

**A WRINKLE IN TIME**  
**How to fight those lines**  
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Wrinkles and lines are a part of aging, right? We should just accept them and move on. Well, a lot of women (and men) are finding that they would rather delay or camouflage these visible signs of maturing. While anti-aging regimens and cosmetic dermatology are much more approachable and acceptable these days, there is a daunting number of different products and procedures available from which to choose. Finding the right option involves matching up the areas of concern with the correct product. Frequently, there is more than one right answer.

The most popular agents right now for wrinkles are those that have little or no down time. Botox has been the groundbreaker in this category and is now the most popular non-surgical cosmetic procedure. It is most commonly used for the brow furrows (for which it is FDA approved), crow's feet and horizontal forehead lines. The treatment consists of a series of small injections in the affected area. A topical numbing agent can be applied prior to the procedure for comfort. It works by temporarily relaxing the affected muscles that cause the lines. While it doesn't work by "filling" the wrinkles, the skin overlying the relaxed muscle doesn't move as much so the lines tend to soften. Also, because the skin is not being creased, existing wrinkles won't progress as quickly. The effects tend to wear off in 3 to 4 months. However, with repeated treatments results will often last longer due to the muscle losing its size and strength.

There are several different filling agents also available now that work by actually plumping up the wrinkle or line. These work by adding volume to the affected area and have no affect on the muscle. For deeper lines, particularly of the upper face, Botox may be combined with a filling agent to soften the line and prevent it from getting deeper. Collagen (Zyderm or the thicker Zyplast) for years has been considered the "gold standard" of filling agents. It has a long safety profile (FDA approved for over 23 years) and produces reliable results. Because it is derived from bovine (cow) collagen, there is a risk of an allergic reaction so skin tests are required before the actual treatment. It can be used to treat wrinkles around the eyes, mouth, forehead, and is also used for enhancing lips and filling scars. Results typically lasts around 3 to 4 months. Recently Cosmoderm and Cosmoplast have been FDA approved for facial wrinkles. The advantage with these products are that they are derived from human skin and therefore require no skin testing and can be used without waiting. These collagen products also contain an anesthetic, which helps to lessen the pain of the injections.

The newest filling agent for facial wrinkles is Restylane. Although only recently FDA approved in December 2003 it has a long safety profile in Europe where it has been used since 1996. It is derived from hyaluronic acid, which is a gel like substance found throughout the body. It lubricates the joints and helps to retain moisture and elasticity in the skin. Restylane is synthetically produced and requires no skin testing so treatments can begin without waiting. There is no anesthetic incorporated into Restylane so the injections require topical anesthetics or local nerve blocks. Restylane can be used in the same areas as collagen but has the advantage of lasting up to twice as long as collagen.

Hylaform is another hyaluronic acid filling agent (derived from the rooster cockscomb) and final FDA approval for this product is pending.

Of course with any of these wrinkle-reducing procedures, good skin care is a must to prevent further damage especially from the sun. At a minimum a sunscreen of at least an SPF 15 should be worn daily and year round. Other topical preparations such as retinoids, hydroxy acids and some topical vitamins such as vitamin C may also help combat those lines and wrinkles. For best results, an at home regimen could be combined with one or more of the procedures above. With the right treatments, an appropriate regimen can be found to satisfy the desire for more youthful looking skin.