

# Needle WORK

**CAN COSMETIC ACUPUNCTURE REALLY MAKE A DIFFERENCE TO THE WAY A FACE LOOKS? Milissa Deitz INVESTIGATES.**

**M**adonna, Cher and Gwyneth Paltrow have all spoken glowingly in public about it. Prince William and Diane Lane are rumoured to be converts, and there are even specialist clinics in London devoted exclusively to the practice of cosmetic acupuncture.

Sometimes referred to as "acupuncture facial rejuvenation" or "the acupuncture facelift", a 1996 study on cosmetic acupuncture in the *International Journal Of Clinical Acupuncture* reported that of the 300 people who took part, 90 per cent saw marked improvements after just one treatment.

A former dancer for the Australian Ballet and Sydney Theatre Company, Darren Spowart has been studying and practising traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) and acupuncture for 10 years. He has studied facial acupuncture with two of the field's leading authorities in the USA, Virginia Doran and Mary Elizabeth Wakefield.

"Many of my clients were starting to think about the effects of ageing but didn't want to do anything drastic," says Sydney-based Spowart. "I believe beauty emerges from inner health. Of my clients who've tried cosmetic acupuncture, I've seen a definite reduction in lines and under-eye bags, and the skin looks softer and more taut. One of my clients had a surgical scar on her cheekbone that she was so self-conscious about, she always wore glasses to cover it. She's not wearing them anymore!"

Treatment involves the use of super-fine needles to target any problem areas on your face and neck and to address any underlying health issues that may be contributing to these problems. Spowart says the needles encourage nutrient-rich blood flow and stimulate muscle activity and toning and can also encourage



collagen growth. The needles are left in place for 20 to 30 minutes.

Cosmetic acupuncture is a safe procedure; rare, and minor, side effects include slight bruising or spot bleeding at the needle site.

Spowart recommends a course of 12 to 15 treatments over two and a half months, followed by maintenance treatments every four to six weeks.

Charles Yarborough, director of the American Cosmetic Acupuncture Association, says his association discourages the use of the word "facelift" as there are no incisions, sutures or acid peels during the procedure, and it will not produce sudden, drastic changes in underlying structures.

"The remedy cosmetic acupuncture may offer is the reduction or erasure of fine lines and the softening of deeper ones," he wrote in a recent association newsletter.

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