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STRESS RELIEF

Stress and anxiety can take a toll on skin. Discover the treatments and services medical spa experts recommend to help revitalize the complexion.

BY NICOLE ALTAVILLA

THE PANDEMIC HAS LED TO HIGHER

levels of stress for many people. According to the American Psychological Association's "Stress in America" survey, nearly 78 percent of adults report that the pandemic is a significant source of stress in their life. In addition, nearly half of adults report that their health and behavior has been negatively affected, resulting in issues such as increased tension in their bodies. Stress can also impact the face and skin. From acne, dry skin, undereye bags, and rashes, to wrinkles and hair loss, stress can cause one's skin to experience changes that, in turn, can actually increase stress levels. "Stress and anxiety can have a major impact on our bodies, leading to fatigue, poor sleep, dietary alterations, impaired cognitive function, and more," says Edgar Fincher, M.D., board-certified and fellowship-trained dermatologist at **Moy, Fincher, Chipps Facial Plastics & Dermatology** (Beverly Hills, CA). "Our skin is not immune to the effects of stress. Stress

and anxiety can cause many dermatologic disorders to flare up or worsen. Short-term or immediate effects can cause flare-ups of acne, rosacea, eczema, psoriasis, or seborrheic dermatitis. Dealing with flare-ups of these rashes or acne can contribute to further lack of self-esteem and heightened anxiety. In addition, persistent stress can make getting these conditions under control more challenging. Prolonged periods of stress can lead to other problems such as fatigue, weight loss, sagging skin, dark circles under the eyes, and wrinkles."

Here are some of the most popular and effective ways to help clients who are suffering from stress-induced skin conditions achieve healthier and more radiant-looking skin.

1. CHEMICAL PEELS Chemical peels offer many benefits to stressed skin. They help to improve skin texture, tone, clarity, and the look of fine lines and wrinkles. "There are

many different peel types, and the strength of each peel can be modified to be stronger or weaker to accommodate the skin type," says Tenley Starr Fabian, RN, founder and CEO of **Starr MedSpa** (Westlake Village, CA). "Chemical peels are wonderful, my favorite being a salicylic acid peel, because it targets breakouts caused by stress and anxiety and is safe for all skin types. I typically recommend a peel once per month to my clients to keep their skin new and continually improving."

2. HYDRATING FACIALS A hydrating facial helps skin lock in moisture to keep it from being too dry or too oily, which can lead to acne breakouts. "A hydrating facial is a wonderful way to grab a little downtime with relaxation," says Fincher. DNA epidermal growth factor repair facials, like those offered at Moy, Fincher, Chipps Facial Plastics & Dermatology are designed to maximize skincare and focus on anti-aging, lightening hyperpigmentation, clearing acne-prone



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skin, and other skin concerns. The DNA EGF Acne Treatment, for example, contains a clarifying papaya enzyme to clear clogged pores and refresh the skin's appearance, and can help reduce acne formation and improve skin texture with regular treatments.

3. LASER TREATMENTS As people age, their skin loses its tone, texture, and firmness, and stress, sun damage, and genetics are also factors that lead to fine lines, wrinkles, pigment changes, and more. Laser treatments help reduce the effects of aging and damaged skin. Clear + Brilliant is a gentle skin-resurfacing laser that helps treat and prevent the early signs of aging and melasma. This non-invasive fractional laser affects only a fraction of the skin, so healthy, undamaged cells can heal and rejuvenate the skin. "There are several wonderful lasers that are great at rejuvenating one's appearance," says Fincher. "Clear + Brilliant is a great option for anyone who wants to shed the old skin and brighten their look."

4. MICROCHANNELING TREATMENTS

Microchanneling treatments help to even skintone, improve skin texture, smooth skin, and improve elasticity and hydration. Aquagold Fine Touch, for example, is a painless microchanneling device that helps plump and rejuvenate skin, and addresses common concerns like dryness, fine lines, and wrinkles. Aquagold Fine Touch works to boost collagen production and rejuvenate by infusing anti-aging ingredients into the skin. It is often filled with hyaluronic acid, but the device also works with other ingredients. **740 Park**

Plastic Surgery (New York, NY), for example, offers Aquagold Fine Touch infused with Botox and fillers to help increase collagen levels and boost cellular turnover.

5. MICRODERMABRASION Microdermabrasion helps to unclog pores and congestion on the face to reduce breakouts, acne, and blackheads. It also helps to treat premature aging, sun damage, dry skin, and can even out pigmentation. **Shafer Clinic Fifth Avenue** (New York, NY) offers the DiamondGlow, which is a general dermabrasion device that gently removes the top layer of skin and delivers topical cosmetic serums onto the skin. "The DiamondGlow facial uses real diamonds to gently exfoliate and rejuvenate the skin," says Edyta Jarosz, lead master esthetician at Shafer Clinic Fifth Avenue. "One of the best things about DiamondGlow is that it can safely treat delicate skin around the eye area and lips, where the skin is prone to wrinkles and volume loss. It also beautifully plumps the lips. DiamondGlow completely transforms the skin by volumizing it, improves radiance, visibly reduces fine lines and wrinkles, stimulates healthy cell renewal, and gives a lasting youthful boost. After

the treatment, skin is smoothed, plumped, hydrated, and healthy."

6. TIGHTENING TREATMENTS Tightening treatments can help to stimulate the formation of new collagen and improve the skin's elasticity. **Le Jolie Medi Spa** (multiple locations in California) offers Forma, which is a non-surgical facelift to tighten the skin and shrink pores and help improve skintone and texture. The medical spa also offers Morpheus8, which helps tighten and lift skin and stimulates collagen production.

7. TOPICAL SKIN TREATMENTS Retinol stimulates the cells to produce collagen and elastin to help exfoliate the skin and help it to maintain its thickness. It can also improve skin's tone, texture, and brightness. "There are several topical skin treatments that can help you cope with the physical changes brought on by stressful life events," says Amir Karam, M.D., double-board certified facial plastic surgeon at **Carmel Valley Facial Plastic Surgery & Aesthetic Center** (San Diego). "Retinol or Retin-A can be very effective in terms of brightening skin. These topicals give skin a nice, healthy glow, which is really what we're all trying to achieve." ●

