

SPECIAL ISSUE

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Silent Signal...or Just a Twitch?



A-list facials go beyond steam—and below the neck: One doctor performs a “facial” of full-body microdermabrasion, laser, and a peel.

Celebrity SKIN

“I need it now!” For celebrities, that command goes for pressed juice, Céline bags—and skin care.

The fastest, craziest ways Hollywood skin pros eradicate zits, cellulite, and lines. By Jolene Edgar

PHOTOGRAPHED BY PAMELA HANSON

VIP access doesn't just apply to front-row seats and flashy nightclubs. A boldface name can open other kinds of doors as well—like the ones to top dermatologists' offices. "Celebrities are often first to benefit from skin-care advances, since they're typically the most eager to try—and willing to pay for—new procedures, especially if they have a big role coming up," says Jessica Wu, an assistant clinical professor of dermatology at Keck School of Medicine of the University of Southern California.

The unique access doesn't stop there. Doctors willingly accommodate celebrities' every project, even on short notice. When an actress in her 40s got called at the last minute for a role that would land her in Bora-Bora—in a bikini—in two weeks, "we had to get rid of her cellulite fast," says Ava Shamban, an assistant clinical professor of dermatology at UCLA. Shamban used her SmoothShapes device, which combines laser, vacuum, and massage, three times a week rather than the standard once. "We could see a real improvement," says Shamban. The star "even called me from the set raving about how much better she looked in her swimsuit." And when a celebrity is happy, word travels faster than a private jet—to her agent, her publicist, her guru, and, of course, her equally notable friends. For those who aren't members of an entourage, consider us your inside source.



“Skin tightening is huge in Hollywood. Instantly, the skin looks incredibly taut.”

Zit Killer

On its own, the acclaimed cortisone shot can shrink colossal zits within 48 hours, but when stars demand faster results, Wu follows the injection with Intense Pulsed Light, saying that with this combo, “swelling and redness are greatly reduced, if not gone altogether, in 24 hours.” Patricia Wexler, an associate clinical professor of dermatology at Mount Sinai School of Medicine in New York City, has an even speedier fix. When a young starlet came to her four hours before a call time with a whopping cyst, Wexler topped the injection site with a concentrated dose of dehydrating trichloroacetic acid, or TCA, and “the lump immediately flattened out,” she says, so the patient didn’t have to wait hours for the cortisone to kick in. (TCA does cause slight scabbing for two to three days, Wexler notes.)

IV Treatments

When stars need to shine at a party (or recover from one), they visit Leaf MD Skincare in Beverly Hills for a Vita-Infusion Facial. While an aesthetician tends to the skin, a registered nurse or a doctor starts an IV filled with vitamin C, B vitamins, calcium gluconate, and magnesium chloride—a modified version of a vitamin mixture that has been studied

for its effect on chronic fatigue syndrome and fibromyalgia. “Most patients feel an immediate improvement in energy that’s well beyond what one would expect as a placebo effect,” says Norman Leaf, who owns the practice and is an associate clinical professor of plastic surgery at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA. Beyond that, calcium and magnesium “produce a nice glow, probably related to vasodilation,” he adds.

Los Angeles and Jackson Hole, Wyoming, aesthetician Melanie Simon, whose fans reportedly include Oprah Winfrey and Vanessa Williams, says she’s seen “skin glow for 24 hours” when amino acids are added to a basic vitamin drip. She does not do the drip herself, but refers clients to Michael Galitzer, a Los Angeles-based doctor specializing in anti-aging medicine. He explains, “The aminos act as a vasodilator, increasing blood flow to the skin.” Leaf warns that any IV treatments should only be given in reputable medical facilities, where “the risk of intravenous infection is impossibly low in the hands of skilled practitioners, and the dosage is safe.”

Faster Lasers

Before big events, actresses and pop stars call on dermatologist Fredric Brandt, who practices in New York City ▼

and Miami, for his combination laser treatment. He wields two lasers, each with a different wavelength: One removes redness and brown spots, and the other stimulates collagen production to reduce fine lines and large pores and give skin an immediate glow. “Some stars stop in the morning of an event as part of their red-carpet prep,” he says. (Makeup can easily veil the resulting redness when they leave his office.)

Head-to-Toe Facials

Adriana Lima, Candice Swanepoel, Erin Heatherton, Miranda Kerr—before these Angels strap on their wings for the Victoria’s Secret fashion show, they visit New York City dermatologist David Colbert for Triad body facials. The experience starts with microdermabrasion followed by a “gentle laser treatment, which encourages fibroblasts to make new collagen,” says Colbert. A peel comes next—20 percent glycolic acid spiked with calming lavender essence. Skin is then doused with a serum that helps build collagen, illuminated with low-energy light that slows its breakdown, and topped with a rich cream laced with tremella-mushroom extract, a humectant that can hold 500 times its weight in water, explains cosmetic chemist Ni’Kita Wilson. “Skin looks dewy and radiant right away, and the buildup of collagen is long-lasting,” says Colbert. Stars can head straight to hair and makeup.

Instant Tightening

Even in Tinseltown, scalpels are becoming yesterday’s news. “Surgery isn’t all it’s cracked up to be,” says Shamban, who performs Power Facials when stars need a lift: an exfoliating retinoid peel, Intense Pulsed Light (which targets brown spots and broken capillaries), microdermabrasion with an infusion of the antioxidants vitamin C and niacinamide, and, finally, radio frequency to firm the face and neck. “Skin tightening is huge in Hollywood,” she says. “I’ve done several actresses’ eyelids and brows right before red-carpet events because instantly, the skin looks incredibly taut, and there’s no downtime.” Shamban uses the Pellevé radio-frequency device, which doesn’t require anesthesia (she likens the sensation to a hot-stone massage). Results are most visible in the 48 hours after treatment. For an effect that lasts about a year, four to five monthly treatments are needed.

Hot-Spot Fillers

If this next item had a snarky hashtag, it would be #celebrityproblems. When hefty earrings drag down stars’ earlobes, their doctors reinflate them with an injection of a hyaluronic acid-based filler, like Restylane or Juvéderm. Aging hands are another big concern. “Lately I’ve been working double-time on celebrities’ hands, making them look as youthful as their faces,” says Debra Jaliman, an assistant professor of dermatology at



Mount Sinai Medical Center in New York City. The synthetic calcium-based filler Radiesse offers a dramatic fix for up to a year. Jaliman slowly injects the mixture into the top layer of the skin near visible veins, stopping frequently so her assistant can gently massage the area to create “a completely smooth surface,” she says. If the hands have brown spots, Jaliman zaps them with an Intense Pulsed Light device called the LimeLight. Splotches darken and flake off a week later, leaving no evidence of sun damage.

Ultrasonic Plumping

A thirtysomething blonde who was scheduled to present at the Golden Globe Awards came to Karyn Grossman, chief of dermatology at Saint John's Health Center in Santa Monica, the morning of the show with some crepiness around her eyes. Grossman applied a mix of hyaluronic acid and collagen protein—and drove it in with ultrasound waves to deeply hydrate the skin, smooth away fine lines, and give a dewy glow. Results are instant but fleeting—lasting only a day or two—and most remarkable around the eyes, where skin is thinnest. If stars can't get in to see Grossman, she tells them to pick up a Clarisonic Opal Sonic Infusion System, which uses a similar technology and serum.

Electric Facials

There's a reason stars on the red carpet glow like someone has plugged them

in. Indeed, someone has: Simon. The self-dubbed “electrical aesthetician” uses different types of current to boost radiance, enhance lymphatic drainage, kill acne bacteria, wipe out dark circles, and even spark cellular repair. While microcurrent has been popular with aestheticians for years—and has been shown to speed healing and collagen growth, as well as to have antibacterial effects—the even lower-frequency nanocurrent, Simon's specialty, is now gaining momentum. “My goal is to replicate the signal that the brain produces in deep delta sleep—a frequency that initiates repair,” she explains. Following a nanocurrent facial, Simon says, energy slowly builds in the skin, peaking three days later. “So I'll treat stars two days before the Academy Awards, and then, if time allows, give them a little pop the day of,” she says. At this point, there's little clinical data on nanocurrent's effect on healthy human skin. Dermatologist Jeannette Graf says, “Delta waves are restorative inside the brain, but there's no evidence that using nanocurrent on the skin would replicate them. That said, anytime you use electrical stimulation during a facial, you prompt an exchange of ions and rev up the metabolism, increasing the energy of the cells. And the more you do it, the longer-lasting the results.” In her own experience, Simon has seen a cumulative effect with nanocurrent and says it doesn't inflame skin the way microcurrent can.



Botox Lite

Stars do crazy things to grab attention, but one thing they don't want anyone to see is their frozen forehead. "I've had patients tell me that it's in their contract: If they get Botox, they could be fired," says Wexler. So dermatologists inject tiny amounts of the toxin into multiple areas of the forehead for a softer, more relaxed look. "People still have full motion, so they can emote and act effectively, but skin doesn't accordion," explains Grossman. Evidence of her sleight of hand: A star patient sent Grossman an article on overdone faces in Hollywood, in which she served as the example of a non-Botoxed face. On it was a sticky note: "If they only knew." The results of this subtler approach last roughly three months as opposed to five, says Wexler. To strengthen and prolong the toxin's effect, especially when patients are on tour or filming abroad, Wu offers a new prescription supplement called Zytaze. The pill combines zinc with phytase, an enzyme that breaks down phytates, or compounds that prevent zinc's absorption. Why is zinc so crucial? To be effective, "Botulinum toxin has to bind with zinc in the body," says Wu. "This pill, which you take for five days prior to your appointment, helps your body retain zinc better, so there's more available to bind to the toxin molecules." In a double-blind, placebo-controlled study, Zytaze made the effects of the toxin last 30 percent longer when taken for four days before an injection.

Bacteria-Busting Facials

Facials with extractions can trigger more blemishes than they treat: All that poking releases a flood of germs onto the skin's surface. So aestheticians have invented smart solutions to the problem. "We apply gauze dipped in freezing-cold liquid nitrogen to kill bacteria and soothe the skin," says Rand Rusher, a Beverly Hills registered nurse and skin specialist and star of the reality show *Pretty Hurts*. (Only aestheticians in doctors' offices are legally allowed to use liquid nitrogen this way.) Hollywood facialist Shani Darden staves off breakouts by following extractions with acid—which typically means doing two peels in one treatment. Such is the case with her client Jessica Alba: "After cleansing, I do a glycolic and lactic acid peel, extractions, and then apply lactic acid, just as a flash peel, neutralizing it after 30 seconds," explains Darden. "It leaves Jess's skin clear and smooth with a really nice glow."

Full Exposure

Before stars take it all off for the camera, they disrobe for their dermatologist. "We'll essentially redo the entire surface of their body," says Jaliman, who starts with radio frequency, namely Thermage, to tighten loose skin right away. Also in demand is CoolSculpting, a fat-freezing device that obliterates belly bulges, love handles, and back fat. "Six weeks after treatment, patients begin to pee out the metabolized fat," says Jaliman. "They're so svelte, they can retire their Spanx."