



FACIAL FITNESS

Rewind a decade or so and the idea of 'exercising your face' would raise a few eyebrows - and quite often be regarded as eccentric, old-fashioned and probably pointless. But that's all changed in recent years, with an influx of game-changing, face-saving workouts, including facial yoga, Pilates and high-energy toning exercises. These new regimes claim to offer a welcome alternative to expensive - and sometimes invasive - skin treatments. But could they hold the answer to youthful looks?

PLUMP AND TONE

Now a familiar face on TV and in the press, Danièle Collins (faceyogaguru.com) was the trailblazer for facial yoga in the UK. Seen as the go-to expert in the field, she created her eponymous Face Yoga Method 15 years ago. 'It's a combination of traditional Eastern techniques and more scientifically based modern exercises and massage,' she explains. 'I designed it so everyone could use it in their own homes. It took a lot of hard work to bring it into the mainstream. As with all "new" concepts, it took a while for people to understand and embrace it, but it's been so wonderful to see it grow in popularity.'

Collins now trains others to teach her Face Yoga techniques - with more than 600 trained teachers in 50 countries worldwide. Among her former students are sisters Camille Bankes and Philippa Mitchell. 'It made sense to us that facial muscles need a workout in order to stay toned and plump, and that boosting the circulation in your face would lead to a glowing complexion,' they say. In January, the pair launched Luminous Facial Yoga (luminous-london.com), a subscription-based website that allows members access to a suite of facial yoga and massage tutorials and regimes for £2.99 per month.

TURN BACK TIME

'We've been overwhelmed by the response,' says Bankes. 'Lots of our

members say they'd been intrigued by the idea of facial yoga for a while but had no idea where to begin - which is how we felt before we trained as teachers ourselves. It's an affordable, sustainable and holistic approach to a healthy-looking face, rather than a quick fix, and our members seem to embrace that.'

Glowing reports from satisfied customers aside, there's been some very positive research into the long-term effects of facial exercises.

A 30-minute daily or alternate-day face yoga routine - designed to enlarge and strengthen the facial muscles, as you would the muscles of your body - significantly improves the facial appearance of middle-aged women, according to dermatologists at Northwestern University in the US. In fact, 20 weeks into the 2018 study, the average drop in 'age appearance' - using a

standardised facial ageing scale - was almost three years.

As Bankes and Mitchell point out, the rising popularity of facial workouts is also down to the growing trend for incorporating wellness into beauty, and taking a more holistic approach to looking good. 'Facial massage is a big part of facial yoga - and many big brands are now highlighting the importance of massaging your face as part of your beauty regime,' says Bankes. 'People are increasingly aware that effective therapies don't have to come with big

'Face yoga is an affordable, sustainable and holistic approach to a healthy-looking face'

FACIAL PILATES

It's not all about yoga, though. Created by Pilates teacher Carme Farré, FaceToned Facial Fitness (facetoned.com) is a facial Pilates routine. 'It uses Pilates principles to build muscle strength in the face,' says Farré. 'Unlike other facial workouts, it's a programme with structure - not just random exercises - to ensure you train the muscles correctly.' Using isotonic and isometric exercises, it works the 'core facial muscles', to structure the face from the inside out, then moves on to more superficial muscles surrounding the eyes, cheek, chin and neck.

Another factor that sets FaceToned apart from other facial workouts is that it includes diet and skincare tips. Farré recently launched the FaceToned app (facetoned.com), which offers live classes, tutorials, workouts and recipes for \$25 a month or \$250 a year. Worth the cost? A recent survey of members found they'd noticed: more facial toning and definition; more volume in their cheeks; a reduction in laughter lines and forehead wrinkles; and more definition in the jaw and jowls.