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How to Make Hands Look Younger – at Home and at the Doctor’s Office

Gabby Shacknai | December 30, 2022



There’s a scene in *Gone with the Wind* when Scarlett O’Hara, dressed in a gown made from her mother’s drapes, goes to Atlanta to convince Rhett Butler to give her \$300 for the taxes on her family’s plantation. She tells him how well things have been going, and he believes her lie—that is, until he sees her hands. “What have you been doing with your hands?” he demands. “These don’t belong to a lady. You’ve been working with them like a field hand!” And just as they betrayed Miss O’Hara in 1939, hands remain a dead giveaway of one’s lifestyle and age today.

“Our hands can show our age more than anywhere else on the body,” says Dr. Tracy Evans, a board-certified dermatologist in San Francisco. Not only is the skin on our hands thinner to begin with, our hands are also constantly exposed to sunlight, which can lead to age spots, collagen destruction, further thinning of the skin, and general signs of premature aging, she explains. The fat that is found in the hands also naturally atrophies as we age, exposing the underlying veins and tissue, and leaving the hands looking boney, and, well, generally old.

Yet when it comes to skin care and cosmetic treatments, we don’t devote even half as much attention to our hands as we do our faces. “People, over the years, have had such an obsession with anti-aging strategies for their faces, but when you take a look at them and see everything, they really do have young faces and old hands,” says Dr. Gerald Imber, a board-certified plastic surgeon in New York City. “It’s only recently that patients have become interested in making everything congruent, so the requests we get for doing something about the hands, either

preventatively or correctively, have skyrocketed over the last five or so years.” As hand rejuvenation has grown in demand, so too have the anti-aging hand treatments available. Here, doctors explain how to make hands look younger, including both in-office procedures and easy, at-home solutions.

In-office anti-aging hand treatments

Fat transfer

“As someone ages, they lose fat and bone density, and hands get a sort of witchy look,” explains Dr. Norman Rowe, a board-certified plastic surgeon in New York City. “We always think of fat as bad, but it actually gives a youthful look—so you want to keep a certain amount.” One solution for fat loss, and the hand rejuvenation treatment favored by many doctors, is a fat transfer. Usually done in tandem with another fat transfer or other procedure, fat is harvested from one area of the body—typically the belly or buttocks—spun and cleaned, and then gradually inserted into the deficient areas of the hands through tiny, near-microscopic incisions. This helps the hands appear more youthful, smoothing out the texture and hiding veins and tendons. “It may take a couple of treatments, because you can’t guarantee how much fat will take—sometimes 60% will take in one hand and 70% in the other,” Dr. Rowe says. “But the good thing about fat grafting is that it’s your own fat, so it won’t be rejected, and it’s a permanent solution.”

Renuva

This injectable filler is derived from human tissue, and is made up of the same proteins and collagen found in the body’s own fat. When injected into the skin, it creates a honeycomb-like matrix that’s filled in with your own fat; after three to six months, the injectable dissolves but the fat remains, explains Dr. Anna Guanche, a board-certified dermatologist in Calabasas, California. It can be used in the face and body, but is an especially good choice for hands: “It restores volume loss to help camouflage veins and tendons, giving the hands a naturally youthful appearance,” she explains. You’re getting similar benefits as fat transfer, but there’s no liposuction required, and the long-lasting results are another boon. “Patients appreciate that they don’t need to go on the same maintenance schedule as with other injectables that may require them to return every six months to a year. I do have them come back three to six months after the treatment to see if they’re happy with the results or want more volume, but this is a long-lasting treatment. It lasts as long as the natural fat cells last, which varies for every individual, but this could be up to 10 years,” she points out. The final cost depends on how much Renuva is needed and your particular provider, but Dr. Guanche cites \$3,000 to \$6,000 as an average.

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