a patient can come in, and we'll treat it with a simple V-Beam vascular laser. The procedure takes only 20 seconds, and the bruise will fade by the end of the day." Who the hell knew?

7. They Can Give You Prettier Earlobes

Next to perkier breasts and a better butt, we yearn for smooth, round, *plump...earlobes*. Yes, you heard that correctly. "Skin sags as we age, and the earlobes are no exception," says Brandt. "And because so many women wear heavy earrings, the lobes are often the first thing to droop." To plump them up, Brandt recommends a hyaluronic acid filler.



Tip

Retinoids will make skin look smoother after six weeks of continuous use.