

Show of hands for latest surgical 'lift'

By KAREN ROBINOVITZ

In an era where botox, liposuction and acid peels are as *de rigueur* as highlights, it can be all but impossible to guess a woman's true age.

The hands have always been the giveaway — until now.

Hand "lifts" are the hot trend in cosmetic surgery, as women flock to plastic surgeons to combat brown spots, spider veins and loss of elasticity.

"Whether they pulled their eyes or bought a perfect nose, women constantly ask me what they can do about their hands," said Dr. Steven Pearlman, director of facial plastic surgery at St. Luke's-Roosevelt Hospital.

Ann, who won't reveal her last name, is a 5-foot-7 stunner with glowing skin (thanks to botox

and microdermabrasion) and a toned body (thanks to liposuction). At 56, she can pass for 35 — and now her hands will no longer divulge her secret.

"Taking care of your hands is as important as taking care of your face," said Ann, who spent \$4,100 to banish brown spots from her "veiny" looking hands by way of lasers, microdermabrasion and fat injections.

"I think my hands now look in tune with the way I look and dress," she said. "You can hardly tell them apart from my 30-year-old daughter's."

Telltale changes in the hands begin in your 30s, says Dr. Paul Frank, a cosmetic dermatologist on the Upper East Side.

Hands start to lose shine and coloring, then fat — probably the only place on your body you

don't want to lose it.

"Fat transfers and peels are no different from getting a manicure," said Frank. "There's no downtime. And it just takes one to three treatments to take 20 years off your hands."

Frank, who does about five hand lifts a week, says that the skin-smoothing effects can last up to 10 years. The procedure — which costs \$3,000 — involves injecting purified fat into the top of the hand.

"Women as young as 35 are already doing it in the name of prevention," said Frank.

Other doctors — like Dr. Steven Wallach, a plastic surgeon on the Upper East Side — don't believe the hand hype.

"Any kind of peel, laser or injection increases the risk of delayed healing," he said, "and

hands just don't heal as quickly as facial skin. If hands scar enough, you risk damaging the tendons that allow the fingers to extend."

That didn't scare off Iris Baron, a school teacher who's "older than 40" and never had any work done to her face or body.

But ashamed of the "bulging veins" on her hands, she paid a visit to Dr. Bruce Katz, director of JUVA Skin and Laser Center.

Katz injected fat from Baron's buttocks into her hands, then molded it to hide tendons and plump up the skin.

Baron says she's "thrilled" with the results.

"I no longer feel like I need to hide my hands," she said. "It doesn't matter how pretty your rings or nails are if your hands don't match."



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