

Would you go under the knife?

Everyone would love to keep their youthful looks and that's never been more evident than now with more and more people opting for cosmetic surgery. Here Emma Hawes takes a look at the latest trends in cosmetic surgery for those wanting to turn back time...

THERE'S not a woman over 30 who hasn't peered in the bathroom mirror and pulled gently at the skin round her eyes or on her cheeks imagining what she'd look like with 'just a little work'.

As time advances, and our bodies begin to show signs of wrinkling and sagging, we all wish we could turn back the clock, or at the very least, stop it moving on any more.

But stories of bad surgery usually persuade us that vanity is not worth giving into. We all cringed when we saw pictures of Leslie Ash's now infamous 'trout pout', and have gasped at photos of the woman now dubbed 'Bride of Wildenstein' who's had so much surgery she looks more alien than human.

Instead we admire celebrities like Liz Hurley, Elle MacPherson and Jerry Hall, who all seem to have escaped getting old, and instead simply look healthy and youthful.

'What's their secret?' we wonder as we rush to buy the latest wonder cream or potion. Well, according to an Oxford-based surgeon, such people may well have had a little help, because the latest trend in cosmetic procedures is all about looking natural.

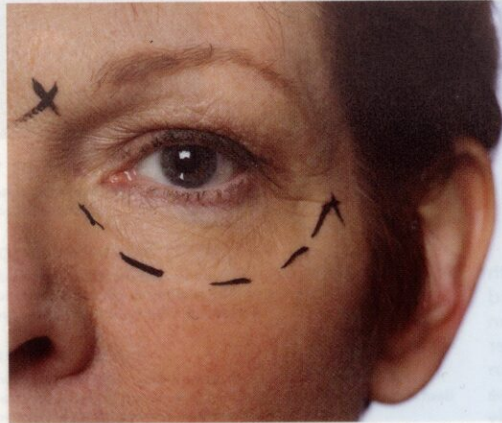
"The key now is maintaining looks," says cosmetic surgeon Adrian Richards. "People used to try and look like they did when they were 18, but that's not natural, and no-one was fooled. Instead you need to start having procedures sooner, rather than leaving it until you're in your 50s and lifting the whole lot in one dramatic operation."

But it doesn't mean you need to go under the knife as soon as the big 3-0 looms. Instead, it's about using all the tricks of the trade to put off the need for a scalpel.

"Botox is one of the best tools for fighting aging," says Mr Richards. "Basically, if you have wrinkles that you can make 'disappear' by pulling the skin around them taut, you can get rid of them using Botox."

Botox injections paralyse the muscles, making it impossible to move them. This not only allows you to relearn how you move your face – most of our lines are caused by frowning or grimacing – but also over time, your skin will be totally renewed and the lines will disappear.

Even better, regular use of Botox means you don't have to have it as often, so maintenance costs reduce as time goes on, although you will need to invest around £900 in the first year.



There are a variety of treatments on offer in clinics around Oxfordshire to help you achieve a more youthful appearance.

“The latest trend is to simply enhance your looks, and turn the clock back at the most 10 years”

Oxford cosmetic surgeon Adrian Richards

If you've got more deep-set wrinkles that you can't make 'disappear' by pulling at them, then non-surgical procedures won't help – it could be time to go under the knife. But there's no need to resign yourself to that 'surprised' look.

"I did corrective surgery for one woman who'd had a facelift," says Mr Richards.

"Before I helped her, she went to the church where she'd worshipped for 20 years, and the vicar asked her if she was new to the parish because she looked so different. That's not the result you should be looking for."

What we should be aiming for is to look about eight years younger. This is achieved with a mini facelift that gently lifts the facial skin and leaves small scars in the hairline and in front of the ears. This drive for a natural look is transforming the plastic surgery

procedures of old.

A 'nose job', or rhinoplasty as it is more properly known, used to involve working from inside the nose and that limited what could be done in terms of sculpting.

But now, surgeons cut across the bridge and peel the skin back, so they work on the whole underlying structure and create the perfect nose for your face. This means the result is far more natural and fits better with your face shape. It's not just women who want to enhance their looks. According to Mr Richards, an increasingly popular procedure for men is the removal of man-boobs – extra fat on the pectoral area that looks like small breasts.

If surgery and even Botox feel a bit radical, then the latest skin treatment to arrive in the UK from America is the Collagenics LA Peel – and it's available at two Oxford clinics. It uses a revolutionary new combination of Retinol, Lactic and Salicylic acids to remove the top layer of the dermis, renew collagen and elastin, and leave you with a more youthful complexion.

Banbury surgeon Oliver Cassell agrees that the new trend is to restore the body to its former glory rather than try and create a Barbie-esque look.

A specialist in breast and body contouring in his private practice at the Foscote Hospital in Banbury, as well as an NHS consultant in Oxford and Banbury, he feels that surgery should be about achieving a natural look.

"I'm not trying to change a person's age, but put people back where they were before they had children, or lost a lot of weight," he says.

"It's about putting them back within the normal range for their age group, so they look better, but not unusually so."

And as the recent scam to buy Boots' No 7 Protect and Perfect Beauty Serum shows, that's something we'd all like to have, however we manage to get it.

Mr Adrian Richards offers free consultations and operates at a number of clinics in the Oxfordshire area. Call tel: 01844 214 362.

The LA Peel is available from Dr Miles Carter at The Spa at The Randolph Hotel in Oxford tel: 01865 256 485, and Sharon Savage at the Pampered Lady Salon in Beckley, Oxford tel: 01865 351 135. Oliver Cassell, at the Foscote Hospital in Banbury, can be contacted on tel: 01865 331939.