



## THE SCIENCE AND TREATMENT OF THE AGING FACE

Cosmetic doctors have been studying the aging face for decades and it is now acknowledged that loss and redistribution of deep facial tissues play a key role in the aging process. The above diagram shows the progression of facial fat pad loss from 1-5. Typically starting in your mid thirties fat around the eyes and cheeks begin to shrink and gravitate downwards. In your 40s and 50s fat is lost from the sides of your face and jowls and lastly from your mid 50s fat diminishes from the forehead. As the fat migrates down the face it tends to collect in natural connective tissue fixation points. Common areas are between the nose to mouth, around the mouth corners, on and beneath the jaw. As these fat pads shrink and slide down the face the surrounding facial muscles react to the volume loss by contracting, this tends to further distort the facial features creating the downturn appearance of the brow and mouth corners. Over time the contracted muscle loses its strength and generally becomes lax. Bone also naturally dissolves with increased resorption as we age. On the face, bone loss is especially apparent of the eye orbit, the upper palate and the jaw, this in turn leads to the overlying skin and muscle losing their natural

anchorage and stretching adding to the aging effect.

For centuries there have been many attempts to find a universal mathematical formula that determines a perfect face. These have often produced conflicting results and fail to fit everybody's idea of a beautiful face and subjective attractiveness. However what has long been agreed is that the youthful face can very simply be defined by dividing the face into 1/3s. The hairline to the eyes forming the upper 1/3, the middle 1/3 from the eyes to the tip of the nose and the lower 1/3, the tip of nose to the chin. The lower third is again divided into an upper 1/3 from nose tip to top lip and lower 2/3 from lip to chin. This formula is of course not absolute but it does provide an elementary platform to aid cosmetic doctors understand the aging face. As you age these proportions change especially the lower 2/3s of the face. The middle third tends to decrease in length and the proportions in the lower 1/3 tend to drift from 1/3- 2/



3 to 1/2 - 1/2, i.e. the distance between the nose and top lip lengthens whilst the distance between lower lip and tip of chin decreases. This is due to bone changes and the stretching of the overlying soft tissues as explained above. All of these changes result in the face taking on a more rectangular look as opposed to the upside down triangle associated with a youthful face.

It is therefore a common misconception amongst to think of the aging face exclusively in terms of skin laxity causing lines and wrinkles. It is now clear that

underlying tissues, including the fat, muscle and bone all change over time and contribute to the aged look. To solely treat the lines and wrinkles of the face with Botox and Hyaluronic acid fillers may be suitable treatments for those in their early 30s, but as you get older additional advanced procedures are clearly required. These advanced, modern techniques aim to restore volume, tighten and treat the skin and underlying tissues and remove unwanted deposited fat.

Research has shown that most people seeking anti aging treatments want to look on average 13 years younger; they want treatments with minimal downtime and most importantly want treatments that are safe. This explains the huge rise in non-surgical and minimally invasive cosmetic procedures. Modern minimal and non-invasive cosmetic medical techniques include the use of volume enhancing fillers, such as Sub Q, Sculptra and Radiesse. Laser removal of fat deposits is now achievable using Laser lipo. Advanced lasers and radio frequency devices such as Smartxide, Fraxel and Thermage can be used to treat fine lines, skin tone, consistency, pigmentation and laxity. Lastly medical topical creams such as AHAs, retinoids, antioxidants and peptides are also fundamental in helping reverse sun damage and restore complexion.

It's important not to forget that lifestyle factors such as smoking, excess alcohol, high sugar diets, lack of exercise and excessive sun exposure all exacerbate the aging process. Making necessary lifestyle adjustments will always prove invaluable in helping slow down and sometimes even reverse the aging process.

For further information on all our services and treatments please contact the Hans Place Practice.

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