

VOGUE

OCT
£3.99

AUTUMN SHAKE-UP:
COOL COATS,
THE BOOTS TO BUY
NOW AND DRESSES
TO WOW

HOW TO BIOHACK
YOUR WAY
TO WELLNESS

HEADSTRONG:
A YOUNG MOTHER
REBUILDS HER LIFE
AFTER A COMA

Zendaya

DIALS UP
THE GLAMOUR



Cheek by JOWL

*When the ageing process started pulling her cheeks down
by her chin, journalist Sarah Brown embarked on Project Jowls.
Her mission? To lift, tighten and turn back time.
Photograph by Inez & Vinoodh. Styling by Phyllis Posnick*

Jowl: *noun*. The lower part of a person's or animal's cheek when it is fleshy or drooping.

Are there many things more horrifying than jowls? Does the entirety of the English language contain a less attractive, more cheerless word? Even the sound – *jow-lz* – is dreary, glum. Like howl, but worse. Jowl is a word so bleak, it almost feels sorry for itself.

But here we are. Jowls.

They happen slowly. You don't have to be old. Or even oldish. Or particularly gluttonous, as the word might suggest. Jowls sneak up on you. They snuck up on me. One day you are happily going about your life, thinking that perhaps, at most, it might be time for a Botox refresher. The next, a badly lit selfie or regrettable interaction with a three-way mirror stops you in your tracks. "Who's that?" you gasp.

Slowly, slowly, my oval-shaped face was starting to look stretched out, drab, like more of a droopy rectangle than a smoothly contoured egg. Something (gravity) was pulling my cheeks down by my chin; they appeared heavy, chipmunky. It looked like the bottom two-thirds of my face was a candle that was melting into my neck. Everything was sliding. All I wanted to wear were turtlenecks. My hair, a wavy 1920s bob cut at a steep incline to flatter my angular features, suddenly no longer worked. Interminable Zoom, WhatsApp and FaceTime calls (does no one simply use the telephone anymore?) were making it impossible to escape my reflection and the invitation to silently analyse, nitpick and despair. I rarely felt my best. I rarely even felt like myself.

Whatever was going on beneath the surface of my previously quite perky-looking face needed to be interrupted and reset – immediately. Thanks to the modern marvels of dermatology, I learnt that, to a certain degree, it could. Marshalling London and New York's finest, I sought answers, advice and action.

Over a series of initial video consultations, the all-star panel of skin experts I assembled explained that the slow and steady, imperceptible at first, collapse of the natural architecture of one's face is due to a constellation of unavoidable events that arrive, one by one, "with age" (thanks).

First of all, degradation of collagen and elastin affects skin quality and firmness. Fat pads – the plump little cushions that help give a face shape – thin out, shift and slide south. The gradual loss of bone (I'm talking about your skull) literally shrinks the structural foundation upon which muscle, fat and skin rest, contributing to overall laxity and sag. Everything begins to settle at the bottom of your face, like a puddle.

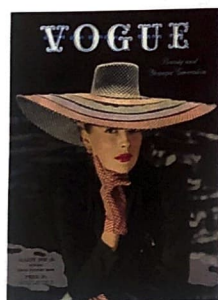
"It's all gravity at work. You're losing that scaffolding that's keeping everything tight and high. That gets manifested as jowls," explained Dr Alexis Granite, consultant dermatologist at uber-aesthetician Sarah Chapman's Skinesis Clinic in Chelsea. "What creates a youthful face is high cheekbones and good jawline structure," added Dr Benjamin Kauffholz, cosmetic wizard to the A-list of London and Paris, who works between Dr Dray's offices in both cities. "It's about restoring the natural bone structure without changing the features."

Project Jowls was going to be a three-pronged mission that would include gently hoisting up everything that was beginning to slip (from the eyebrows down), tightening the lower portion of my face from deep within, and sculpting the contours.

My first stop: the Upper East Side office of dermatologist to Manhattan's social set, Dr Macrene Alexiades. "These are new. You didn't have jowls before," she murmured, visibly frowning behind her mask, face shield and goggles. "It's just not you. We are going to work on vanishing these," she said, confidently. Dr Alexiades wanted to get right down to business and bring out the big guns. And by big guns, I mean something that actually looked like a gun (*Star Trek*-style) and was apparently so powerful that instead of involving multiple sessions spaced weeks apart, like so many in-office treatments, this would take just 45 skin-searing minutes (priced at a cool \$5,000). Called Profound, it is a device that shoots radio-frequency sound waves out of its microneedle tips. Applied in a stamping motion along my jawline, under my chin, and up and down my neck, the microneedles would create tiny holes 6mm deep that would kick-start the formation of fresh collagen and elastin as part of the body's natural wound-healing response. The radio frequency would heat the tissue, encouraging a tightening, contracting effect. >



Earring: stylist's own.
Hair: Orlando Pita.
Make-up: Dick Page.
Nails: Megumi Yamamoto.
Set designer: Jill C.
Nicholls. Production:
VLM Productions.
Digital artwork:
StereoHorse. Model:
Rebecca Longendyke



Strong jawlines on the cover of *Vogue*: clockwise from left, an unknown model photographed by John Rasevskis, August 1942; in profile for December 1941, by Horst; Naomi Campbell by Steven Meisel, March 2019; Kate Moss in silhouette for December 2000, by Nick Knight



DOES THE ENTIRETY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE CONTAIN A MORE CHEERLESS WORD THAN JOWLS?

Dr Alexiades, who had been the principal investigator on Profound's multicentre clinical trials, described potential results as "30 per cent of a lower facelift". I would be swollen and bruised for about 10 days following the treatment; results would reveal themselves gradually over the next year, and last until my face started sagging again on its own... about two years, estimated Dr Alexiades. "It takes a month to see some tightening, and then it really starts to become apparent after two months," she explained.

The day of the procedure, I arrived partially numb, thanks to a prescription cream I had smeared all over my face in advance, at Dr Alexiades's direction, and braced myself for what she had warned me was "the only thing that's not super comfortable". Swooping down overhead like an enemy aircraft came the most terrifying thing I'd ever seen: a "multi-injector" Frankensyringe armed with three 32-gauge needles, which she repeatedly plunged into my face and neck. It was filled with lidocaine – a pain reliever – which was ironic. "It feels like a bee sting, right?" she said cheerfully, as I winced and squirmed on the table. The actual treatment was mellow in comparison. Dr Alexiades held the handpiece against my face, pulling the trigger and covering ground in neat rows. Each zap felt like lightning looks when it crackles in the sky. Though it was not painful, I could feel, and hear, the electricity under my skin. "That's the current," she said. To help mitigate some of the expected bruising, Dr Alexiades's assistant zapped me a few times with the V-Beam laser directly following the service. Still, the next day I looked like I'd been strangled. Mottled, black, blue and tender to the touch. I laid low. Turtlenecks 24/7. Full-coverage concealer applied with a brush and shadowy lighting for unavoidable Zoom calls.

Meanwhile, three blocks up Park Avenue, Dr Amy Wechsler, another top New York dermatologist and Chanel's resident skincare expert (she created the brand's culty La Solution 10 cream), was planning Phase Two. As a complement to the tightening effects of Profound, Dr Wechsler recommended CoolMini, a treatment that would target the submental area directly under my chin. Lately, my chin had begun to resemble an on-ramp to my neck. When Dr Wechsler explained that two treatments of CoolMini – the latest iteration of CoolSculpting, equipped with a smaller handpiece – could essentially vaporise 50 per cent of the fat nesting beneath my chin, further refining my profile, it did not take me long to say yes. The treatment (priced at \$1,000 per session) worked

via cryolipolysis: the extreme cold froze, and killed, the localised fat cells, which were then metabolised (flushed out of the body via the lymph system) over a period of several months. Fat cells can expand and contract as weight fluctuates, but after puberty, they lose their ability to multiply. Once removed, they would not be coming back. Ever. So, as we say in my family: *basta, presto, ciao*.

"For the first five to seven minutes, it's going to be cold, colder and then so cold you're going to hate it," said Dr Wechsler. "But once you feel like you can't tolerate it anymore, 30 seconds later you're numb and you should feel nothing. I promise it's worth it." For the treatment, she handed me over to her sought-after lieutenant for all things cosmetic, Laura Dyer, who, it turns out, has done the most cases of CoolSculpting in America (18,000 and counting), and regularly trains other doctors on her technique, which has been adopted as the global standard. The handpiece clamped beneath my chin with the strength of an industrial vacuum cleaner, attached to a long, accordion-like tube that was faintly *Mad Max: Fury Road*. Despite the awkward hard plastic contraption suctioned on to my face, 23 minutes in, I could have taken a nap. When an assistant entered the room at some point and offered me an assortment of snacks, it reminded me, wistfully, of being on an aeroplane. The next day, I was sore, a bit swollen and numb (a sensation that would last for weeks), but nothing I would particularly consider "downtime".

Next up in Dr Wechsler's master plan: the injectable fixer-upper, whereby strategic Botox and filler would help lift the falling features that were contributing to my budding jowlettes. This would create the most immediate, visible difference, and provide a nice dose of instant gratification while we waited for the tightening, contouring

and much longer-lasting effects of the Profound and CoolMini to manifest themselves.

As Dyer evaluated my face from different angles, I showed her a photograph that hangs at the top of my stairs. It is a portrait taken by Brigitte Lacombe some years ago of my mother and me. The contours of my face look smooth and sleek, streamlined. This picture is so familiar to me, yet sometimes I stare at it and wonder, where have I gone? "You don't look that far off," Dyer said, reassuringly. "You look a little like... like you've been through a pandemic. What's happened between that picture and now is just some basic ageing."

Desperately needed Botox gave an immediate lift to the brow (and everything beneath it), which made me look happier, more polished. Less beleaguered. That, combined with a trip to my masterful eyebrow archer, transformed and cheered me immeasurably. It was as if everything was starting to pop back into place, and into focus.

I wasn't counting the vials of Restylane Lyft Dyer plowed through, but let us assume it was a lot, as she subtly restored the framework of my face, filling out hollows near my temples, building back my cheekbones, which were apparently looking "quite flat", and replacing lost mid-face volume. "The heaviness that's extending here is changing the shape of your face; you're getting longer and heavier," she explained. "As we start to fill, it's going to lift all of that back up. You're going to feel like yourself again."

It was not so much about attacking the jowls as treating everything that was contributing to them. Think of a pair of stretched-out jeans that you wash and, once they come out of the dryer, suddenly fit like they're supposed to again. I was wary of having filler injected along my jawline (would it add bulk?), but Dyer explained that, injected deeply, close to the bone, it would "help expand the framework" and sharpen the line.

Two weeks later, I was back in Dyer's chair for what she called "the refinement appointment: to see what we can do better, without overdoing anything". It reminded me of the back-and-forth one might have with a good tailor: going in for several fittings and small adjustments to make sure everything was perfect. Still mid-pandemic, I was pretty much only leaving my house to go to the grocery store and to see Dyer. She added a little more lift to the cheek and a few shots of Botox to the platysmal bands, a set of muscles in the neck that date back to prehistoric times, when we were running around on all fours and our heads needed more support. "Once these muscles relax, they'll bounce up and you'll get 2 to 3mm of lift. It has such an impact on the profile," she promised.

I'd be back to see her in about four to six months, as the Botox wore off, but the Restylane Lyft could last as long as a year and a half, she said, recommending a touch-up for good measure midway through.

Deeper change, it appeared, was afoot, too. When I took off my mask upon sitting down to a blustery socially distanced outdoor dinner with my mother, whom I had not seen in several weeks, she immediately made a comment about my jawline and neck. She saw a difference. I knew the CoolMini was working when my husband asked if he could try it, too.

My friend Megan and I did a FaceGym "private training" session together over Zoom, where we learnt toning/sculpting/detoxifying exercises such as "finger ripping", a tapping movement to the jaw and cheek that our trainer, Madalaina, described as "high-intensity cardio" for the face (which has more than 40 different muscles). "This is a beautiful movement to lift the jowls," she cooed as we learnt the "palm pull-up", pressing our palms to either side of our cheeks, *Home Alone*-style, and lifting up through the temples for several reps. "Even two minutes a day can make a difference," she lectured, encouraging us to practice the techniques while cleansing or applying moisturiser each morning.

I jade-rolled and gua sha'd with zeal, looking for any competitive edge. Dr Granite sent the famed Facialift manual roller from Skinesis, the big white wheels of which look like they belong on a moon buggy, but are designed to lift, tighten, detoxify and release jaw tension.

It was three months after the initial Profound treatment and the beginning of my jowl odyssey – truly, it had become an odyssey – when I went back to Dr Alexiades's office to check in. "Your jawline is tighter and more lifted, no question about it. I'm happy," she said. After squinting at me sideways, she decided to give me a touch more filler, injected invisibly in front of the ear, for the slightest extra lift, before proclaiming me "done". I was overwhelmed by what a lot of work it required to look as though you've had no work at all. To just look, hopefully, as you always have, and as you have remembered. As a final touch, Dr Alexiades held her iPad up to my face and took a series of triumphant "after" photographs.

A few days later, a message pinged in my inbox. Dr Alexiades had created an animation, superimposing my "after" photographs over the "befores" from my original appointment. It was possible to witness, from three different angles, my face change in slow motion. I gasped. But what was more astonishing than the undeniable improvement the video revealed was the change to the rest of the way I looked. I had more light in my eyes. I was sitting up straighter. I was holding my head higher. It worked. ■



Clockwise from left: Angelina Jolie by Craig McDean, March 2021; Adwoa Aboah for December 2017, by Steven Meisel; a Peter Lindbergh image of Linda Evangelista, September 1992; a photograph by Irving Penn, for August 1950