



RIGHT ANGLE

The perfect jawline does more than enhance your profile. It can also turn back the clock. By Megan Deem

So much attention is paid to whether our foreheads are smooth or our lips full, but the secret to a beautiful profile actually resides farther down—in the jaw and its defined contours. According to a quick poll of dermatologists and plastic surgeons, the jaw is the zone inspiring concerned youth-seekers to beat a path to the doctor's office. "In two hours today, I treated three people for jowls," says New York City dermatologist David Goldberg, MD.

And why not? Just as hair defines the top part of the face, the jaw gives shape to the lower half. Celebrities such as Angelina

Jolie and Jessica Alba—even when pregnant—have crisp, L-shape jawbones that scream movie star. (In Hollywood, nothing says character actor like a weak chin.) Victoria Beckham, never one to miss a marketing opportunity, has even launched a makeup line in Japan called V-Sculpt, which is intended to help women hollow beneath their cheekbones and sharpen their jawlines to get what Beckham calls "that sculpt" when viewed from the front.

If you don't like the way your chin looks, you can blame time, your parents, and sometimes yourself, but know you're not alone. "Women as young as 25 or 30 may notice sagging," Goldberg says. "It has to do with genetics, gravity, and aging."

Surprisingly, given its major role in caus-

ing lines and spots, UV exposure isn't the No. 1 cause of heavy jowls. "Sun affects skin quality, but only the superficial layers; UV doesn't penetrate deep enough to reach muscle and fat, and those are really responsible for severe hanging skin," Goldberg says. "And since it's not a sun issue, ethnicity plays no role at all. Dark skin or light skin, we're all in the same boat."

The pouchy skin pockets are "one of those things that if you look for them, you'll find them," says Bryan Mendelson, MD, a plastic surgeon in Melbourne, Australia. "All laxity shows up with the influence of gravity. The worst thing for a woman is to bend her head down toward a mirror, because she'll see jowls easily." And while that slack tissue may disappear the moment

she straightens her Head, her reflection, like a crystal ball, has provided a glimpse into the future.

INSTANT FEEDBACK

In certain cases, the fastest way to enhance your profile has very little to do with the jaw itself. "When you remove facial hair, such as the peach fuzz along the sides of the face, you automatically create more definition," says **Berenice S. Rothenberg**, owner of **Berenice Electrolysis & Personal Beauty Center**, the secret of many a smooth-skinned Manhattan social. "The hair diffuses light, so everything is blurred together; there are no sharp lines. When it's gone, light can

(A person may experience a slight metallic taste.) "There's no resulting redness," Bicaj says, "so I see women who come in before a big night out to get their best, firmest skin." Bicaj is also popular among actresses who have major TV appearances scheduled—pictures can always be Photoshopped, but television reveals every flaw.

For those willing to wait the three to five months it takes to see longer-lasting results, Miami and NYC dermatologist **Fredric Brandt, MD**, uses the **Aluma** radio frequency machine along the jawbone to deliver collagen-building thermal energy deep into tissue with the idea that the springy new fibers will firm the area and

the chairman of the department of plastic surgery at the University of Texas **Southwestern Medical Center** in Dallas, as well as one of the study authors. "As we age, pads of fat in the cheeks can slide over this ligament, which can itself weaken and fall toward the neck." The displaced cheek tissue can bulge out around the corners of the mouth; the ligament and everything below it may end up hanging off the jawbone.

Confronted with this situation, doctors such as Brandt will inject a **hyaluronic-acid-based filler** such as **Restylane** or **Perlane** in the cheek section to replace what's missing, propping the skin back up and minimizing marionette lines, as well as any mysterious lower-face bulges. "Some people liposuction the fat out, but I generally use the filler to fill in the fat, and the filler will also help to

the fat and the skin will also pull up a stack of

to injectables" in the cheeks are useful for correcting another age-related chin change: A recent study published in *Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery* found that the mandible continues to grow as a person gets older. Since previous research in *Nature* has proven that a small, narrow lower face signifies youth and beauty, a doctor may choose to plump the upper part of the face to make the jaw seem more petite. "We also found that women's jawbones grow more than men's," says **Rohrich**, one of the new report's authors. "It's probably estrogen-related, since that hormone has a significant effect on bony growth. In addition, we noticed that women are more likely than men to develop jowls, which may also indicate an estrogen link."

When you're content with the size of your jawbone, but not the way it flattens into your neck, a **filler** can also mold contours and definition for a more pleasing profile. "If you weren't born with an angular jaw and you want one, we can build it out with **Perlane** along the bone, for example," Brandt says.

After he's finished plumping, Brandt injects Botox into the platysma muscles of the neck, the ones that pull down on the jaw, exacerbating the problem. "Once you relax those, they stop tugging so much on the jawline," he says.

SHORT STOP

What's known as a "weak chin" is actually a skeletal deformity resulting in a **retruded** jawbone. (Rohrich believes the ideal female chin is two millimeters behind a vertical line drawn from the upper lip.) One permanent correction is a solid **silicone** implant. In more extreme cases, sur-



Unfortunately, all the jaw-clenching or gum chewing in the world won't chisel away the sag.

reflect better off the planes of the face."

Rothenberg relies on doses of the **GentleLase** laser to eradicate hair long-term, but waxing would have the same effect, albeit not a lasting one. (Regardless of the removal procedure, any regrowth will look finer.) ELLE editors who submitted to Rothenberg's touch were initially skeptical, but soon discovered cheekbones they didn't know they had and likened the experience to a session with a particularly gifted makeup artist: They noticed an immediate hollowing in the cheek area, as well as a more pronounced jawbone. "I was nervous at first, just because I wondered if it would look weird to have no hair there," one staffer says. "But it was crazy—I could see more angles in my face right away."

THE SKIN YOU'RE IN

For impatient types who want improvements yesterday, Manhattan facialist **Aida Bicaj**, renowned for her complexion-sculpting treatments, uses the **Biologique Recherche Remodeling Face Machine** to induce temporary tautness. It generates a painless electric pulse that stimulates skin and muscle tissue, causing them to contract for at least a few hours.

Bicaj begins the hour-long session just below the chin. Working back toward the ear, she places two antiaging-serum-soaked sponges hooked to electrodes (which transmit currents under the tissue from one sponge to the other) along facial bones, holding them in place for about 10 seconds.

pick up slack. An ELLE guinea pig submitted to Brandt's jaw-remodeling procedure and noted that although friends couldn't pinpoint exactly what had changed, they did remark that "I already looked different in a good way."

According to Goldberg, some patients need only one treatment with a radio frequency machine, whereas other people can require up to three, spaced one month apart. The effect remains apparent for two to three years. But buyer beware: "Don't even try if muscle or fat are part of the problem; it's a waste of money," he says. "These machines work only on skin." (For a quick self-diagnosis, pinch the offending area with your fingertips. "If skin alone is your problem, your thumb and forefinger will almost touch," Goldberg says. "If there's also muscle or fat present, then the distance between the two points will be much greater.")

CORNER POCKET

If one's lower face brings to mind a squirrel storing nuts, it's likely that superficial cheek fat has succumbed to gravity, pushing everything below it even further earthward—or into a pool by your bottom teeth. A recent study in the journal *Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery* found that cheek and jowl fat are actually two separate entities and that the ligament dividing them acts as a retaining wall. "The mandibular septum on the outside of the jaw holds skin and muscle together," says **Rod Rohrich, MD**,