FOREVER 21
From thicker hair to a toned tummy, turn back the clock with ELLE's annual head-to-toe time-stopping primer. By Janna Johnson O'Toole

TOP SHOP
Trying to pinpoint the exact cause of hair loss often leaves derms scratching their heads. From hormone shifts and genetics to scorching flatirons and harsh chemical treatments, a thinning ponytail may result from multiple culprits. But new research provides a major clue. A study published this March in the *Science Translational Medicine* journal identified a specific protein, prostaglandin D₂, to be three times higher in the scalps of individuals suffering from alopecia (the most common type of loss). “The study found that the protein inhibits hair growth,” says Miami- and New York-based dermatologist Fredric Brandt, MD. Two oral drugs currently in FDA trial, luripiprant (for facial flushing) and setipiprant (for nasal congestion), also happen to block the protein from synthesizing and could be used in the future to combat thinning. “With a reduction of the protein, it may be possible to actually reverse hair loss,” Brandt says. For now he says minoxidil and bimatoprost (the active ingredients in Rogaine and Latisse, respectively) compounded with retinol—a derm can prescribe the mixture—remain the best topical treatments.

In a recent study by P&G, women were reported to be “significantly more dissatisfied with the volume of their hair than with their health, weight, figure, or skin.” For instant fullness, sprinkle scalp with a powder shampoo—the gritty texture lifts roots. And consider adding color. “Thin highlights or two shades lighter than your natural color will add youthful dimension,” says colorist Michael Canale (ageless Jen Aniston’s go-to). The dye job also expands strands’ outer layer, which has a plumping effect.
ABOUT FACE

It's a guilty pleasure few can resist: examining every micrometer of your face in a hotel bathroom's magnifying mirror. But if a recent peek nearly spoiled your holiday, don't fret—the doctor is in.

Nashville-based dermatologist Michael Gold, MD, is taking powerhouse anti-aging topicals to new territory: deeper layers of the skin, where, he says, they can fight the signs of aging faster than ever before. He first prep's the face with the fractional iPixel RF laser, which creates microscopic holes in the epidermis; these are then quickly filled by a variety of topical actives—from plumping hyaluronic acid to brightening vitamin C. He follows with an ultrasound device, pushing the ingredient further into the skin with acoustic pressure. "The topical is absorbed much deeper than if just applied superficially, providing a stronger therapeutic effect," he says. Although the technique is not yet FDA approved (Gold is involved in the trials), it's widely used in Asia and Europe, marketed under the system iTed, and Gold believes that because it amps up nearly every topical ingredient, the technique will be a major player here (as it is overseas) against hyperpigmentation, acne, scarring, fine lines, and stretch marks.

With age, skin's fibroblasts begin to slack off, slowing down production of collagen and resulting in a loss of elasticity that causes more woes than just skin sagging. "As connective tissue becomes lax, pores begin to widen and appear larger," says NYC-based dermatologist Macrene Alexiades-Armenakas, MD, PhD, who recommends a two-stage photodynamic treatment to resurface the fibroblasts. First she slathers skin with a thin layer of Allumera, a light-activated cream made from a gentler version of levulinic acid (often used at higher doses to treat precancerous skin lesions). After an hour, she follows with an intense pulsed light laser, such as the Alma Harmony, to "turn on" Allumera's active ingredient.

"The buildup of new collagen around the pores makes them look smaller, and levulinic acid can also target oil glands, causing pores to tighten," says NYC-based derm Anne Chapas, MD. Several days of sun avoidance are required post-procedure (pile up the Netflix queue), and melasma sufferers should opt out, as intense pulsed light, like most lasers, can exacerbate pigmentation. But Alexiades says pores are noticeably smaller after just a single treatment.

LIGHT WOMAN: Maintain a pretty glow (seen backstage at Elle's Spring Couture) with pick-me-up spritzes of Tatah Luminous Dewy Skin Mist throughout the day.
NECK FIX

Think defined jawlines are reserved for just the Brady Bündchen? A new procedure currently in FDA trials whittles double chins with a series of tiny injections over a six-month-long period. No dieting, no contorting facial exercises—just micro-shots of a synthetic version of a chemical, sodium deoxycholate, naturally found in human bile. Double-blind clinical tests conclude the solution (code name: ATX-101) causes a “statistically significant reduction in submental fat” after six months when compared with a placebo: The active ingredient “causes fat cells to rupture and die,” Brandt says, “while leaving the surrounding tissue unharmed.” It takes a few months for the results to kick in as the body slowly expels the dead cells. Bonus: There’s a “residual skin-tightening effect,” Gold says. (And yes, he believes the injection will “revolutionize” the way in which other areas of fat on the body are addressed too.)

To shore up lax jowls and necks, Ulthera (an ultrasound device that treats the deep dermis by boosting the production of new collagen and elastin) remains the “big gun” in Gold’s arsenal. “It gives the biggest bang with one treatment,” he says. Brandt also continues to be pleased with the results, but he has refined his method. “A week before a patient is scheduled for Ulthera, I inject prominent neck bands with Botox,” he says. “It relaxes the muscle, so the neck heals without any counteractive downward pulling.” The 43-minute procedure is painful, so Gold administers a mild sedative and painkiller to increase tolerance. For some, however, the price may deliver the sharpest pinch: Ulthera costs, on average, between $3,000 and $5,000.

For décolletage upkeep, NYC-based dermatologist Francesca Fusco, MD, suggests the Clear + Brilliant nonablative fractionated laser. Three or four 30-minute sessions a year “gently smooth fine lines and break down brown spots without any downtime,” she says. “A patient can go straight back to the office.” In her practice, the laser has also been replacing traditional chemical peels above the neck.
A milestone birthday, a college reunion, those McQueen leather leggings—we have plenty of incentives to tone and tighten.

NYC-based derm Anne Chapas targets patients' pudge with LipoSonicx, the latest noninvasive fat zapper, approved by the FDA last year. "The high-intensity ultrasound device heats fat cells to 55 degrees Celsius," she says. The 130°F temperature is kryptonite to fat, causing the cells to die and be flushed out through the liver. The results, which take two to four months to appear, are impressive: "Most patients lose around two and a half centimeters, dropping a pants size without any downtime," she says. Because the treatment is hands-on—during a 30- to 45-minute session, the doctor maneuvers the handpiece over the abdomen and flanks—LipoSonicx is costly ($3,000 for the stomach)—double the price of its main competitor, Zeltiq CoolSculpting, which is also doctor administered but freezes fat using set-it-and-forget-it (for an hour) suction cups.

If crepey hands and elbows have you moisturizing to no avail, consider the natural filler LaViv, from Exton, Pennsylvania-based Fibrocell Science. "I take a tiny piece of skin from the back of the neck and use it to grow the patient's own fibroblasts," Brandt says. "After four to eight weeks in the lab, the cells can be reinjected into the skin of the donor." Brandt finds the bespoke (and pricey—roughly $5,000 for two treatment areas) concoction an ace not only on the fine lines of the face, but also for smoothing coarse texture on the hands and elbows. "It plumps up those areas and softens crepiness better than hyaluronic acid [in fillers such as Restylane]."

For legs that have begun to lag, Alexiades turns on her q-switched laser. "The Pixel QS penetrates deep, up to four millimeters, into the dermis to stimulate collagen," she says. "The new collagen makes the skin thicker, softening fine lines and rough texture." The laser is more affordable (a session will run about $300) than other tightening treatments, making it ideal for limbs.