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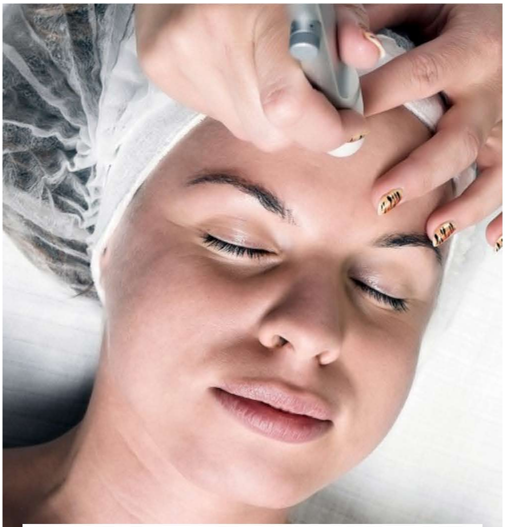

Overhyped or Underrated? Beauty Experts Weigh In

Four beauty buffs reveal the truth about popular treatments

Written by Lynn Schnurnberger

With what can seem like a million new beauty treatments being touted each week, it's been hard to know what to opt for—until now. Four renowned beauty experts weigh in on the good, the bad and the most promising.

DR. DENDY ENGELMAN

Overhyped:

Who can forget those pictures of a blood-splattered Kim Kardashian having what was dubbed a "Vampire facial"? The PRP (Platelet Rich Plasma) treatment, in which a patients own blood is injected into the face or another part of the body, doesn't seem like *that* crazy an idea: After all, it is natural. But Manhattan dermatologist Dr. Dendy Engelman says that at least for now, "It's like the wild west out there. No one really knows what the sweet spot is, what the right concentration is to get effective results. There are doctors telling people that PRP is great for facial rejuvenation! It will make your hair grow! It can stop aging! But I've had patients come to me who've seen other doctors, they've had a scalp full of needles and they didn't get results. Right now these procedures are really expensive, they're not predictable and they're painful—so many more risks than rewards."

Underrated:

"Everybody's looking for a good skin tightening system, you can have a great looking face, but cellulite, saggy arms, our skin texture give our age away," says Dr. Engelman. Until now. "I was never that happy with Ultherapy (which uses ultra sound) or Thermage (which works on radio frequency)—they do lift and tighten the skin some, but not enough to make them worth it for most patients. But now there's a machine I just started using that combines both technologies and it really seems to work." The relatively-new-to-the-market Exilis claims to be less uncomfortable, less expensive and much more effective than those other treatments. Best of all, Dr. Engelman says that after four once-a-week treatments a patient should only need maintenance touch ups once a year.

DR. ADAM KOLKER

Overhyped:

Well-known New York plastic surgeon Dr .Adam Kolker ticks off a list of procedures that don't provide patients with a bang for their buck. "Temporary breast augmentation with saline injections, it lasts 48 hours, why wouldn't you just wear a padded bra?" he asks with a laugh. So called 'short-scar' facelifts or tummy tucks are also to be avoided. "Listen, if a scar is shorter than it should be it's like a tailor taking a size 6 skirt and making it over to a size 2 with a too-short seam. Any reputable surgeon isn't going to make a scar any longer than necessary, but he or she's not going to make it shorter than it should be either," he says. And those Brazilian Butt Lift injections? "They're short lived," Dr. Kolker admonishes. "Fat transfer only works in small areas. You might be happy at first, but after six months, you'll be feeling meh—after a year the extra fat will all be gone."

Underrated:

Ironically, after dissing fat injections to the butt, Dr. Kolker puts fat transfer high on his list of underrated procedures, with a caveat: For use only in small areas, where fat cells can establish an intimate relationship with the blood supply and become part of the body. "As we age skin becomes more lax, the architecture of the face changes and we need to restore volume." For under eye areas, cheeks, anywhere the face has lost volume, Dr. Kolker says fat transfers (often used in conjunction with Botox and fillers) offer a more permanent solution , possibly even up to 10 years.

DR. PAUL JARROD FRANK

Overhyped:

"On the subway, I get really angry when I see ads for 'fat melting machines,' or 'fat melting spas," says renown dermatologist Dr. Paul Jarrod Frank. "There are some fat melting technologies that work well, and I use them, but only on patients who want to get rid of belly fat or love handles or an extra three to five pounds. The majority of patients want to loose more than that and they're going to be sorely disappointed—not to mention that they'll waste a lot of money. The same is true for "skin tightening" machines. On a 35-50 year old who's well-maintained Ultherapy or Thermage can be the icing on the cake, adding a little more lift and tightening to a series of injections. But you need collagen to build collagen, and on older patients this just doesn't cut it."

Underrated:

"People come in complaining about wrinkles, but one of the biggest signs of aging is dull skin," says Dr. Frank. "There are all different kinds of fraxel lasers that will help remove brown spots, fine lines, acne scars,   and they also decrease the risk of skin cancer. When patients come in for a consultation it's the first thing I talk to them about."

DR. MARC LOWENBERG

Overhyped:

"This may surprise some people," says celebrated cosmetic dentist Dr. Marc Lowenberg, "but hands down, the most overrated cosmetic dental procedure is teeth whitening. All the ballyhoo leads people to believe that they work on everyone—but they don't. Sure, some products work better than others, a dentist will use a much stronger solution of hydrogen peroxide than you get in a home whitening tray or a whitening strip—but the problem is that it's not about the product. The molecular structure on some people's enamel just won't get whiter, no matter what you use. When you use hair dye, you can be sure that your hair will end up another color; but when you whiten your teeth there's no guarantee you'll have a whiter smile. "

Underrated:

"When their lips and cheeks start to look hollowed out, most people turn to dermatologists or plastic surgeons. But this problem can also be corrected by 'opening up the bite'—a method that involves adding veneers to back teeth," says Dr. Lowenberg. Technically called a "posterior restoration," the procedure involves about a dozen teeth and makes the arch wider, which creates a fuller smile and gives greater support to the lips and cheeks. "It's like a mini-face lift," says Dr. Lowenberg.

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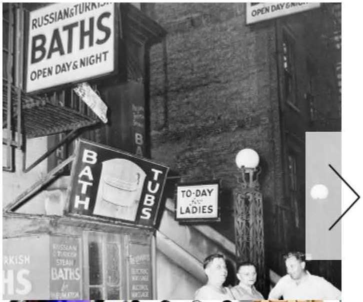

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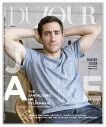

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