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Why Vanity is Good For Your Health

These vanity hacks could lead to a more beautiful you inside and out

Written by Lynn Schnurnberger

With recent evidence that certain cosmetic procedures can produce unintended health benefits, the old adage “When you look good, you feel good” has never been truer. Here, two of New York’s top dermatologists, Dr. Paul Jarrod Frank and Dr. Robert Anolik, break down the healthy bonuses of beauty procedures that you thought were only skin deep.

Lasers

When Dr. Robert Anolik began to suspect that lasers could not only resurface patient’s skin but also help rid it of precancerous cells, he decided to do some investigating. He determined that by using a mid-level pulse laser (more intense than Clear + Brilliant but less invasive than Fraxel) he could reduce precancerous lesions (those ugly brown spots), and co-authored a study outlining his findings. “I encourage everyone to do it once a year,” he says. And while laser resurfacing isn’t a treatment for full-blown skin cancer, it may just nip it in the bud, affording you more time with that beautiful skin.

Body contouring

Body contouring may seem like a shortcut, but according to Dr. Paul Jarrod Frank, it can also act as a motivator to keep the weight off. “Cosmetic intervention gets rid of unwanted muffin tops, and then, because they’re looking and feeling better, I find that patients start asking me about workouts, vitamins, and whether they should go off sugar,” he says. “Body contouring helps give them the extra push they need to keep the weight off and start living a healthier lifestyle.”

Botox

Besides being a wrinkle-eliminating miracle substance, Botox also acts as a cure for all manner of head cases. Its use as a treatment for chronic migraines has been well documented, and as Dr. Anolik found by injecting it below the ear and along the jawline, it can also keep patients from grinding their teeth. Goodbye TMJ! It could even treat depression, as European researchers have suggested, by freezing the muscles between the eyebrows that send feedback to the brain to be scared, angry or sad. So instead of paying a shrink, you could just hightail it to the dermatologist.

Fillers

Due to age or botched plastic surgery, patients can develop ectropion – a condition in which the (typically lower) eyelid turns outward, leaving it prone to irritation and usually requiring corrective surgery. But Dr. Anolik has found less invasive remedies. “When we were injecting Juvederm or Restalyne into the cheeks to restore volume to a patient’s face we noticed that the ‘lifted’ cheek lessened the pull down on the eye,” says Dr. Anolik. “The eye could close more easily and, where it couldn’t before, it naturally produced tears.”

Hair growth treatment

Studies have shown that finasteride, the active ingredient in the hair loss treatment Propecia, also helps shrink the prostate gland, making it easier for doctors to accurately identify cancers. However, contradictory studies have shown that the drug could lead to an increase in high-grade tumors. While controversy swirls around the drug’s pros and cons, one thing is clear. “It’s definitely given me a healthy head of hair,” Dr. Frank says with a laugh.