
WELL-BEING



In Your Face

Is it possible to get a lift without surgery?

BY ALICE GORDON

I hereby confess to being a ruthless cybercitizen. Whenever unbidden information pounds on my gate, I wave in the good and throw the latch against the rest. I accept that gold sometimes gets left outside with the dross. So I don't think you can blame me for not knowing much about the phenomenon of acupuncture "facelifts" until now. Although I do blame myself. I'm a good candidate: I'm aging, I'm vain, and, more pertinent, I have spent three of the last four springs letting the gifted New York acupuncturist Marisa Anaya poke me with needles to soothe all kinds of aches, pains and annoyances, including tennis elbow, tinnitus and TMJ (temporomandibular joint disorder, or stupidly grinding one's teeth). This year, when Marisa joined the

beauty-oriented clinic of Shellie Goldstein Acupuncture, the move caused me some anxiety, which eased when Marisa assured me that she still did acupuncture that had nothing to do with facelifts. Curiosity made me want to try them anyway.

What's the difference?

An acupuncture facelift differs significantly from more invasive approaches. No scalpels or anesthesia; no post-op bruising or swelling. No risk of changing your face beyond recognition. The series of 10 treatments Marisa and her colleagues recommend for a thorough and lasting "lift" involves very thin needles that feel like tiny pinpricks. Period. Before inserting needles in the face, Marisa examines a patient for imbalances in her, or his,



ACUPUNCTURE, LIKE GOOD NUTRITION, WORKS FROM THE INSIDE OUT.

kindly grandmother. It doesn't hurt, exactly, you just sometimes wish she would just get on with the "Oh, you precious thing!" and let go. In addition to the pinching, Marisa firmly rolled my neck and jowls. (Damn those jowls!) And by the way, micro-current did firm them up a bit; it also made my upper eyelids and neck visibly more taut, as it did the area below my cheekbones, giving me a pleasant, slightly sculptured look. In a word, says Marisa, the treatment "reeducates" the muscles.

The effects of my one outing didn't last that long, but neither will one set of bicep curls dramatically define your arms. Like trainers who add weight to clients' barbells over time, Marisa starts patients out on a low level of current and steadily raises it over the next nine treatments. My fellow Marisa Anaya fan Lisa Alexander is happy to have taken the ten-time leap onto the table, and, really, why would a bassoonist lie? I expect to be humming my own happy tune soon. □

whole being, always looking for what might be blocking the flow of energy (chi), throwing off internal and external balance (yin and yang) or adversely altering the emotions. Acupuncture, like good nutrition and plenty of sleep, water and exercise, works from the inside out. Much of what teeters out of balance will show up on the face.

Marisa can do two kinds of nonsurgical facelifts, it turns out. You could compare them to David and Goliath. Little David would signify the straight acupuncture protocol: Receive needles in the face to stimulate the body's healing response; doze off for twenty minutes; have the needles taken out, and that's it until the next treatment. Big Goliath would be the AcuFacial facelift, a sequence of procedures devised and trademarked by Shellie Goldstein, who trained Marisa: Instead of in the face, most of the needles go to other parts of the body that govern imbalance. Then Marisa returns to the face: First, she uses ultrasound to gently exfoliate the skin. Second, she delivers microcurrent, or "a subsensory vibration that works with the body's own electrical energy system," via a metal roller and Q-tip-topped probe. Third, more ultrasound vibrations push moisturizers 1,500 times deeper into the skin than it can

go when applied manually. (Trust me on this or force me to quote more than the following from the ultrasound machine's manual: "Ultrasonic cavitation alters the structure of the lipid bi-layer of the stratum corneum.") Fourth and last, an LED light is shone on the face. The clinic's brochures claim that LED's red and blue light variously increase collagen and elastin production, improve circulation, reduce redness and work as a powerful antiseptic against bacteria that cause acne. One could be skeptical, but longtime Marisa-client Lisa Alexander, a professional bassoonist who lives in New Jersey, swears it's true. "My skin looks so much healthier after Marisa's treatments, and I hear that even from people who don't know what I'm doing."

The current difference

The micro-current process has medical provenance. Its benefits for facial rejuvenation were discovered during its early use on stroke patients suffering Bell's Palsy, or paralysis on one side of the face. Not only did micro-current treatment restore muscle function on the palsied side, but it also made the muscles much more toned than those on the unaffected side. My experience of the micro-current was a little like being pinched by a

Avoiding the Knife

A few resources around the globe:

Shellie Goldstein Acupuncture
New York, NY: 212-388-0800
hamptonsacupuncture.com

Georgia Louise
CACI Non-surgical facelift
New York Clinic: 212-388-0800
London Clinic: +44 2075 899 911
georgialouise.co.uk

Tiffani Kim Institute
Chicago, IL
312-260-9000 (main line)
312-260-9020 (wellness)
tkichicago.com

Theracua
Tokyo, Japan
+81 03-3491-4589
theracua.com