

# ONE THRILLING COMBINATION



*The face is a complex structure; and as such the approach to the aging face should take into consideration this complexity. In terms of anti-aging treatments, the sum of the parts is definitely greater than the whole. "Advanced studies of anatomy and physiology are responsible for a move to a more comprehensive approach, shifting the focus from individual wrinkles to a holistic paradigm."*



Radiofrequency is used often in aesthetic medicine due to its versatility, efficacy and safety profile. Radiofrequency shows immediate tissue tightening as well as subsequent remodelling and collagen production. The machines produce their effect by sending radio waves into the tissue and heating the layers beneath the skin. Micro needling similarly, is a fast, safe and effective way of inducing tissue tightening. The procedure was masterminded by Dr Des Fernandes in South Africa and is now used across the world. It can be used for breaking up pigmentation, superficial wrinkles, scars and tightening. It involves repeated punctures with fine needles leading to thousands of micro-wounds and subsequent collagen stimulation.

Chemical peeling has been used for exfoliation procedures for centuries and causes controlled destruction of the upper parts of the skin followed by skin regeneration. The peel type can be customised for pigmentation, acne and rejuvenation. Peels can be superficial involving stratum corneum for light rejuvenation all the way to deep dermis for scars and pigmentation. The possible side effects include redness, swelling, itching and acne breakout but these are usually transient.

Recent advances have involved the use of threads as an alternate option to plastic surgery for treatment of skin laxity and sagging. Threads are placed under the skin and stimulate collagen production resulting in a slow long lasting lift. Fat deposits into cheeks and lips are also used today instead of fillers.

Improved understanding of anatomy and aging has shifted the focus from treating individual wrinkles to a holistic approach. Combination treatments which are tailor-made to the patient's needs, time and budget are really the only way to guarantee patient satisfaction and minimise side effects. A less is more approach with scheduled touch-up sessions is recommended.

Written by Dr Michelle Emmett, Refine Clinic.

The aging face from the surface, appears to be sagging with wrinkling around the mouth, eyes and cheeks. But when one looks through the skin to the bone and fat structures below, one sees that since the scaffolding on which the skin sits is diminishing; the skin has nowhere to go but to drop. Without addressing the underlying structures, one will be left with a tight but flat face. In so far as filler treatments go, the new world guidelines advise that before dealing with the jaw area, one must first re-volumize the cheek area, as this creates lift and will diminish the lines around the mouth and nose.

While in the earlier days physicians used neurotoxins (Botox™) in one area of the face such as the frown, clinicians tend to treat multiple areas today to create a relaxed and natural look. When one area of the face is treated, other areas may become overactive to compensate. Hence, again a holistic, softer approach is used to create the natural look. Botox™ is used preventatively in earlier ages (35-40) and as treatment as one gets older. However, a good example of evolving and combination treatments is when treating the forehead. As one ages these muscles become intrinsically weaker and excess Botox in this area may cause the brow to drop. Hence, one would rather opt to use filler under the entire surface of the forehead or in the lines to treat the wrinkles as opposed to Botox™.

Fillers act as a scaffold for collagen and elastin as well as stimulating new collagen formation. Strong gels have higher lifting and volumizing capacity and are used in areas requiring lifting, such as the cheeks. Softer gels are used to hydrate the skin and treat superficial wrinkles. One can thus understand that a combination of both is required to get a softer more natural result.

As one moves more superficially in the layers that are the face, one speaks of tissue tightening, collagen stimulation and skin resurfacing. Devices for skin tightening involve heat induction which changes deep structures and stimulates collagen as well as contraction of fibres which lifts the skin. Lasers will improve fine wrinkles by the above methods. It will also improve sun damage and acne scarring. The scientific concept behind a laser is controlled microscopic thermal wounds deep in the surface of the skin. This will allow for contraction, collagen stimulation and rapid wound healing in an orderly fashion.



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