



Put to the test: the new  
non-surgical technologies  
for streamlining necks  
and eliminating jowls

by Sasha Slater

# CHIN UP

**WHEN** fashion designer Marc Jacobs came out about his facelift, he wasn't boasting about his newly chiselled cheekbones: #heckofaneck, he proclaimed on Instagram post-surgery. Because necks, as I now realise, are a prime area of panic particularly in the age of Zoom, where no statement necklace or frilly collar can truly conceal the signs of wear and tear.

According to Dr Stefanie Williams, owner and medical director of the Eudelo clinic in Vauxhall, London, necks are vulnerable because 'there's a lot of movement, and the skin is very thin and delicate'. Which means, as Nora Ephron wailed, 'There are chicken necks. There are turkey gobbler necks. There are elephant necks. There are necks with wattles and necks with creases that are on the verge of becoming wattles. There are scrawny necks and fat necks, loose necks, crêpey necks, banded necks, wrinkled necks, stringy necks, saggy necks, flabby necks, mottled necks. There are necks that are an amazing combination of all of the above.'

I know how she felt. These days I spend too much time brooding over the lines and folds of mine. Happily, when your neck's on the line, the beauty industry steps in. There are now a range of ingenious ways to tackle such problems. On the extreme end of the spectrum, there are surgical neck lifts and facelifts, as demonstrated by Jacobs. But close friends (who shall remain nameless) tried that, and the results – including an odd new little under-chin dimple – don't encourage me down that road. I'm keener on the new generation of lasers and radio-frequency wands whose results are gradual, subtle and work with what you've already got.

The treatments I tried range from painless to mildly uncomfortable, and downtime is minimal. A warning, though: results take time, with some problems requiring several treatments over a period of months.

### RED ALERT

When I was 16 and silly and in Sardinia for a long, hot summer, I burnt my chest so badly it blistered. Since then, my décolletage has punished me with broken veins, redness and puckering. I started wearing my top button primly fastened like my long-ago Latin teacher. 'Neck skin has fewer oil glands than the skin on your face,' explains Dr Williams, who sees a lot of permanently red and or freckled necks and chests. At Eudelo, she offers Dye-VL AFT, a hybrid IPL (intense pulsed light) laser treatment that homes in on the haemoglobin that gives skin its redness, and seals broken blood vessels. The treatments (I had three, some may need six) are quick, taking about 10 minutes each with a month between. They're mildly uncomfortable, as the bursts of light sting – a patch test first makes sure you won't react badly – and my chest looked bumpy and red for about 24 hours after each session. But a month after the last treatment, the skin is markedly less red and has a smoother texture. At last I can wear a scoop neck without fear.

*Dye-VL AFT, from £1,250 for course of three, eudelo.com*

### HEAVY LIFTING

Face on, I recognise myself, but if I'm caught unawares in profile on someone's iPhone, it takes a moment to work out who that dumpy, double-chinned dowager is. I want a jawline as tight as Audrey Hepburn's. That may be too much of an ask, but there's no doubt that I can inch towards Audrey with a little help.

In aesthetician Natali Kelly's smart Chelsea clinic, I embarked on a series of six sessions of UltracelQ+ HIFU (high-intensity focused ultrasound) and NuEra Tight (radio frequency) with therapist Iris Abdel. Each took about 45 minutes and involved Abdel stroking a wand over my neck, chin and lower face. 'As we age,' explains Kelly, 'the skull shrinks, so we essentially lose the scaffolding of our face. And the facial fat pads deflate and descend, causing heaviness around the jawline.' Oh dear. The two procedures tighten skin, increase collagen production and smooth fine lines.

And a plus: as treatments go, this is actively pleasant – the wand is warm and soothing, and the chat is good. The results, while gentle, prompt compliments of the 'you look 10 years younger' variety. I still have a small jowl – I'm afraid only surgery is likely to give me that chiselled jawline, but this is a definite improvement. And it will keep tightening and plumping over the next six months. Results last about two years.

*UltracelQ+ HIFU, from £1,200, NuEra Tight RF, course from £2,400; natalikelly.com*

### SMOOTH OPERATOR

I've had Prophilu on my face and loved the smoothing effects the super-moisturising hyaluronic acid delivers. Kelly, a maestro of injectables, also uses it to plump chests, hands and, yes, necks. She takes about three minutes to deliver 10 doses intradermally on specific points on the neck – so swift you hardly feel the needle. Take a scarf, though: you will look like you've been attacked by angry wasps for a couple of hours afterwards, until the syrupy acid spreads deeper under the skin. Once there, it minimises the appearance of lines and wrinkles as well as stimulating collagen and elastin production. You have to have two sessions about a month apart. Again, results develop gradually, but I'm as happy with it in my neck as in my face. In fact, if I could have Prophilu all over my body, I probably would.

*Prophilu, £600 per session, natalikelly.com*

### STRING THEORY

Necks muscles that stand out like ropes look good on cartoon superheroes. Less so on women d'un certain âge. But, explains Dr Pradnya Apté in her sunny consulting room on Harley Street, 'as we get older, the platysma band, a cuff of muscle that runs from the collarbone to the jawline, starts to overwork.' This not only causes jowls to form but also produces those vertical lines that stand out from your neck so it looks more like the trunk of a mighty oak than a smooth column of marble. Particularly when you say 'ee' too long and too vehemently. The answer, says Dr Apté, is to inject botulinum toxin (Botox) into the muscles. This stops them overworking and pulling down the lower half of your face. It's called the Nefertiti lift after the famous bust of the ancient Egyptian queen whose neck has been the cause of so much envy over the centuries. It's perhaps a dozen injections around the neck and jaw, and I had a tiny bit of bruising for the next few days, but that faded and I was pleased to see my neck looking smoother and less overwrought.

*Nefertiti lift, £420, drpradnyalondon.com*

But if needles and night creams are not your thing, I have a last suggestion: invest in a trusty polo neck... ●

## SMOOTH AND FIRM

The cream of the creams

**Valmont V-Neck Cream**  
£229, lamaisonvalmont.com



**Dr Levy Décolletage Regenerating Silk**  
£286, drlevyswitzerland.shop



**Revision Skincare Nectifirm Advanced**  
£143, revisionskincare.co.uk



**Chanel Le Lift Crème Fine**  
£108, chanel.com



**111Skin Celestial Black Diamond Neck & Décolletage Serum**  
£250, 111skin.co.uk

