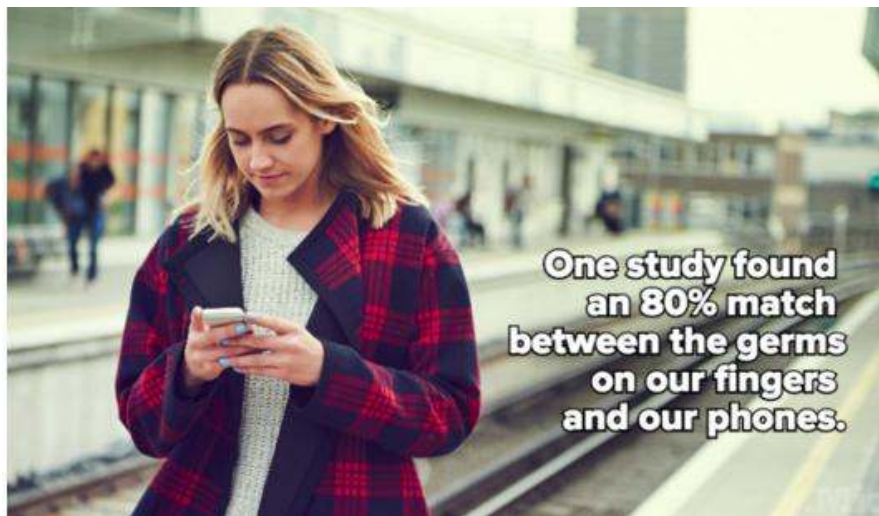


## Awesome News — Your Phone Addiction Is Bad for Your Skin and Face



You know the state of phone addiction is bad when a designer **creates** an innovative phone that proudly promises to cure you of your Instagram addiction... by basically just being a fancier version of your Nokia "**dumb phone**" circa 1999.

That phone addiction can have consequences. The beauty industry has responded to our tech addiction with alarming warnings about what phones are doing to our skin, promising creams, treatments and even surgery to undo everything from "**phone acne**" to "**text neck**."

Are some of the fears justified? Actually, yeah. But experts consulted by *Mic* say you don't need pricey creams or plastic surgery to save your skin from the perils of texting, though you might need to take a long hard look at your tech habits — and maybe even, y'know, get a life.

**Taking care of your "Y-zone":** While we might be used to worrying about our T-zones — forehead, nose and chin — the cosmetics industry has switched focus to the "Y-zone" around our jowls and neck, which are apparently drooping and wrinkling in younger women who check their devices up to **150 times a day**.

While women have long been told to fear the appearance of **crow's feet** and **turkey neck**, these issues, normally associated with older women, are now presented as an issue for the young and tech-obsessed.

"Here's the sad news about the neck for those in their 20s: While you have the wisdom of caring for your skin better than your mother did... you are creating what is known as 'tech neck,'" esthetician **Renée Rouleau** told *Mic*.

"Constantly squinting to look at your phone screen or looking down and scrunching your neck can result in wrinkles and fine lines on the neck and around the eyes."

YSL last year claimed to have launched the **first beauty cream** for text neck, promising **"an ideal Y-shape."** London department store Selfridges is also offering treatment for **"phone face"** — sagging jowls, jaw tension and double chin. And **plastic surgeons** are promoting face-lifts and fat injections to reverse signs of phone and tablet use.

Plastic surgery procedures reached a record high in the U.K. in 2015, with the number of neck lifts among women **up by 16%**, mirroring **increased interest** in the procedure in the United States. Botox injections, used to fill in crow's feet, also **continue to grow in popularity**.

The dirty truth crawling on our phones: As *PopSugar* warned, is it true that "your cellphone is completely ruining your skin"?

"There is no doubt that cell phones can carry bacteria, and when held close to the face, might cause acne," Charles Bollmann, a retired physician specializing in anti-aging with his own *skincare range*, told *Mic*. "The cellphone/acne solution: Clean your cellphone, or use the speaker."

Our phones are actually *dirtier* than the bottom of our shoes or a toilet seat. One *study* found an 80% match between the germs on our fingers and our phones, meaning everything we touch ends up on our screens... and then on our faces when we make a call.

Pressing your phone against your face also traps oil in your pores, leading to possible breakouts, according to dermatologist *Neil Sadick*, while those with eczema or nickel allergies are more prone to contact dermatitis.

"The best step is prevention — so keeping up on cleaning your cellphone is a definite must," California-based esthetician *Alana Mitchell* told *Mic*.

We've all felt that sticky sensation after a long call, but "*phacne*" can be prevented by a daily wipe-down of the screen using sanitizer wipes or essential oils, according to Mitchell.

**Getting a life:** Some of the fears, of course, are overblown. "Our society lives on fear, and the TV and news does everything possible to promulgate this. It brings ratings. So as for cellphones causing skin problems, this is vastly overrated," Bollmann told *Mic*.

But it is worth re-examining your behavior, since the solutions pretty much boil down to common sense and a well-stocked kitchen cupboard. To prevent "text neck," the simplest step is just to lift your cellphone to eye level, preventing you from slumping over the screen. As for remedies, consider going DIY.

"Essential oils, ice, hot water and washcloths are some good quick picks, but depending on your skin problem you might want to use different items," Mitchell said.

New York City-based cosmetic dermatologist **Paul Jarrod Frank** told *Mic* he recommended a regular skincare routine including moisturizer with SPF protection, adding, "Always stay hydrated and get your rest. Don't be on your devices too late at night."

Taking time out from all those notifications will likely do your mind some good too. "I frequently get asked to answer questions about computer problems, such as eye strain and sitting at computers 20 hours a day. Anyone who does these things has more to worry about than their skin," Bollmann said.

"The best thing is common sense," he added. "That should tell you not to live on your cellphone and get a life."

Harsh — but hard to argue with.