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# ERASE SUN DAMAGE

*Banish brown spots and wrinkles with these highly effective procedures and products. By Anne-Marie Guarnieri*

THERE ARE MANY THINGS to love about the sun (vitamin D, sunsets). Unfortunately, the star at the center of our solar system doesn't have the best relationship with our skin, and this contentiousness makes itself known via sun damage, which involves so much more than just dark spots—there's rough skin, broken capillaries, and wrinkles too. But here's the good news: Whether you've only just started to notice redness and lines, or have existing damage that you'd like to treat, science—and time—is on your side. An important note: No matter what the state of your skin, make sure you have a thorough skin-cancer screening with a dermatologist every year.

**AT THE DERM** How you decide to treat your sun damage depends on several factors: the type (or types) and the severity. For brown spots, wrinkles, and broken blood vessels, it used to be the case that you'd need a variety of lasers or treatments to see improvement. Not so these days, says Bruce Katz, a New York dermatologist. He recommends the LightPod Neo rejuvenating laser, which can tackle multiple issues at once, is safe for all skin tones, causes little or no discomfort, and promises no downtime.

"It's color-blind—it's not affected by the pigment in the skin. We can adjust the laser's energy settings to the skin type and the application," Katz says. The recommended number of biweekly treatments is three or four, depending on the intensity of the damage, and results are on par with a fractional CO<sub>2</sub> laser. Cost: A full face is \$750 to \$850, whereas the face, neck, and décolletage clock in at \$1,500 to \$2,000.

Los Angeles dermatologist Harold Lancer favors a two-step treatment using both the Halo hybrid fractional laser and BBLs BroadBand Light. "BBLs is the new, more-specific, higher-energy version of intense pulsed light, and can be used anywhere on the body," he explains. That's followed by the Halo, a resurfacing laser that uses ablative and non-ablative wavelengths to remove damaged skin and trigger new growth. (Lancer is skeptical about any sun-damage treatment that claims to have zero downtime: "If it doesn't involve any downtime, then you threw your money out. The bottom line is, if there's no healing involved, there's no stimulation of tissue repair and new formation.") Pain can be moderate, and Lancer says that you'll have to lie low for five to seven days post-treatment. "It looks like a first-class sunburn," he says. Cost: \$1,500–\$2,500

for the face and neck. You can expect to see results after one session.

But as New York dermatologist Heidi Waldorf asserts, newer doesn't necessarily mean better. She regularly reaches for tried-and-true options like the Fraxel Dual, Clear + Brilliant, and YAG lasers or a combination thereof. "The Fraxel Dual is still a go-to," Waldorf says. "It does very well for moderate wrinkles. And I combine it with a YAG laser for the darkest brown spots." Cost: \$1,000–\$1,500 for the Fraxel Dual; \$300–\$800 for a YAG.

**AT-HOME SKIN CARE** You know this, but it bears repeating: Use sunscreen every day with a minimum of SPF 30, such as Shiseido Extra Smooth Sun Protection Lotion SPF 38 PA++ (\$34) or La Prairie Anti-Aging Emulsion SPF 30 (\$230). And in case you're thinking, "What's the point? All my sun damage has already been done," that's a myth, stresses Katz. "You can continue to get sun damage into your 70s and 80s if you're not being careful," he says.

Second, step up your skin regimen—or start one, if you haven't already. Ideally, say both Waldorf and Lancer, it will include a retinoid-based product to reduce fine lines and minor discoloration. We like Olay ProX Deep Wrinkle Treatment (\$33.99) and Neutrogena Rapid Wrinkle Repair Serum (\$21.99). To fade mild dark spots, Waldorf recommends a weekly glycolic-acid peel, like Dr. Dennis Gross Alpha Beta Medi-Spa Peel (\$110 for 16) and NeoStrata Skin Active Perfecting Peel (\$82 for 13), but skip the retinoid on days you do the peel. For day, use an antioxidant serum or cream that contains peptides. Try Caudalie Resveratrol Lift Firming Serum (\$82) or Lancer The Method: Nourish (\$125). The key is to stick with it—you'll begin to see improvement in four to six weeks. Use the same products on your neck, chest, and the backs of your hands.

Finally, keep in mind that should you want to explore a stronger remedy (lasers, deep peels), studies have indicated that the better quality your skin is in pre-treatment, the better and longer-lasting the results will be. "I have people who say, 'I don't have time for a skin-care program. I just want you to laser me from head to toe.' And I say, 'Even with a suitcase of cash, that isn't going to happen,'" says Lancer. "'Let's try a simple program, and give it four weeks.'" Then perhaps it's time to look to the light. ■