

beauty lab

Over time, our face shape shifts, softening the lower edges so we look less like ourselves. But there's help. Here, effective treatments to define the jawline. *by Shannon M. Bauer*

Sharper image



Injectables precisely placed in the lower face can sculpt the jawline, lift the neck, and slim the face.

In our efforts to maintain the balance of our face, we may not always zone in on the jaw area. But it actually has a lot to do with the symmetry of our features and acts as part of the scaffolding for the face and neck, holding the skin taut. Starting in our 30s, the jawbone begins to shrink, skin loses volume and elasticity, and the muscles become more active to compensate—all of which can change your face shape, says Amelia Hausauer, M.D., a dermatologist in Northern California. A few moves can help this area stay smooth, firm, and lifted.

DIY Gua sha, a traditional Chinese medicine practice, involves massaging the skin with a smooth stone to increase the circulation of blood and lymphatic fluids. “This helps decrease puffiness and relax facial tension,” says Gianna de la Torre, an acupuncturist and a cofounder of Wildling, which offers an Empress Stone (\$65, wildling.com) that can target the jaw area. Apply a face oil on clean skin for slip. Then hold the curved U-shape edge of the stone so that it hugs the chin, and glide toward the ear. Repeat five times on each side. For the most sculpted result, commit to doing this daily.

AT THE DERM “There are lots of little muscles in the lower face, and some have a lowering effect on skin, while others have a lifting effect,” says Hema Sundaram, M.D., a dermatologist in Maryland and Virginia. “We can adjust that muscle activity with a neurotoxin like Botox, Xeomin, Dysport, or Jeuveau [price starts at \$800; results last a few months]. It takes precise injections in spots individualized to the patient’s face shape, proportions, and desired results.” To create more distinction between the neck and face, a dermatologist can inject neurotoxin along the jawbone and in the platysmal bands (the muscle that blankets the neck). “If you can minimize the pull-down of the muscle, you can tighten the angle at the jawline,” Dr. Hausauer says. Neurotoxin can also be injected in the masseter muscle below the ear; relaxing it tapers the jaw for a more heart-shaped face.

Structured fillers like Restylane Lyft and Juvéderm Voluma (average price is \$975; results last six months or more) balance, restore volume, and support the jawline and chin, Dr. Hausauer says. A best-in-the-biz injector may even put a touch of filler in your temples and your cheeks to lift the skin along the jaw. Another key region is just in front of and below the ear. Adding filler there creates a sharply angled notch in an area with bone, fat, or collagen loss, Dr. Sundaram says. ■