



# Tips to YOUNGER Looking LIPS

**K**issable lips. Sensuous lips. Youthful, plump and delicious lips. Women dress their lips daily with balm, gloss or lipstick. We worry about them when they get dry and, heaven forbid, cracked. We exercise them often with thoughtless or meaningful conversation. Often we don't think too much about them – except for a fleeting moment when we look in the mirror.

But we'd better not forget about them. Lips

are an important feature. Most men say they notice a potential date's pout seconds after looking into their eyes. The trouble is that, like the forehead, the youthful appearance of lips degrades as time goes by.

A recent poll in Australia found that lips rate highly on the attractiveness scale. Full lips are seen as sensual and kissable, whereas thin, tight lips are seen as a sign of ageing – it can make women look sour-faced, mean and unsexy.

The poll found that 50 percent of women would like to change something about their lips, including the volume or plumpness (28%), definition (28%) or the shape of their lips (18%). Most of these women would get work done if the treatment was safe, natural and long-lasting.

Given the horrendous examples set by celebrities (hello, trout pout) it's no wonder while most of us would love to have our lips enhanced, very few of us do for fear of looking

like a cartoon caricature. Fat, puffy, balloon-like lips are often what springs to mind when considering lip treatments; not youthful, natural enhancement, which is what should be happening.

Treating the lower half of the face is still lagging behind, compared to the frenzy to eradicate lines in the upper half. Women are more-or-less comfortable with the idea of Botox and Juvéderm in the forehead and around the eyes, with many doing so without considering the ageing effects around the mouth.

But just as lines above the brow or crinkles around eyes can add years to your age, so can a mouth that bears all the signs of age – drooping corners, an undefined lip-line and lack of volume. In fact, considered use of Botox and Juvéderm around the mouth can work wonders and make significant, but subtle, enhancements.

The process of facial ageing includes the diminishing of the bone under lips that keeps the structure of the mouth full. We also lose muscle and fat around the lower half of the face.

Those who suffer from wandering lipstick, with thin crepey lines around the mouth, are well aware that over time, the lip border loses its crispness, gets thinner and the naso-labial lines deepen. All of these factors need to be considered when addressing concerns in the lower half of the face – not just the size of lips.

Dr Teresa Cattin is passionate about the appearance of this half of the face. As president of the New Zealand College of Appearance Medicine, she has been giving seminars throughout New Zealand and Australia teaching doctors how to improve the mouth area naturally.

"Basically it's not about changing the shape or exaggerating the look, but taking it back to where it should be – where it might have been before, in the case of an older client, or where it could be in a younger client."

She says there are two types of clients – the young that want to be 'glamourised', and the older that want to retain a youthful appearance. But most importantly, Dr Cattin stresses that it must be done naturally and it must take the whole face into consideration.

Unlike going to a hairdresser for a new haircut, taking a celebrity photo as an example is the worst thing you can do.

You shouldn't ask for someone else's lips, she says, because you need to consider if they will fit your face.

One often-cited celebrity is Angelina Jolie. "Jolie's lips work for her because she has big eyes. If you made her eyes smaller, her lips would look too big, if you make her lips smaller, her jaw looks too strong."

Not that celebrities are always the best examples. Lots of paparazzi photos show stars with that bee-stung look – an upper lip that is, shock horror, just as big or bigger than the bottom lip. Or both lips that are frighteningly large compared to the face. It's these bad-case scenario photos that have been giving the treatment a bad reputation and have only heightened the concern and fear over such a procedure.

It shouldn't happen.

Appearance medicine doctors are taught to follow the mathematical formula of beauty, an equation first described by Euclid in 300BC. It defines the relationship between two dimensions or different points of a line and it's an equation that our brain instantly resonates with. It is 1:1.6 (phi). This ratio extends to all parts of the body, not just the face. But it also applies to features on the face. The ideal lip has

this proportion from the base of the nose to the top of the upper lip, and the bottom of the lower lip to the chin.

"If a client has already got perfectly proportioned lips, I can only give them more volume equally to the upper and lower lip to keep the ratio right," explains Dr Cattin.

The aim is to enhance, not exaggerate. Lips must be matched to the rest of the face and all features come into consideration – eyes, cheeks, face width, jaw width. The treatment might be a subtle lift, barely noticeable to the untrained eye, but the result can be tremendous.

It's amazing what a difference the mouth makes to the rest of the face. And Dr Cattin can do far more than you'd think, including lifting and firming the neck to remove jowls. If someone has an overactive masseter muscle, from clenching the jaw or chewing gum, Botox can relax that muscle and make it less prominent – and can also save teeth from being ground down and relieve tension headaches. Perhaps one of the more popular uses for Botox and Juvéderm on the lower half of the face is to reduce the depth of the naso-labial lines running from the nose to the mouth.

But for those who were born outside the norm and who have a thin upper lip, a little lift of the cupid's bow creates a youthful pout and more volume balances the upper and lower lips out.

