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## Looking youthful

Time marks our faces but we can reduce its impact.

As we get older we begin to lose fat in our face. The result is a much older-looking appearance, with wrinkled and sagging face and neck skin.

Particularly susceptible is the area around the forehead, namely, the brow, cheek, jaw and the neck.

The ageing process also contributes to a change in facial shape. When one is young, usually the face is more distinctly oval or triangular in shape, but as one becomes older, it may

settle into a more squareish or rectangular shape. With more folds and wrinkles, we not only look older, but also tend to look tired.

Conventional facelifts have been around since the 1900s. They are based on the idea of reversing the effects of ageing by tightening the skin, lifting the tissues and restoring them into original position. Because every face is unique, there are many types of facelifts, depending on which areas have been affected and need to be treated.

### Facelift surgery

The face can be divided into three zones – the forehead, the face and the neck. For each of these zones, there are specific treatment options.

**Surgery** is still the gold standard for facial rejuvenation because it can last between five and 10 years. There are many different types of facelifts, neck lifts and forehead lifts. Some involve the superficial or

subcutaneous plane, others involve deep plane facelifting while others provide a combination of the two.

The different layers of skin present varied problems, and there are different techniques which can be employed. There is no single treatment to solve every problem as approaches need to be modified, adjusted and customised for each individual.

For instance, those in the older age group or with very severe skin laxity or significant ageing may require more radical surgery.

### The less invasive route

There has been a swing toward less invasive facelift procedures, and these are often recommended for patients in their 40s to 50s, with less severe face ageing.

One such procedure is the **threadlift** – a type of facelift that uses specially designed surgical threads placed under the skin in different

positions and pulled in different directions to lift the tissue under the skin. When you lift the tissue, you also lift the skin.

The threads are set in place to hold the skin in a lifted position and encourage collagen formation. Parts of the threads dissolve over time. This is a great treatment to rectify ageing issues in areas where the neckline is lost, the jaw is saggy and the face is drooping.

There are different threadlift techniques which offer different degrees of longevity. Threads angled to deep tissues are more effective than free-floating threads and last much longer.

While threadlifts are very effective in the right situations, they are not as long-lasting as conventional facelifts. They last about half as long but can be repeated. The doctor can redo, add or tighten the pre-existing threads when the skin starts to sag again.

There is also **collagen tightening**, which may not offer the best outcome but has no downtime. This procedure uses ultrasound technology. A machine called **Ulthera** delivers heat energy through ultrasound waves under the skin, where the collagen tissues are. This heat energy stimulates the collagen to grow and as a result, the skin becomes tighter. This helps to reverse the effects of ageing and can last for 18 to 24 months.

The process can be repeated regularly and is fast becoming popular among patients who do not want any downtime.

Techniques are always evolving and becoming more fine-tuned and targeted, so before a patient can decide what to do and how to do it, a lengthy discussion with the plastic surgeon is a must.



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