



# Hand Jive

## FOUR STEPS TO YOUNGER-LOOKING HANDS

by Fiona Wright, MD

Many women will look in the mirror and see their face. And then they look at their hands and say, “Whoa, these are looking 10 to 20 years older than my face!” Because our hands receive so much exposure, they are one of the first places on our bodies to show visible signs of aging. Natural aging and exposure to sunlight cause this appearance.

The more common visible signs of aging include dark age spots and precancerous growths. A loss of fatty tissue also occurs, making our hands look bony and our veins more prominent. Hand rejuvenation treatments can help restore the hands to a more youthful appearance. Various treatment options are available, so one treatment or a combination can be used to help achieve a look that people desire.

**1. PROTECT YOUR HANDS FROM THE HARSH ENVIRONMENT.** Sun damage causes most wrinkles and often people forget about the hands when applying sunscreen. Use sun block on the hands every day as they are exposed to the sun daily, even when doing simple things like driving. Wear protective rubber or plastic gloves when cleaning. Cleaning products like bleach and dish soap will severely dehydrate the hands. Dry, coarse hands make wrinkles look worse and age a person even more. Keep hands warm in cold weather with gloves. Cold weather can also dry out hands and make wrinkles look much worse. Moisturize your hands. This is done by washing hands with a mild soap, not bar soap. Also, apply lotion every day and don't forget to exfoliate.

**2. EXFOLIATE AND SLOUGH AWAY DEAD SKIN CELLS.** A buildup of dead cells can make hands look ashy, dull and can highlight the appearance of brown spots. To remove this dead-cell buildup, apply a glycolic or retinoid product to the backs of your hands before bed. Also, take advantage of modern technology to make a drastic change in the age of your hands.

Microdermabrasion is a superficial skin polishing that improves the appearance of aging skin. The results are immediate but maintenance treatments are required. Chemical peels can also be performed. Ensure that when choosing to do a chemical peel on the hands that it is done under the supervision of a physician. The hands are prone to slower healing and complications, so it is important that the proper chemicals are used to provide safe, effective results.

With the increasing advancements in cosmetic procedures, laser resurfacing skin rejuvenation gives your doctor a new option to turn back the hands of time. This fractional resurfacing offers precise control as

the procedure gently removes the damaged skin or “age” spots to reveal smooth, fresher-looking hands.

**3. REMOVE THE BROWN AGE SPOTS.** The most common signs of aging hands are age spots and discoloration from sun damage. Lighten the spots with hydroquinone. This ingredient is considered the gold standard in lightening. It works by halting pigment production in areas where dark spots appear. Some over-the-counter hand creams contain hydroquinone. If the cream alone does not improve the condition, you will want to see a doctor who can prescribe a more concentrated cream or offer additional medical treatments. Procedures will include those mentioned previously.

However, when there are multiple age spots and precancerous growths, photodynamic therapy is the treatment of choice for patients with extensive damage. I prefer using an intense pulsed light (IPL) source during this treatment, which results in good global improvement within two or three treatments. Because the treatment may also stimulate collagen synthesis, it appears to be helpful in improving the skin texture and tone as well.

**4. VOLUME ENHANCEMENT.** A skeletal look of the hand or prominent and unsightly veins can be lessened by plumping up the skin with natural or synthetic soft tissue fillers, which returns them to a more youthful appearance. Volume depletion in the hands can be easily corrected with Juvaderm or Restylane volume fillers. While the literature reports wide variance in the duration of the effect, I find that my technique provides good volume restoration for at least six months with some persistence of effect still maintained at one year. Patients find the results impressive and the procedure simple—and they now feel more confident in displaying their hands.

Hands down, our hands give our age away before our faces do and that is why hand rejuvenation has become a popular way to wage the ongoing war against aging. With our handy toolbox of procedures you can raise your hands and be sure that your true age won't be betrayed by a simple hand shake or casual gesture. Now you can enjoy showing off your jewelry! +