

Smart ways to live well

MARCH 2008

# Prevention

5 EASY  
HEALTH  
BOOSTS  
p. 32

## GET YOUR BODY BACK!

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**Tired of hiding** your age underneath a turtleneck? Thank the hierarchy of skin care. Most of us have spent decades pampering our faces, only to have the wear and tear on our necks give us away. (Who knew the skin on your neck is the thinnest on the body, making it more susceptible to damage?) As it turns out, some of the very anti-aging products you use on your face can help your neck look younger, too. We've also uncovered the newest in-office treatments that, although expensive, are proven to give your face a prettier pedestal. Follow this guide and say good-bye turtlenecks, hello V-necks!

#### NECK NUISANCE

## DARK SPLOTCHES

UV exposure overstimulates pigment-producing cells, causing blotchiness.

#### THE FIX

■ **A bleaching cream** that contains kojic acid or mushroom or licorice extract can lighten dark spots, but be patient: Results may take months. Use products made with hydroquinone cautiously; the fader can be irritating. "This area is drier and more sensitive because it contains fewer lubricating oil glands," says Heidi Waldorf, MD, director of laser and cosmetic dermatology at Mount Sinai School of Medicine.

■ **Anti-agers** such as retinol- or alpha hydroxy acid-based creams help to drive the lightening agents deeper into your skin, making them more effective. To reduce irritation, use them on your neck every third evening and slowly work up to nightly application.

■ **A broad-spectrum sunscreen** of at least SPF 15 worn daily can prevent more spots. For the best protection, look for one with avobenzone (aka Parsol 1789), Helioplex, or Mexoryl.

#### NECK NUISANCE

## WRINKLES

Years of sunlight breaks down collagen fibers responsible for keeping skin youthful and firm.

#### THE FIX

■ **Skin care products**, including those containing retinol and peptides, can build collagen and smooth skin—even reducing the so-called tree-ring lines.

■ **In-office options** are considered the gold standard, says Ronald Moy, MD, a professor at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA. One to consider: fractionated resurfacing, with lasers such as Fraxel and Affirm. They stimulate cell turnover and the production of fresh collagen by making thousands of microscopic wounds over 20% of your skin. Because the surrounding skin is left untouched, healing time is minimal. The slight redness it causes subsides within a few days. You'll see significant improvement: Fine lines are often reduced by up to 50% after five or six monthly treatments at \$500 a pop.

#### NECK NUISANCE

## TURKEY WATTLE

This fleshy flap of skin forms underneath your neck as a result of excess fat, loose skin, and weak muscles.

#### THE FIX

■ **Liposuction** performed under local anesthesia is a quick fix, says Yael

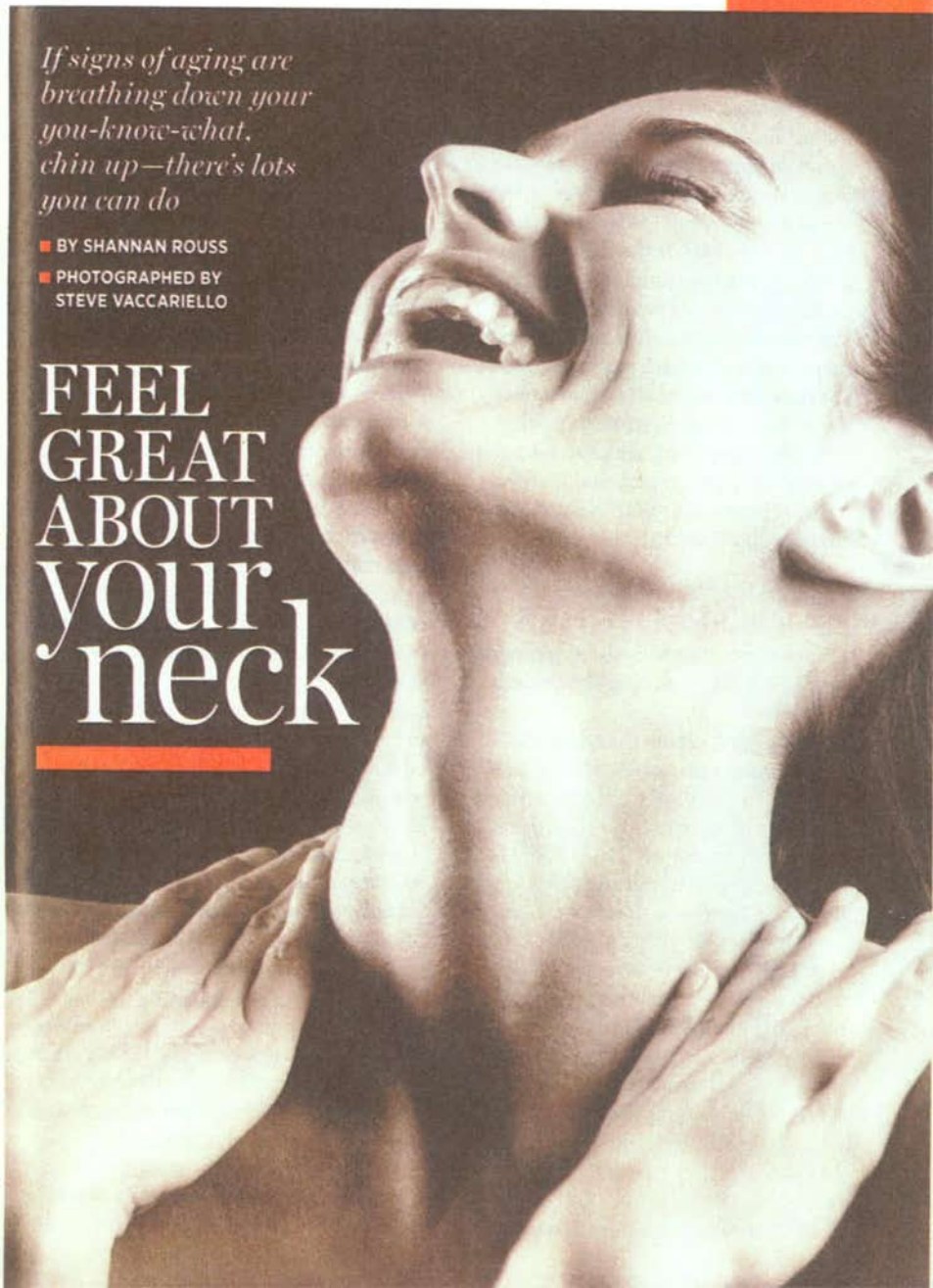
*If signs of aging are  
breathing down your  
you-know-what,  
chin up—there's lots  
you can do*

■ BY SHANNAN ROUSS

■ PHOTOGRAPHED BY  
STEVE VACCARIELLO

# FEEL GREAT ABOUT your neck

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Halaas, MD, a facial plastic surgeon in New York City. During the half-hour procedure, which costs around \$2,500, small incisions are made behind the ears or below the chin; excess fat is vacuumed out via tiny suction tubes.

■ To reduce bruising and swelling, which can last up to 2 weeks, another option is **ultrasound-assisted lipo**, which employs sound waves that liquefy fat before it's suctioned out. (With either treatment, you'll need to wear a neck sling for 2 weeks to help skin re-drape properly.)

■ If you have excess skin, you may need to **pair lipo with a neck lift** to completely regain firmness. During the 1- to 2-hour procedure, which costs about \$1,000 more, small incisions are made behind your ears or under your chin and then excess skin is trimmed, lifted, and sutured into place.

#### NECK NUISANCE

### BANDING

These vertical cords appear when the platysma, the thin sheet of muscle that covers the neck, begins to stretch out of shape, says Halaas.

#### THE FIX

■ **Botox** injected directly into the platysma temporarily smooths the cords by relaxing the muscle. Each treatment costs about \$500 and lasts approximately 4 months.

■ **Surgery** is a more permanent option. During a platysmaplasty, which runs about \$4,000, the muscle is tightened and anchored through a small incision under the chin. Any post-op bruising and swelling should subside within a week. Then your age will be your secret to keep or reveal. ■

## NECK PRODUCTS WE LOVE

**1. SMOOTH SKIN** With light-reflecting technology, **Benefit Firmology** (\$30; [benefitcosmetics.com](http://benefitcosmetics.com)) restores a glow.

**2. LIGHTEN SUNSPOTS** Mushroom extract in **BeFine Food Skin Care Neck Cream** (\$24; CVS) evens out skin tone.

**3. PREVENT DAMAGE** Daily use of **L'Oréal Paris Collagen Remodeler Contouring Moisturizer for Face and Neck SPF 15** (\$20; drugstores) fends off UV aging.

**4. REDUCE SAGGING** The collagen boosters chlorella extract and hydroxyproline in **Shiseido Benefiance Concentrated Neck Contour Treatment** (\$48; Macy's) tighten skin.

