

BROW-BEATEN

Are you fed up with constant comments that you look angry or tired? Blame gravity. As we age our brows droop, giving us a permanent scowl. A flat brow is far more masculine. Droopy brows then fall forward and squash the eyelids, making us look tired. Accelerated by stress, brows can start drooping in our thirties.

'Pre-juvenation' non-surgical treatments are becoming increasingly popular among millennials who prefer a more discreet gradual change over surgery. Experienced practitioners are recommending a stealth approach: the clever combination of compatible treatments which can delay surgery. The CC Brow Lift is a non-surgical alternative to a brow lift: when you lift the brow, you lift the eye. Botox raises the eyebrows then Thermage smooths and tightens sagging skin on the eyelids and forehead.

Surgical brow lifts have become less popular since the advent of the Botox brow lift, which paralyses the muscles that pull the brow down. This is an advanced technique which requires an expert understanding of muscular anatomy as well as artistic skill: our brows are so expressive. Raising the brow isn't straightforward as thirteen muscles pull it down, but strategically placed Botox under the arch can lift sagging eyebrows by a couple of millimetres.

Early signs of loose skin on the eyelids and forehead will benefit from Thermage non-surgical tightening to enhance the Botox brow lift. If you start treatments in your late 30s, you can delay the need for eyelid surgery. Radio frequency gently heats and tightens collagen deep in our skin, promoting new collagen growth, especially on a younger person. You may need more than one session and results appear gradually after three to six months as new collagen is formed. There is little downtime because the outer layer of skin (epidermis) is protected by a cooling system so any redness (like a mild sunburn) or swelling disappear quickly. Results can last up to two years, unless you have very sun-damaged skin. Like Botox, it's a very safe treatment.

At Cosme we will advise you how to look after the delicate skin around the eyes, which is five times more porous than your facial skin and therefore more vulnerable to pollution, UV rays and cigarette smoke. Prolong your treatments by protecting your collagen. Look for the CE safety label on sunglasses which guarantees that lenses filter out at least 99% of UV rays. Wear sunscreen on your eyelids all year round and a wide brimmed hat when you are out in the sun.

Fortunately finer eyelid skin responds quickly to a good quality eye serum. Avoid heavy eye creams which tend to sit on the surface and trap too much moisture in the skin which causes swelling and congestion. Similarly the high water content in face creams causes puffiness. Lightly tap around the orbital bone instead of rubbing, which can stretch the skin. Cut down on sugar and processed carbohydrates which cause inflammation that can lead to puffiness and dark shadows.

It's not surprising that eyebrow shaping has become such essential grooming: a cleverly shaped arch can give the illusion of lift. Think of your eyebrows as coat hangers: they give shape and contour to the whole eye area. But be careful not to pluck too much, which will make your eyes look smaller and your nose bigger.

At Cosme we only recommend practitioners who have experience of combining treatments. A good doctor will not over-inject and knows when to stop. Botox looks easy, and is frequently taught in inadequate one day courses, but it is incredibly technique sensitive. If placed too deeply below the muscle, or too superficially in the dermis, it will be ineffective.