

VOGUE

5 Surprising Beauty Benefits of Acupuncture

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Acupuncture has been popular since ancient times for a reason: It makes people feel better. What's more, in recent years, patients undergoing the procedure to treat health concerns have often noticed that their looks have benefited, too—leading to a rise in “acupuncture facials” that combine whole-body rebalancing with targeted needle stimulation (and, sometimes, spa-like add-ons) for glowing skin. Less well known, however, is the fact that the technique can also be used to address specific, pesky cosmetic issues—and as it turns out, those are one of the first things a practitioner might look at when diagnosing you.

“In traditional Chinese medicine, we look at the face as a reflection of what's going on inside,” explains New York City acupuncturist Shellie Goldstein, M.S., L.Ac. “We look at your internal well-being to decipher what's going on. From the inside, we will make that change, and it will be reflected on the outside.” In other

words, the lasting solution to your breakouts or sagging skin might not be a cream or device, but rather a healthier, more balanced body.

Here, Goldstein explains five specific ways that acupuncture can provide a beauty boost from the inside out.

De-Puff

A swollen face is likely a sign of larger issues, according to Goldstein—issues that acupuncture is designed to address. “If you have digestive problems, allergies, or poor lymphatic drainage, what you may see in the face is puffiness,” Goldstein explains. “Not only will we correct it, we will adjust it from the inside.” This is accomplished by inserting fine sterile needles at certain points on the body identified in traditional Chinese medicine. Each resulting “micro-trauma,” as Goldstein calls it, causes a healing response both locally and throughout the body; different points correspond to different bodily systems.

Clear Up Acne

Acupuncture’s rebalancing effect has a way of calming breakouts, whether chronic or caused by monthly hormonal fluctuations. “We look at acne as a reflection of internal heat, and the digestive system,” Goldstein explains. “We can adjust premenstrual breakouts through acupuncture as well by treating the heat that arises” in the body during certain times of the month.

Calm Rosacea

“Similar to acne, it’s about adjusting that internal balance within,” Goldstein says. “Rosacea in Chinese medicine is often about digestion—by clearing up the internal digestive issues, it really helps to minimize redness and irritation in the skin tissue.”

Brighten Dull Skin

Acupuncture can boost a lackluster complexion both directly—by triggering local healing processes in the face—and indirectly, by recalibrating bodily systems.

“Simply by putting a needle in the skin, you’re stimulating skin circulation, lymphatic drainage, and collagen production,” Goldstein says. But also, “dullness

can often be a lack of energy flowing through the body properly. We work to raise your energy and balance what's going on.”

Tighten and Tone

Whether your concern is the gravitational pull on your legs or slack facial skin, according to Goldstein, a few needle pricks can help to firm things up.

Acupuncture is “absolutely amazing for muscle tone and deeper tissue tone in the body,” she says. “It will help to relax the deeper tissue muscles that are too tight, and tighten the ones that are [loose]. It’s really good for lifting and sculpting the cheeks and jawline, and even for lifting eyebrows.”