

WINTER  
2015

# FASHION

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## TREASURED CHEST

The delicate skin of the décolleté is easily harmed by sun exposure and lack of overall care, revealing telltale signs of neglect. WENDY SCHMID reports on the best treatments to overhaul this often overlooked area.

CUP SIZE OFTEN TRUMPS SUNSCREEN AND MOISTURIZER for the chest-obsessed. But, word to the wise: Ditch the La Perla push-up and invest in your skin. Sun spots, wrinkles and sag can easily mar your décolleté—and the look of every V-neck or open-neck dress you slip on. “The chest is like the forgotten child,” says Manhattan dermatologist Francesca Fusco. “I have patients with nice, smooth, even-toned faces and then freckly, sun-spotted, leathery chests. They just don’t think to apply moisturizer and sunscreen.” Thinner skin and fewer oil glands set the chest up for susceptibility to sun damage and collagen loss, and neglect often does it in.

“Part of the problem is that beauty treatments typically focus from the forehead line to the chin line, but the face, neck and chest should be treated as one anatomic unit, like when you go to a museum and see a bust,” says Beverly Hills dermatologist Harold Lancer, who tends to high-profile celebs like Beyoncé and Scarlett Johansson. Lancer rather famously became known for restoring the décolleté years ago when he introduced mechanical diamond buffing (exfoliation using inert crystals), and it’s still part of what he calls his chest rehab. The protocol:

nutrition and sunscreen counselling, vegan stem-cell facials after twice-monthly power polishings and his patented Lancer The Method for the body. The trio of products (Polish, Cleanse and Nourish) works with interlocking chemistry to stimulate tissue repair at home. “The chest needs tender loving care, and going straight to laser technologies is like going straight to diet pills to lose weight instead of nutrition. Quality skincare is always the first step. It primes the skin to better tolerate laser or ultrasound later, if needed,” he says.

Peels and photo facials—intense pulsed light (IPL) and autofluorescent transmission technology (AFT)—are another way to ease into correcting a chest that doesn’t quite match the rest of you, due to sun damage. “When we’re younger, the melanocytes, our pigment-producing cells, give us a beautiful tan so we don’t see the damage occurring,” says Dr. Diane Wong, medical director, owner and founder of Toronto’s Glow Medi Spa. “But the cells start to produce more unevenly over time, leading to what we call sun spots or liver spots. It creeps up.” Trichloroacetic acid (TCA) peels every six to eight weeks can help lift away milder cases of sun damage. “It’s applied all over »

the chest, with more dabbed on darker areas of pigmentation. Then, for a week, the area is dry and flaky,” says Fusco. IPL can also break up brown and red pigment so it gradually flakes off after three to six treatments. “We have a lot of busy, professional women who do IPL on the chest as a lunchtime treatment,” says Wong. Lancer prefers AFT. “It’s a new type of broadband light that’s more controlled. The pulse durations are more precise, there are cooling handpieces and there’s a lens that filters the light so the reflection back to the skin isn’t harmful. It’s like IPL-plus,” he says.

Bigger spots, however, can require bringing out the bigger guns in the dermatology realm. “Peels and photo facials are like taking the express train or a fast car if you’re going downtown. But lasers are like taking a helicopter,” says Fusco. For deeper pigment patterns rivalling a Dolce & Gabbana leopard print, she recommends the Nd:YAG Laser. “You aim and shoot each spot; they get a couple of shades darker and then slowly slough off.” Expect to cover the area by day and apply an antibiotic ointment to prevent post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation by night. Winter, incidentally, is the perfect time to peel, zap or laser the chest, stealthily and stylishly hiding any downtime behind a nubby funnelneck or a cashmere sweater.

For more extensive sun damage—and the fine lines that come with it—there’s Fraxel Dual, a fractionated, non-ablative laser that works with two handpieces at two wavelengths. “The 1550 wavelength is the workhorse. It lightens brown spots, boosts collagen to improve fine lines and, if there’s a little sag, it tightens,” explains Fusco. “The 1927 wavelength, a newer addition, takes off darker, more leathery pigment.” The doctor can swap between the wavelengths or use them in separate treatments. “It leaves the stratum corneum [the top layer of the skin] intact, injuring just 20 per cent of your skin and leaving 80 per cent unaffected. Then that 80 per cent kicks up collagen production to repair all of the tissue, leaving it baby smooth. It’s quite impressive,” says Wong. But it’s not pain-free. You’ll need topical numbing before each session and, for five to seven days afterward, your chest will look like you put on self-tanner without exfoliating.

While Fraxel can take care of some fine lines and crepiness, cleavage wrinkles require a different tack. “It’s the between-the-boobs lines that bother patients most. I have some that wear bras to bed every night trying to prevent them,” says Fusco. In larger cleavage, Manhattan dermatologist Paul Jarrod Frank injects Belotero, a clear hyaluronic acid filler akin to Restylane and Juvéderm but with a thinner consistency, which makes it better for finer, superficial lines. “One of the biggest advancements is that we’re now able to move these things we do on the face down to other areas of the body, like the chest,” says Frank. “For Belotero, you need topical anaesthesia; we do multiple tiny needle pricks and it does sting, but results can last a year and erase a decade.” Bonus: It can also work in the horizontal lines on the neck.

And what of lifting the décolleté and chest sans surgery? Doctors have long been trying to do so, mostly unsuccessfully, and Fusco recalls that some used Botox. “It caused the trapezius muscle to contract so that the patient stood straighter for a lifted look, but it weakened the opposing muscle, the pectoralis, and then patients had trouble in their yoga classes. Botox is just not OK in this area.” Ulthera, however, may offer a subtle improvement. “For sag due to slackening skin, it’s not going to significantly lift breast tissue when performed on the décolleté. But it does tighten it up, which also helps to smooth wrinkles,” says Frank. Up to three treatments can be necessary, and results are seen in the months post-treatment as collagen remodels.

If you’re hoping to keep your collagen right and tight in the first place, you may have a head start. “Today, everyone is educated about sunscreen. We have broad-spectrum options that are tinted or moisturizing, so there’s just no excuse not to use them on your chest too,” says Wong. The same goes for your skincare. What’s good for the face and neck—peptides, antioxidants, fatty acids, hyaluronic acid—is good for the chest, so smooth it on down. “The preemptive strike is where the benefit is,” says Lancer. “It’s like dental hygiene: You don’t want to wait ‘til you have cavities. So if you’re in your early 20s, start now with skincare and when you hit your 40s, you won’t need chest rehab.” □

## BUST A MOVE

Spread serums and moisturizers for your face down to your décolleté, or try one of these troubleshooting topicals.

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: RODIAL SUPER FIT BOOB JOB (\$82); ELIZABETH ARDEN PREVAGE ANTI-AGING NECK AND DECOLLETE FIRM & REPAIR CREAM (\$138); ALGENIST FIRMING & LIFTING NECK CREAM (\$122); LIERAC COHÉRENCE NECK LIFTING CREAM (\$95); YVES SAINT LAURENT FOREVER YOUTH LIBERATOR Y-SHAPE CONCENTRATE (\$75); RACINNE ULTIMATE YOUTH POWER NECK EMULSION (\$44); OLE HENRIKSEN ULTIMATE LIFT NECK CRÈME (\$54)

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