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Neha Mehra, 45, looks relaxed even though Dr Navin Taneja is hovering over her with a 32-gauge needle and is about to inject a 4mm anti-cellulite mixture of silicon, herbal extract artichoke and vitamins into her upper thighs. Twenty minutes after the painless procedure, she's out of the medspa with a spring in her step. It was her fourth anti-cellulite session and the results have already started showing. Soon she hopes to flash legs that will be the envy of leggy teenagers.

Asian Roots medspa that Mehra visits is a hive of activity. It has been in the 'rejuvenation' business for over a year, and its five treatment rooms are always booked. A stitch here, a tuck there and happy faces all around. Kamayani Kanwar, founder of Asian Roots spa that specialises in cutting-edge age-defying treatments says, "Age management is a major pre-occupation today." And clients simply pour in. The ageing and the not-so-old turn up at these spas and clinics that promise to turn the clock back.

The result is a huge growth in beauty salons, skin clinics and spas. And these outfits are offering state-of-the-art — and rather expensive — treatments that are being updated all the time. "In the human sub-conscious there has always been a sense of mortality related to age. This makes people fear ageing," says Dr Nimesh Desai, consultant psychiatrist at the Institute of Human Behaviour and Allied Sciences (IHBAS).

Kanwar adds, "The feel good factor is dependent on not just looking good, but also feeling youthful and refreshed." Significantly even men, who once shied away from beauty salons, are more than willing

Turning the clock back

Botox and fillers are old news. A cache of cutting-edge beauty cures is winning the ageing game for thousands across the country, says **Chitra Papnai**



Graphic: Swarnap Dasgupta



Dr Navin Taneja (above) injects a patient with perlane, a dermal filler, to correct the nasolabial fold; (left) Dr Chiranjiv Chhabra gives a client skin circulation therapy to treat dark circles at her Skin & Wellness Centre

to try the newest age-control formulae available today.

So if the hint of crow's feet is giving you sleepless nights, remember that all is not lost. There's plenty of help at hand thanks to the mushrooming beauty clinics boasting of you-name-it-and-we-have-it treatments. What's more you can try them without going under the knife.

But when do the danger lights start flashing? According to *The Telegraph* beauty

columnist, Suparna Trikha, "The mid-30s is the right time to start taking care of your skin and body because it begins to be lashed by hormonal changes at this stage."

Though ageing is inevitable, she puts quick ageing down to intrinsic (hormonal changes) and extrinsic factors (decrease in skin elasticity due to prolonged exposure to the sun and pollutants). Trikha says that as one ages, the body starts losing

Today, new-age procedures like Mesotherapy and Oxygen Therapy are winning major brownie points

its sebum oil and wrinkles begin to rear their ugly heads. The first signs of ageing can be spotted when wrinkles begin to line the forehead, frown lines and crow's feet appear around the eyes.

But if you think that age management is only for the

of 15 while the oldest is 63.

The treatments that the mushrooming salons are doling out range from advanced non-invasive to hi-tech invasive techniques. "Today most of the clients are choosing the non-surgical methods over surgical ones," explains consultant dermatologist Dr Navin Taneja. He allays fears by saying that the procedures are also safe.

In fact, there are so many treatments around that Botox

is almost yesterday's news. So too are filler injections, laser treatment, non-surgical facelifts, chemical peels and micro-dermabrasion. Though still around, these are being given a run for their quick-fixes by advanced procedures such as Mesotherapy, Oxygen Therapy and Intense Pulsed Light (IPL).

What is Mesotherapy? It's reckoned to be an effective way of making the skin look younger and free from acne

scars. It's a one-in-all treatment that not only beats the wrinkles and reduces odious stretch marks but cuts out embarrassing cellulite deposits on the arms, thighs, chin and tummy. Here's how it works: a number of injections containing Vitamin A and C, hyaluronate and polyvitamins are given directly into the dermis. While the result can be seen after the very first

injection, the effect of the treatment lasts up to two-and-a-half years. A Mesotherapy body shaping will set you back by about Rs 5,000 per session while double chin reduction costs Rs 3,000 a sitting.

Every salon worth its magic potions is also rushing to acquire sophisticated machines like the Skin Analyser and Beautytek. This German gadgetry is available in Delhi's Clinic Dermatech and it has men and women trooping in by the dozen. The Skin Analyser points out the problem areas using a dermascope. The reading is then transmitted to the software that reports the oil level, moisture level, skin curvature and keratin (a fibrous protein that makes up skin, hair and nails) level. "Based on the result, treatments best suited to the skin type are suggested," says Dr Meenakshi Harnal of Clinic Dermatech.

And if stars like Madonna, JLo and Jennifer Aniston swear by Oxygen Therapy for that flawless complexion, then it may be time to try it out.

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This therapy not only tightens the skin, but also removes pigmentation and scars," says Chhabra. That will be Rs 1,000 per sitting.

And women certainly don't have to go under the knife for sagging breasts, a wobbly tummy and loose skin. Hi-tech systems like Beautytek are multi-functional and offer non-surgical solutions for a variety of girlie woes. Per sitting, it's between Rs 1,000 and Rs 5,000 for a facelift, Rs 6,500 for a tummy tuck and Rs 5,000 for cellulite reduction on the arms and another Rs 8,000 for the thighs. Of course, you'll need at least five to six sittings. Cellulite reduction all over the body costs Rs 1 lakh.

Another new treatment on the block is Intense Pulsed Light (IPL) that also wards off sun damage, deletes fine lines, wrinkles and stamps out pigmentation. A special gel is thinly applied to the affected area and pulses of light are flashed over it. IPL skin rejuvenation for the face costs Rs 5,000 while full skin resurfacing costs Rs 20,000.

You can make your skin blemish free with older treatments like micro-dermabrasion or full-body laser treatment. These last for 40 minutes to an hour, while the anti-ageing facelift laser (non-surgical) takes only 10 minutes to tighten and tone.

But sometimes non-surgical treatments are simply not enough. Dr Taneja

says that in some circumstances surgical or invasive methods are suggested. These have been around for a while and some continue to be very popular. Take your pick: laser therapy, rhinoplasty, blepharoplasty (to reduce eye bags and sagging eyelids), abdominal plasty or dermabrasion. "Tummy tucks, breast implants and nose and face jobs are the top of the popularity charts," he says.

However, the latest procedure around is the thread lift. In this case, tiny threads are placed under the skin and pulled. This is also being used to correct features. "If one of your eyebrows looks droopy

as compared to the other, a thread lift can stretch the eyebrow to the level of the other one," says Harnal. A thread lift starts at Rs 5,600.

But then those sceptical of these invasive or non-invasive cures can always

turn to nature. Trikha who keeps the flag flying for *haldi* and *uptan* believes that the trick is to start cheating on age very early in life. Step 1: Know your skin type. Step 2: Always keep your skin well moisturised. Step 3: Once you hit 35, go for skin tightening packs like China clay, Fuller's earth and egg white. Step 4: Mind your diet. Step 5: Guard against harsh UV rays.

Being polished and sculpted to perfection comes easy today. It's quick and painless. And at the end of the day, you may just have controlled the ravages of time.

(Neha Mehra is a pseudonym)
Photographs by Jagan Negi and Rupinder Sharma



A technician uses a Skin Analyser and dermatoscope to study skin type at Clinic Dermatech