



Three-step program

DR FRANK VELLA USES AN INTEGRATED APPROACH TO ACHIEVE HARMONIOUS AND LONG-LASTING RESULTS. GILLIAN SAMUEL REPORTS.

Sydney and Central Coast cosmetic physician Dr Frank Vella believes facial rejuvenation can be accomplished through a simple three-step process. He says his mantra is the harmony of the facial features and, for this reason, his approach is to the entire face. He uses a combination of muscle relaxant injections and dermal filler followed by take-home cosmeceutical topical skincare products for an overall treatment program.

These treatment protocols are suitable for patients with gravitational ageing such as drooping cheeks, jowl formation, deepening of the nasolabial lines, crow's feet, heavy eyelids and brows, forehead and glabellar lines and other symptoms of ageing due to loss of volume and thinning of the skin.

The patients experiencing these kinds of problems vary from young people in their mid-20s who have lost a lot of weight to others who are in their early 70s. Smoking, stress, heavy sun exposure or genetic factors can all play a part, Dr Vella says. His approach is to restore a normal appearance without leaving obvious signs of cosmetic enhancement.

'I've always maintained cosmetic procedures shouldn't be visible. It's a sub-optimal result if other people can tell

what you've had done,' he says. 'You want them to think that you've been on holiday rather than being able to guess that you've had work done.'

In his opinion, having a procedure for just one area of the face tends to highlight other areas that don't look so good. 'For example, in the upper face sometimes using muscle relaxant injections to treat the crow's feet and lift the brows makes forehead and frown lines look more obvious by contrast. I recommend treating the entire upper face area when using muscle relaxant injections,' he explains.

Similarly, when using a dermal filler on the lower part of the face he says, 'If the lips are to be done, it's probably a good idea to also do the corners of the mouth and the nasolabial and marionette lines at the same time.'

Dr Vella believes in focusing treatments on the triangle formed by the eyes and mouth, the most expressive area of the face and the key to non-verbal communication. 'It's the focus of attention and the area where patients can get the best value for their cosmetic dollar,' he says.

In the mid-face area he uses a dermal filler to restore volume in the cheeks.

'Dermal fillers have a long-lasting effect well beyond the degradation of the product because it has the effect of stimulating collagen production.'

To maintain results, Dr Vella recommends regular visits for muscle relaxant injection top-ups – which help prolong the duration of its effects by retraining the facial muscle movements – along with topical treatments with cosmeceutical products every six to 18 months, backed up by at-home use, to maintain skin quality and texture.