

MY NECK was becoming more Jabba the Hutt than Princess Leia, but what to do about it? I could slather on all manner of expensive creams and unctions made from ingredients culled from the rain-forest, oceans or Himalayas or surrender myself to the surgeon's knife. The former seemed ineffective and the latter way too scary. Then I heard about neck and jawline enhancement.

Dr Lilianna Laird took a good look at my jelly jowls and said she knew exactly what would help. To strengthen my jawline she would inject botox into it, including a shot in the mentalis muscle so the chin wouldn't flatten when I talked, then she would inject Juvederm, a filler, into the chin and jawline to even out my jowls. All this would give the illusion of a sharper profile. And without the need for any scalpels.

I didn't feel a thing as Dr Laird applied plenty of anaesthetic cream before she started work, filling me in on this latest of cosmetic procedures while we waited for it to take effect.

"Not everyone wants to go for surgery but they might want to make an improvement to their neck. That's where fillers and Botox come in. The results are not going to be extreme like you get if you have surgery, but they're a lot more noticeable than just cream. So it's good for people who don't want to go to extremes," she says.

Ideal for those in their forties, when the skin isn't yet too saggy, jawline enhancement it is also popular with younger people who want more definition on their chin. Because most of the fillers are made of hyaluronic acid, a product the body produces anyway, they don't need to be prescribed by doctors, although in Dr Laird's case, she's a former accident and emergency medic who has also specialised in dermatology.

"We're trying to soften and sharpen, not completely change people's faces," she says. "It's for those who want to look a little bit fresher, softer and sharper. We soften some lines and sharpen others, such as the jaw, to create a clearer profile."

Unlike brow and eye treatments, those involving the lower face are more innovative and less traditional. Much of the success of the jaw enhancement comes down to Dr Laird's aesthetic judgment.



"It's like plumbing and rewiring a house," she says. "It's not something people are going to say, 'Oh, you've had whatever done'. It's discreet. You are not going to suddenly get a new you, but most of our clients don't want to look extreme. Forty per cent don't tell their partner and they don't notice. We have an expanding male clientele too."

Dr Laird has been at Beyond MediSpa, in Harvey Nichols, Edinburgh, since August last year and prior to that her CV includes A&E and dermatological work at the Victoria and Southern General hospitals in Glasgow and A&E at Glasgow Royal. She always enjoyed minor surgical procedures and now relishes the transformative power of cosmetic treatments. "The best thing about my job is if someone has a problem you get immediate results. I have always liked that ability to just fix it."

And as she hands me the mirror after about 45 minutes of syringe work, I can see she has fixed it for me. Result. My jawline is definitely stronger and, while I can still frown, over the next couple of weeks my furrowed brow becomes smoother than a shaved Brendan Cole smeared in butter and slid on to a polished dancefloor.

Fillers, including Juvederm and Restylane, last for nine months and start at £200 while Botox lasts for four months and starts at £250. MediSpa is currently offering 15 per cent off all injectable procedures until the end of August.

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