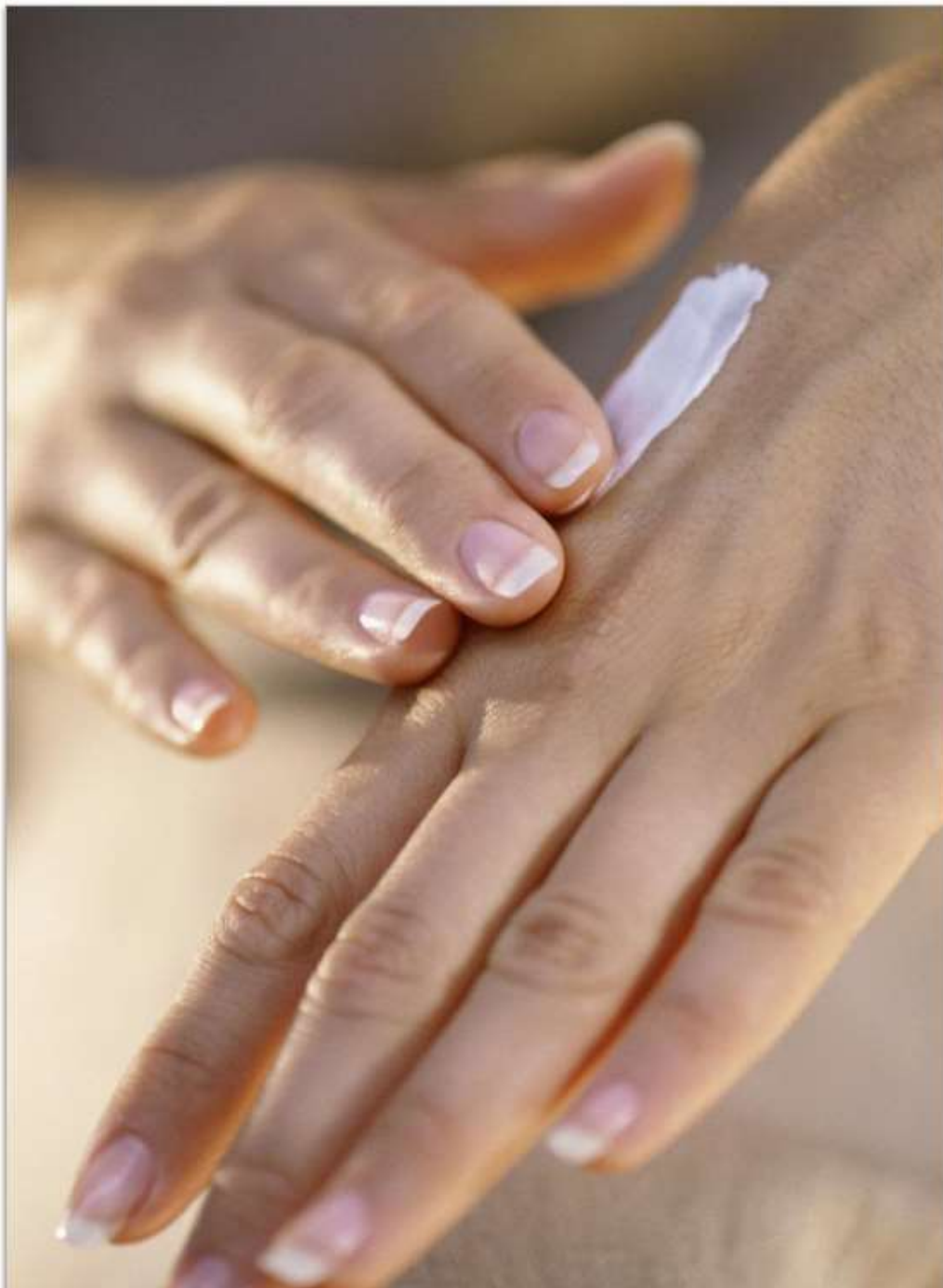




Going Skin Deep on Anti-Aging for Your Hands

By Stephanie Nolasco, September 05, 2013



Fine lines, crow's feet and sun spots — when it comes to aging, women have a lot against them.

And it looks like our hands can betray us as well.

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It was recently **reported** that more women are looking into surgical procedures to prevent and reduce the signs of aging in one's hands, comparing it to the impact of one 55-year-old youthful pop star who's been rocking fingerless gloves lately to hide her "mitts."

"Hands age just like the rest of us do," explains **Dr. Brian S. Glatt**, an assistant clinical professor at the division of plastic surgery at Mount Sinai School of Medicine. "They happen to be in a prominent place and tend to be overlooked over time as a part of the body which can make one look older.

"But prevention is also usually neglected in the hands," he adds. "How often are people concerned with using sunscreen on the backs of their hands versus concern about covering their face?"

Unlike other parts of the body, hands are often exposed to the most common culprit behind early signs of aging. Basking in the warm glow of the sun's rays damages skin's elastin, causing wrinkles, sagginess and discoloration, among other problems. And, as we get older, doctors say the delicate skin of the hands thins out, resulting in prominent veins.



“As we age, the natural fat cushions in our hands begins to decrease,” says **Dr. David E. Bank**, president of the New York State Society for Dermatology and Dermatologic Surgery. “The skin on the back of the hands is extremely thin, so any loss of fat padding will be very noticeable. The thinning of this fat barrier causes all the structures in the hand to become more visible — which means the tendons, bones and veins begin to protrude. Over time, additional changes in bone structure, as well as enlargement of veins, contribute to this ‘bony’ look.”

Bank also stresses that since our hands obtain more sun exposure than our face, it’s easy to lose the collagen that keeps them soft and supple.

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Beverly Hills-based plastic surgeon **Dr. Gabriel Chiu** reveals more women are looking into getting procedures to reverse the side effects of not slathering enough SPF daily.

“We rarely, if ever, use sunblock on our hands,” says Chiu. “We also rarely use skincare on them. Sure, many people have manicures, but who do you know is regularly applying exfoliants, moisturizers or skin lightening agents on the hands? Since applying makeup to the hands is not common practice, not even concealer tricks can prevent the appearance of ‘granny hands.’”

There are possible solutions, but it will cost you. Some doctors offer “**fat transfers**,” injecting fat from a patient’s derriere or thighs onto the hands, plumping them out. But some medical experts believe this causes more harm than good.

“Surgery is not the answer,” says **Dr. Stafford Broumand**, associate clinical professor of plastic surgery at the Mount Sinai Medical Center. “Fat injections can, over time, leave your hands looking fattened and unnatural.”

As an alternative, there are **chemical peels**, which dermatologists say will diminish the appearance of wrinkles and discoloration. However, possible complications, such as change in skin tone, scarring or even fever blisters can occur. And patients are warned that chemical peels won't prevent or slow the aging process. Doctors can also inject synthetic **fillers** that, much like a fat transfer, plumps up the skin. But these require yearly upkeep, which may not be an option for the budget-conscious.

You can always try pampering yourself instead.

READ: Are Oxygen Facials the Next Botox?

"Try a petrolatum-based ointment, like Vaseline or Aquaphor, and add honey, mint, or rosehip oil," suggests dermatologist and professor **Dr. Gary Goldenberg**, who believes this treatment can keep your hands well nourished and smooth. "Use as a night cream."

However, there's only one thing you can do to keep your hands looking their very best.

"The most important part of avoiding old hands is putting sunscreen on them every single day, just like your face, neck and chest," says **Dr. Jessica Krant**, assistant clinical professor of dermatology at SUNY Downstate Medical Center. "Preventing sun damage also prevents the brown spots and the UV radiation-related breakdown of collagen and fatty connective tissue that provide springy support in the skin."