

Quest for Physical Beauty

BEAUTY

The quest for physical beauty is an ancient one, fuelled by a human desire to display the hallmarks of lineage, social standing, power and fertility.

Many ancient peoples understood the beautifying powers of natural substances.

The word "cosmetics" is derived from the Greek word "kosmetikos"; witch means skilled in adornment.

Not surprisingly, the word "beauty" finds its origins in the romance languages. It derives from the 13th century French word "biaute". This came from the Latin word "bellus" meaning handsome. The Spanish use "bellesa" to represent beautiful or attractive, and the Italians use "bella".

"There are no ugly women, only lazy ones" Helena Rubenstein

Throughout history and across cultures, women have transformed their appearances to conform to a beauty ideal.

Beauty varies from culture to culture, and current western standards of beauty emphasise a toned, slender look, exuding fitness, youth and health. However, there do appear to be some universal truth in beauty.

For instance, unlike the rest of the animal kingdom, where males are the beautiful ones, the human focus on beauty has always been on women's face and bodies, and this is so in all cultures: it is more important for women to be beautiful.

Recent research suggests beauty is not in the eye of the beholder, and that ideals human attractiveness may already come "hard wired" into the human brain, that in fact we have a built-in "template" of beauty by which we judge the attractiveness of others. However you are not the best judge of your own beauty. You are more likely to overrate your looks than under-rate them. Neither are your friends, because they know you, they include other aspects such as your personality. In fact the best judges of beauty are complete strangers, who because they don't know you, are not biased and will make a purely physical appraisal.

Finding a practitioner who can deliver a natural-looking result — and one who will tell you when enough is enough — can make all the difference. Facial expressions are an integral part of the human personality.

The Halo EffectThe power of a pretty face has been recognised and studied for decades. Social psychologists have identified something called the "what is beautiful is good" stereotype. When someone is attractive, they are assigned many other positive attributes that have nothing to do with looks. Attractive people are typically judged as more intelligent, competent, sociable, popular and sensitive than less attractive people. Good witches are pretty, the princess is always beautiful.. bad witches and the wicked stepmother are ugly..

Beauty and Self ConfidencePeople are often more confident when they look their best, and being attractive seems to be strongly associated with self confidence. In this way, non-surgical facial rejuvenation today is not just about looking young but can be a valuable method for maintaining confidence and self esteem.

Beauty may be only skin deep however studies have shown that attractive people are more likely to be perceived as pleasant and are judged to be more socially competent.

Defining BeautyPhilosophers, scientists and ordinary people have long puzzled over what makes a face attractive, questioning whether there are objective standards of beauty or if beauty is in the eye of the beholder. Plato wrote the "golden proportions" in which the width of an ideal face would be 2/3 of its length, while a nose would be no longer than the distance between the eyes.

In 1225, Thomas Aquinas defined beauty as containing 3 elements: Wholeness, Harmony and Radiance.

The Beauty Premium

N. Etcoff, psychologist and Harvard Medical School professor, argues that looking good has survival value and that beauty confers privilege, popularity and unearned advantages. When it comes to job interview, looking well presented is the golden rule. Studies have found attractive people are more likely to be hired for a job.

Economists have long recognised the correlation between physical beauty and wages. A study by United States economists Hamermesh and Biddle used survey data to examine the impact that appearance has on a person's earnings. They found that the "plainness penalty" is 9% and that the "beauty premium" is 5% after controlling other variables such as education and experience. In other words, a person below average looks tended to earn 9% less/hour and an above average person tended to earn 5% more than an average looking one.

The psychology of beauty is complex, not just because the concept is undefined but also because can be a product of culture and society. However the correlation between physical attractiveness and success is undeniable, as well as the fact that the way people present themselves has an immediate effect on how society perceives them.

What difference does beauty make?The powerful effects of beauty can be seen at infant stage. Maternity ward staff record mothers of more attractive babies talk to them more and maintain more eye contact with them. Similarly, babies

respond more positively to pleasant faces. From the first 2 days of life they look longer at attractive faces and by age one they take a more active approach to attractive than unattractive persons (irrespective of race).

The Ideal Face:

- Clear complexion
- Child like features with large eyes
- Full lips, small nose and small chin
- High set eyebrows, prominent cheek bones, narrow cheeks and a well defined jaw line
- A full, thick head of hair

Male attractiveness mirrors the same check list but with a thicker flat eyebrow and larger jaw, chin and nose.

Measuring BeautyThe desire to be physically attractive is one of the major driving forces behind the health, beauty and fashion industry.

It has been found that many objects that we perceive as beautiful in nature have their various parts in proportion to each other and that ratio is 1:1.618 otherwise known as Phi or the golden ratio.

Motivation: The WHY FactorWhy do you want to change your appearance? The most common motive for undergoing non-surgical cosmetic procedures is the desire to look younger and healthier.

People are living longer, they are living fitter lives, so the discrepancy between how they feel, what they can achieve and how they appear is bigger than it used to be. Now they need to look as young as they feel. People feel as though they have a competitive edge if they are looking younger, more awake and alert.

Anatomy of the FaceThe human face is an extraordinary complex part of our anatomy and our primary social tool for interacting with others. Composed of 14 bones underlying 20 key muscles, the face is the key to our identity.

Because of its mobility and its exposure to environmental factors, the face is the most obvious signpost of the ageing process. The hallmark of a youthful face is the plumpness of the skin. The gradual loss of volume with age involves a number of factors such as shrinkage of some of the facial bone structures, loss of collagen and skin elasticity and the effects of gravity.

The first symptom of intrinsic ageing is the reduction in hydration of the skin. Diminished dermal repair function also begins at a young age but the effects don't become apparent until later.

By their 30's most people will have some lines around their eyes and the beginnings of expression lines and laxity under the jaw. Some will have dry skin, though others may still experience skin blemishes. Repeated muscular actions form wrinkles and existing creases such as the nasolabial fold deepen.

What is happening is that the skin's production of collagen and cell renewal and tissue repair processes are slowing.

In the middle age the bond between facial muscles and skin tissue weakens, causing sagging in combination with the accumulation of fat below the eyes and around the jaw. At the same time the skin becomes thinner and loses elasticity, while the normal expression lines deepen.

After middle age fibroblast activity declines, reducing the quantity of glycoproteins and hyaluronic acid in the dermis, and sebum production also falls.

Extrinsic ageingAfter the age of 30, ageing by environmental factors such as pollution or excessive sun exposure is different in nature and more aggressive than intrinsic processes and can make people look many years older than their biological age.

In extrinsic ageing the epidermis thickens. The amount of collagen and elastin increase, but the structure of these proteins become atrophied. This is mostly due to photo damage. Skin functions such as the regulation of water loss are compromised. Small capillaries in the dermis decrease and the remaining blood vessels become dilated.

While the ageing process is inevitable, anyone can reduce the impact of extrinsic factors by taking preventative measures. The effects of intrinsic ageing vary from individual to individual, depending on genetic heritage, skin type, lifestyle factors and dental health.

What is wrinkle?Technically a wrinkle is fine furrow or trench that forms in the outer layers of the skin. In young people most of these are temporary. They smooth out and disappear when the action that caused them to appear ceases – smiling or frowning, for example.

As people age, increasing numbers of these lines become permanent due to changes in the structure of the skin. Cell division and renewal occurs more slowly, the layers become less integrated and thinner. As sweat and oil glands produce less lubrication the moisture content is reduced, depriving skin of water-lipid hydration. Collagen and elastin decrease and their function is compromised.

This can be made worse by factors such as sun damage, pollution or smoking. They cause the production of free radicals (a free radical is a substance that possesses only one electron instead of the normal two. Since electrons come in pairs, the free radical will actively try to replace its missing electron by removing it from another molecule in our body. This can result in cell damage, ranging from enzyme production and collagen breakdown to cancer.

Dynamic Wrinkles: Dynamic wrinkles occur as a result of using the facial muscles. During facial expressions (smiling, frowning…) the muscle contract causing the skin to crease.

- Forehead lines
- Frown lines (between the eyebrows)
- Crow's feet (side of the eyes)
- Rabbit lines on the nose
- Smoker's lines on the upper lip

Static Wrinkles: They are the creases and folds that are present at rest and are not dependent on forming facial expressions. In younger people they are present as under-eye creases and the indentation of the nasolabial fold or as a feature of the fleshy part of the chin.

More static wrinkles develop as people get older because the collagen, elastin and hyaluronic acid that provide the skin with structure and volume decrease with age. The loss of skin structure and volume means that the skin is less able to return to its initial position after creasing with habitual actions and expressions.

- Under-eyes creases
- Crow's feet
- Cheek creases
- Nasolabial folds
- Marionette lines
- Chin creases

Sagging: Static wrinkles also form as a result of facial sagging. This is due to a combination of influences: with decreased collagen production the skin loses firmness, less elastin is present in the underlying tissue, bone mass shrinks, the layers of the skin separate from the underlying muscle which can become more lax, fat thins and is affected by gravity.

- Under eyes bags
- Upper eyelid hooding
- Cheek fat pads
- Jowls under the side of the jaw
- Wattle or double chins

Loss of Volume: It can cause a sunken or gaunt appearance. This is due to thinning of the skin structure, the descent of facial fat pads in the orbital, cheek and chin areas as a result of gravity and increased laxity, and bone shrinkage, particularly in the lower face. Loss of teeth also affects fullness in the peri-oral and cheek areas.

- Temples
- Orbital rim
- Cheeks
- Lips
- Chin