Don’t Let Gravity Get You Down
Is Sagging Skin Really Part of Our Destiny?

As the years become decades, most people, at some point, look in the mirror and think “I’m just too young to look this old.” Unfortunately it’s not just the legendary apple falling out of the tree that follows Sir Isaac Newton’s laws of gravity. Legend, law, and common sense assure us that “all things eventually tend to fall downward”. If the skin on your face, eyes, and neck is beginning to spot, wrinkle, and sag, non-surgical treatments such as Botox®, Restylane®, Fraxel™ and Lumenis Ultrapulse Total FX can easily rejuvenate your skin and put it back where it belongs.

The first face-lift was performed in Berlin in 1901. For nearly a century, procedures became more and more aggressive as surgeons became adept at satisfying our need to lift and tighten our aging faces and bodies. These aggressive procedures were often wrought with complications such as infection, scarring, asymmetry, and prolonged downtime.

The pendulum began to swing away from the scalpel in the 1980s when a little-known drug called Botox®, serendipitously melted away wrinkles as a side effect of treating eye muscle twitching (blepharospasm). In 2002 when Botox® was FDA approved for cosmetic use, this wrinkle reducing phenomenon rapidly became the number one non-surgical cosmetic procedure performed in the United States. Injected properly, Botox® creates a natural looking non-surgical brow lift while eliminating crow’s feet, frown lines, forehead lines, and smoker’s lines.

Two years later, Restylane® became an overnight sensation when it was FDA approved in 2004. Hyaluronic acid fillers like Restylane®, Perlane, and Juvederm® XC replace lost volume making the face look younger, youthful, and plumper. Fillers are now being used to replace larger volumes in the face aka “liquid facelifts”. Adding volume back to the nasolabial folds, sunken eyes, cheeks, lips and eyebrows precisely fills in wrinkles and has a lifting effect on the face, eyes, and sagging jowls.

There are three main components that must be addressed to correct aging skin:
1. Epidermal surface imperfections (sun spots, pre-cancers, skin texture): Photorejuvenation (IPL), Fraxel™ skin Resurfacing, Photodynamic Therapy, Retin-A, Chemical peels
2. Loss of collagen & elasticity in the dermis: Restylane®, Juvederm® XC, Fraxel™ Repair, Thermage, Velashape
3. Loss of fat and volume in the dermis and sub dermis: Dermal fillers

Fraxel™ laser technology, first FDA approved in 2004, quickly became Avant guard as it gave patients and dermasurgeons hope for the elusive “non-surgical face lift”. Fractional CO2 technology sends precise microscopic columns of laser energy into the skin on the face, removing old excess tissue and replacing it with healthy new cells. These tiny dermal injuries stimulate your skin’s natural healing process, causing immediate tightening while stimulating the production of abundant new collagen, which renews your skin’s youthful firmness and elasticity. As the treated skin heals it contracts and tightens, naturally smoothing and lifting the lids, cheeks, jowls, and face. In addition to achieving a 2-4mm face and lid lift, all patients notice dramatic wrinkle reduction on the face and neck, particularly around the eyes and mouth. Results generally last as long as surgical correction, which is up to 6 or 7 years. Unlike surgical correction, which can leave scarring, misshapen eyes, and significant downtime, tissue removal with Fraxel™ is predictable, always symmetrical, and yields minimal down time. The so-called laser eyelift can deliver beautiful, natural-looking results without the “deer in the headlights” look that is sometimes seen after plastic surgery.

In addition to Laser treatments, pulsed radiofrequency energy used in Thermage has been shown to non-invasively tighten skin around the eyes, jawline, chin and body with minimal discomfort. Although the results are not as dramatic as a facelift, over 90% of patients obtain noticeable tightening of the treated areas and it never looks “pulled.” Individually, these non-surgical miracles are fantastic; combined, they are extraordinary. The secret to creating extraordinary results lies in knowing how to best combine them. When we wed together Fraxel™ Laser resurfacing, Botox®, and fillers, there is almost nothing we can’t do for the aging face and neck. We can easily stall and even reverse the aging process by stimulating collagen, reducing wrinkles and sagging skin, and erasing skin imperfections like sun & age spots, pre-cancerous and early cancerous skin lesions. This recent revolution in facial cosmetic procedures has injectable wrinkle erasers and tissue-altering laser procedures replacing or delaying surgical face-lifts. It wouldn’t be surprising if these increasingly effective and natural looking procedures with little recovery time and minimal risk of infection and scarring eventually have surgeons relocating their scalpels from the operating room to museum shelves.

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