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CAN CELLULITE BE ERASED?

Cue the trumpets! The end to puckered skin may be here. By Alessandra Codinha

Blame the media, blame the mirror, but to have a woman's body in 2014 is to be made utterly aware of all the ways it can be manipulated into being a slightly better body—and bathing suits definitely don't help. The spotlight inevitably turns to cellulite, the unseemly structural change in the skin that, according to the American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery, affects nearly 90 percent of all women regardless of activity level or body type. The result is a dimpling—most commonly

on the hips, thighs, and buttocks—that's compared, at best, to orange peel and, at worst, to cottage cheese. The enemy is unsparing in its scope.

"I've done cellulite treatments on women who were marathon runners, triathletes, even one who had done the Ironman seven times, and they all still had cellulite," says dermatologist Bruce Katz, director of the Juva Skin & Laser Center in New York. "It's genetic, and it's universal." Cellulite occurs when clotted pockets of fat are fractured by vertical bands of connective tissue (called septae), creating a hills-and-valleys effect under the skin. As skin begins to loosen with age, those anxiety-attack-provoking nooks and crannies become more pronounced. In the past, even the most celebrated remedies produced only temporary results—if that.

Now seemingly every spa offers cellulite-targeting treatments, and in the fight against this insidious foe, one name keeps coming up: Anushka Blau. The tightly toned 69-year-old entrepreneur ("I have a better body now than when I was 25," she says) has been called a "cellulite exorcist extraordinaire," and has spent more than four decades searching for a cure, founding a namesake treatment center and buzzed-about cellulite clinic in New York before relocating to Palm Beach in 2001. "Cellulite has to do with genetics; it has to do with hormones," says Blau, noting that men are largely not susceptible to it. "We have the curves, but we have the curse too." Blau's spa offers a full-service life revamp over a five-week program (from \$895), replete with nutrition guidelines based on the 5:2 diet, an extensive supplement regimen (including vitamins B, C, and D, as well as valerian, L-carnitine, selenium, glucosamine, and a bevy of probiotics and CoQ10s), barre classes, thigh-contouring massage, and circulation-enhancing and detoxing body-sleeve wraps. Add to that eight sessions with the SmoothShapes XV system (from \$1,112), which combines vacuum and massage while emitting both light and laser energy. "Our approach is a whole-life, whole-body approach," she explains—and some hard work is required. "You can get a surgical treatment and, sure, one area might be cellulite-free, but to treat just one area is to put on a Band-Aid; it's not really a cure.

You want someone else

to take care of your body? Well, you need to take responsibility for it." Blau's clients rave about her methods. "I'm in the business of helping people take control and change their lives," she says.

In the midst of this age-old war of attrition, a small clutch of technologically advanced treatments has practitioners across the country claiming victory in sight, and a few are beginning to plant their flags. Katz prefers Cellulaze, a heavily lauded quick-recovery laser procedure that simultaneously "melts the fat, cuts the fibrous bands, stimulates collagen, and tightens the skin." One session can cost between \$4,000 and \$5,000, removes cellulite, and apparently impairs its ability to return without keeping you out of work for more than a day. Katz notes that patients can see the results in a matter of weeks. But does it work? "For the three years we've been using Cellulaze, we have not had a patient's cellulite reoccur," he says, and he has published studies along with the 3-D imaging to prove it. "This treats the problem at the root. It's really game-changing."

Cellulaze isn't the only game in town. Paul Jarrod Frank, a dermatologist and director of the 5th Avenue Dermatology Surgery and Laser Center in New York, favors Vasersmooth, which is similar to Cellulaze, only it uses ultrasound rather than laser technology. "Ultrasound is the new laser," he says, and the advantages are not insubstantial: Ultrasound technology is essentially "color-blind" to skin tone, and the wand is usually significantly larger, for treating a number of areas. "I make an incision about the size of a pencil eraser, nothing that will leave a scar," Frank explains, "and take the ultrasound wand. It's like ironing clothes, except I'm doing it from the inside, and it's breaking up the fibrous bands, melting lumpy fat pockets, and stimulating collagen growth. The procedure takes roughly an hour, and patients usually see results within a week or two." It's a bloodless procedure, he adds, with costs ranging from \$3,500 to \$7,000, depending on the amount of cellulite. "It's the first thing I've done in the last 15 years of fat removal and body contouring where I've seen something that really makes a long-term difference without maintenance."

For those with light cellulite (read: orange peel), Frank suggests a somewhat counterintuitive route—fillers. "Instead of a \$7,000 procedure, I'll use a hyaluronic acid filler like Radiesse in the dimples," he says. A syringe of Radiesse costs about \$900, and because of the overall lack of tension on the skin of the leg, dermal fillers will last longer than they might in other areas. "There are always a few stubborn puckers," he notes. "A lot of patients come in and say, 'I have these two spots here; can I do something?' and I'll drop a syringe of filler in there. And boom." Life changed—well, sort of. "There's never going to be one laser or injection that fixes everyone's cellulite," says Frank. "The advantage now is that we have several options. Nothing is a magic wand. But we are much better off than we were."

Magic wands or no, there's always the hope of a miracle in a bottle. Sisley's latest foray into the market is Cellulinov (\$242), which promises to flush out fat cells while reinforcing sagging skin, thanks to a

Continued on page 281

Thomas Waldo Story. Lynn has even done that very English thing of trying to breed the Ascott Rose, seeking the delicate peach color from one of the ancient Chinese vases in the estate's collection.

The couple's other residences—an airy town house in London that once served as the painter John Singer Sargent's studio, a duplex overlooking the East River in New York, and a new compound on Martha's Vineyard—feature a more contemporary aesthetic, with pale colors and sleek furniture set off by spotlight paintings and sculptures from an art collection that includes works by Agnes Martin, Ellsworth Kelly, Cy Twombly, Robert Rauschenberg, Luc Tuymans, Bill Viola, and Gerhard Richter. "I like casual elegance, a calm monochromatic ambiance that is cozy and comfortable," Lynn says.

She hopes that initiatives like "The Conference on Inclusive Capitalism" will help change the way that people think about the future—a daunting task, but a worthy one for a woman who relishes a challenge. "Frankly, we are the generation that fought against racism and sexism—let's not also be the generation that lost the American dream," she says. Lynn, of course, is still a die-hard Hillary Clinton supporter ("She's an amazing woman with a profound strategic vision for America that I very much believe in"), but, interestingly enough, she also remains friendly with John McCain, serving on the board of the McCain Institute for International Leadership.

Lynn now feels completely at home on both continents—a grand English lady and an American good old gal. Her older son, Ben, is a partner in his own investment firm, and her younger son, Jake, runs the film side at Russell Simmons's Def Pictures. "Being a mom was always my first priority," she says. "Maybe I was naive, but I also believed I could have a career." She continues, "The boys probably never knew how hard it was for me to be away from them. But I think kids thrive when they have a mother who adores them and respects them as individuals." And one tough enough to survive the three-hour full-squad workout that preceded her professional cheerleading debut. "I was so exhausted and achy," Lynn recalls. "I texted Evelyn and the boys and said, 'In the event that I die tonight, I love you all!'" ■

CAN CELLULITE BE ERASED?

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 272

unique blend of longan-seed extract, red algae, Indian lotus, caffeine, cedrol, and ginkgo biloba. The product claims to firm and tone skin as it reduces dimpling by 30 percent in four weeks by increasing blood circulation and limiting oxygenation of the fat cells. "Effectively, we're putting the fat cells on a diet while promoting circulation and getting rid of that toxin buildup that causes cellulite," says Sisley national trainer Shawn McLoughlin. "We're hitting the problem from all different angles. We're looking at the source, not just treating the symptom."

Secreted-away Amazonian seeds and trademarked peptide chains aside, smearing on over-the-counter creams containing stimulants like caffeine and cayenne pepper may help circulation, but doctors insist that these alone are unlikely to effect any real change. "There's not one single product that's going to make cellulite better," says New York dermatologist Cheryl Karcher. "There are some products that are going to make cellulite *look* better." Certain silica-including unguents have the nifty knack of lessening the appearance of cellulite "solely due to the way they reflect light off the skin." (Of course, that Vaseline-over-the-lens effect is nothing to be scoffed at. Witness the incredible sales and cult followings of Soap & Glory Sit Tight Intense XS [\$38], Nivea Skin Firming Cellulite Gel-Cream [\$13.49], and Clarins Body Lift Cellulite Control [\$69].)

Frank agrees. "Caffeine restricts the blood cells, so caffeine-rich products could offer some kind of temporary appearance of cellulite reduction. But cellulite is a deep issue, and it's a matter of penetration," he says. "The job of our skin is to keep things out, so it's unlikely that you're going to have an over-the-counter product with a medicine that's active enough to affect cellulite."

Clearly, though, advances are being made every day, from every possible angle. "I've seen thousands of women change their lives," says Blau. "We're all in this fight together." ■

THE FUTURE OF BEAUTY

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 254

research, department of dermatology, at Columbia University Medical Center in New York. Finding effective treatments has proved extremely difficult, however. "Most trials center on male-pattern baldness, which is very different. Women lose hair all over, while men tend to lose the hair on the top of their head and keep a fringe between their ears." Current transplant methods involve removing thousands of hairs from that denser area in the back and relocating them on the top of the head. Women are rarely candidates for transplants because they don't have enough hair in any one area to spare. "And Rogaine may help retain some hair, but it won't grow new hair," adds Christiano.

Now women with thinning hair have a significant reason to be optimistic. Christiano and her team have developed a groundbreaking technique that clones human hair. "The holy grail of hair restoration is being able to start with a small number of cells and have them multiply," she says. "Our method is game-changing because we need only a few hundred donor hairs, the size of a dime or a nickel, instead of thousands. Even women with severe thinning can afford that."

After removing hairs from volunteers, researchers separated out the dermal papillae (the connective tissue at the base of the hair follicle), put them in a petri dish, then fed them tissue culture and nutrients. Within a few weeks, they started to multiply. The cultured papillae were then injected into human skin that had been grafted onto mice, where the hair began to grow on its own. Tests showed that the hair matched the DNA of the human donors.

Christiano is hoping to move on to clinical trials within two to three years and thinks the procedure will be FDA-approved in five to 10 years. Dermatologist Paradi Mirmirani, an expert in hair loss with the Permanente Medical Group in Vallejo, California, is excited about the prospect. "Transplants in women can be difficult to do if there isn't enough donor hair. This would finally solve the problem of supply." And as far as beauty miracles go, it will certainly be worth waiting for. ■