

TOP FLIGHT: *BEST FACIAL WORKOUTS*

Violet Grey April 3, 2016

Some of 2016's most important exercise routines target not your thighs or your abs, but your skin—and, best of all, you can do most while lying down.

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While you're already hard at work on your abs at Pilates and boosting your derriere at Ballet Beautiful, this year it's worth considering a new toning and sculpting routine—for your face. While the facial workout has become a buzzword recently thanks to the praise of makeup artists like Lisa Eldridge, it is not just a facialist's parlor trick or a backstage secret weapon. Rather, it's an age-old practice used in traditional Chinese medicine since the eighteenth century. Practitioners work to stimulate the facial muscles, which in turn improves blood circulation, reduces puffiness, and ultimately reveals extra-taut skin, killer cheekbones, and a smooth forehead. Here, we highlight some of the best—and easiest—ways to keep your face in shape without breaking a sweat.

PUT THE PRESSURE ON

The Acupressure Face-Lift

Using the same basic principles as acupuncture, acupressure employs a wand (or a finger) to gently massage pressure points on your face and head (there are more than 100 of them). The outcome? It takes down fine lines and wrinkles, aids digestion, improves circulation, and is even said to reduce headaches and insomnia. [Shellie Goldstein](#), M.S., L.Ac., of [Hamptons Acupuncture](#) (known for its dedication to graceful aging), suggests massaging the “win tang” point, located above the bridge of your nose, for 5 to 10 seconds three times a day (ideally with a tool, like Goldstein's [Touch and Glow](#) wand, so you don't expend your own energy). This will relax your forehead—and the rest of your body, too.

Tatcha Akari Gold Massager

Inspired by Japanese acupressure, [Tatcha's gold leaf massager](#) is most effective when chilled in the morning (to stimulate skin and decrease puffiness) and heated via warm water by evening (to encourage blood flow and healing before you sleep). Its organic rounded shape and the anti-inflammatory properties of gold make it ideal for a facial massage (two excellent options are outlined on [Tatcha.com](#)). For a rejuvenating eye massage, place the narrow end of the tool at the outer corner of the eye and, applying almost no pressure, slide the massager toward the nose. Next, place the tool at the inner corner of the eye and, applying a little more pressure, slide outward along the browline while pressing slightly harder. Repeat five times on each eye.



[TATCHA AKARI GOLD MASSAGER VIEW NOW](#)

THE FACE MASSAGE

Isabelle Bellis' Sculpting Massage

Facialist [Isabelle Bellis](#) has a waiting list that stretches beyond the six-month mark, and her unique sculpting massaging (she trained at the school of famed aesthetician [Joelle Ciocco](#), godmother of the form) is just one of the reasons. “A properly tailored neck and face [sculpture massage](#) strengthens facial muscles, effectively reshaping the face—it’s similar to working with clay to form a sculpture,” she explains.

While this might conjure the image of a vigorous (and borderline painful) post-tennis deep-tissue massage, Bellis’ technique relies on a very soft touch or, as she describes it, a “caress.” Using soft but swift upward motions and pressing even more gently around the eyes, Bellis delivers plumping and anti-aging results that devotees swear to in lieu of Botox and fillers. And while there’s no substitute for Bellis’ magic touch, she suggests trying the massage at home (you can do it with your usual gentle cleanser) to download some of its benefits into your daily routine.

The D.I.Y. Detox Massage

Achievable with any moisturizer (although we favor [Charlotte Tilbury's Magic Cream](#)), a D.I.Y. facial massage takes only 2 to 5 minutes, but yields myriad benefits. “Massaging your skin before makeup application will help increase blood circulation, which is important for flushing out toxins. I usually do it while applying moisturizer to get the benefits while also helping skin absorb the product better,” says makeup artist [Carola Gonzalez](#), who massages her clients’ faces before red carpet events. Again, use the circular movement method (as suggested by Bellis), massaging the cream all over your face before ending with the eye area.



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ROLL IT OUT

The Chinese Jade Roller

In traditional Chinese medicine, jade is known for its healing powers. Historically, practitioners used jade stones in massage to balance the flow of qi (energy flow), boost immunity, and stimulate healing. Today, sleek facial [roller tools](#) made from the stone (which you can use from the comfort of your vanity) have become popular for their ability to increase circulation, smooth away fine lines, aid in lymphatic drainage, and reduce puffiness. For best results, roll upward after applying serum or moisturizer.

The German Dermaroller

Aesthetician [Melanie Simon](#) is worshipped for her nano-current technology practices, so when she endorses a user-friendly facial roller that works to stimulate collagen production, reduce scarring, and minimize the size of your pores, in-the-know beauty buffs are on board. And with good reason: Simon's favorite German [Dermaroller](#) isn't actually electric, but works by making tiny punctures in the skin, sending blood to cells and encouraging healing and collagen production. Simply roll the device over your face and neck two times per week, slathering on a serum afterward for optimal results. Immediate effects include some cheek redness, not unlike a post-run flush.

THE ACUPUNCTURE APPROACH

Facial Acupuncture

While acupuncture is best known for its ability to help with aches and pains, it can also reduce (and sometimes even remove) fine lines and wrinkles, scarring, acne, and puffiness. When inserted, each tiny needle stimulates a muscle along a specific path line, exercising it and providing multiple skincare benefits. [Soo-Mi Hwang](#) of New York's [SanaVita Center for Holistic Cleansing](#), who has reached celebrity status among her New York clients for her highly effective [facial acupuncture](#) ministrations, promises the same age-erasing results as fillers or Botox.

Learn more about the [best facial workouts](#) & more at [VIOLETGREY.com](#)