

GREAT LEGS

Who says women over 50 can't show some leg? Not us! Here, M.D.s reveal the best leg beautifiers, from an herb your grandmother swore by to the latest innovations

Finally! Spring is here and we're starting to thaw out from the long, cold winter — which means it's almost time to trade our long pants and thick tights for capris, sundresses and shorts. And for celebrity dermatologist Marnie Nussbaum, M.D., the first week of spring is also when her clients in New York City start asking for help to improve the appearance of their legs. The most common con-

cerns? Varicose veins, spider veins and cellulite — conditions that affect nearly *all* women. In fact, researchers at the University of Michigan report that up to 73 percent of women suffer from painful bulging varicose veins, and experts report that both cellulite and spider veins become more common after age 50, affecting up to 90 percent of women.

Even if you live in a state where a stubborn chill is still hanging in the air, now is the perfect time to take action against these trouble spots, asserts Dr. Nussbaum. She explains that it can often take several weeks to see visible improvements. Read on to discover the best at-home and in-office techniques that will get your legs in gorgeous shape!

"I take a brush and scrub my body from head to toe in the shower. This increases blood circulation, which in turn helps with cellulite."

Marilu Henner

SMOOTH CELLULITE

Those unsightly little dimples that form on the butt and thighs become increasingly common as we age. To blame: decreased circulation of blood and lymph fluid, which are key to keeping skin firm and flushing excess water and fat-trapping toxins so fat cells don't swell and bulge beneath the skin. **BEST AT-HOME FIX:** Apply a firming lotion that contains the antioxidant CoQ10 (which improves circulation and helps the body produce skin-firming collagen), as well as shea butter and argan oil (which help maintain skin's elasticity), advises Dr. Nussbaum. A brand we like: Sebamed Q10 Firming Body Lotion (\$23, drugstore.com). Rub on damp skin daily after your shower and

your legs will look more toned and smoother within 3 weeks. **BEST IN-OFFICE FIX:** Women with deep dimples covering most of their thighs may require a more intensive treatment, says Dr. Nussbaum. Her recommendation: Thermage. This noninvasive procedure uses radio frequency energy to shrink fat cells and stimulate new collagen growth to firm up loose skin. Results can be immediate, but since collagen production continues for several weeks, skin can look even better over time. The procedure generally costs about \$2,000 per session, and Dr. Nussbaum advises that more than one treatment may be needed to achieve the desired results.

BY SUMMMER



HEALTHY LIVING
News You Can Use

GREEN TEA PROTECTS TEETH

When people rinsed twice daily with 10 ml (2 tsp.) of a mouthwash containing 2 percent green tea, they cut their gingivitis scores by 67 percent and plaque scores by 165 percent after 4 weeks. How? Green tea is rich in polyphenols that ease gum inflammation and prevent bacteria buildup. For a rinse that contains green tea, try TheraBreath PLUS Oral Rinse, \$14, therabreath.com.

SURPRISE PERK OF A SLEEP ROUTINE

In a study presented at a meeting of the American Heart Association, people who got the same amount of sleep two nights in a row ate 210 fewer calories on the third day than those whose sleep duration varied by an hour or more each night. The authors say changes in sleep patterns can cause hormonal imbalances and fatigue — both of which trigger cravings.

ERASE SPIDER VEINS

Many women are genetically predisposed to spider veins, which form when tiny vessels near the skin's surface weaken and fill with blood. But everything from menopause to medication can also lead to the purple veins. **BEST AT-HOME FIX:** Women in the 1940s and '50s used horse chestnut to ease spider veins — and modern medicine proves Grandma knew best. "Supplementing with horse chestnut seed extract is the best alternative treatment," says Luis Navarro, M.D., who works with celebrities as director of The Vein Treatment Center in New York City. A compound in this herb boosts circulation and strengthens vein walls to lighten the appearance of veins in 3 weeks. One we like: Venastat (\$17, drugstore.com). **BEST IN-OFFICE FIX:** For years, the treatment of choice was sclerotherapy, a procedure in which a solution is injected into the vein, causing it to collapse and disappear. But it can be uncomfortable, so Dr. Navarro uses Cryo-Sclerotherapy, which makes the procedure pain-free. "We use super-cooled air along with mechanical pressure to overload sensory and pain fibers around the site, preventing

pain." Many women need 2 to 4 sessions, which cost \$500 each.

SHRINK VARICOSE VEINS

Painful, bulging veins become more common after menopause. The cause: Hormonal fluctuations trigger changes in blood flow that damage vein walls. **BEST AT-HOME FIX:** "Wearing compression stockings for a few hours can relieve heaviness and fatigue in the legs," says Dr. Navarro. In one study, 86 percent of women who wore them saw their pain drop by at least 50 percent — and they reported an improvement in appearance of veins within 3 months. A brand we like: RejuvaHealth (\$20 and up, rejuvahealth.com). **BEST IN-OFFICE FIX:** For larger veins that cause serious pain, endovenous laser ablation is the most effective option, says Dr. Navarro. In the procedure, a laser maneuvered into the problematic vein seals it from the inside, causing it to immediately vanish. And local anesthesia makes the procedure, which takes 20 to 30 minutes and requires no downtime, pain-free. Costs vary from \$2,000 to \$4,000, but it is often covered by insurance. **closer**

Instantly Smoother & Slimmer!



TO GET GLOWING SKIN

Combine 1 cup of coffee grounds (to boost circulation), ½ cup of sugar (to exfoliate) and ¼ tbsp. of olive oil (to hydrate). Rub on legs and rinse for smooth skin. Bonus: This also temporarily reduces cellulite.



TO NIX BUMPS

Mix equal parts shaving cream and body wash and use for shaving to ward off razor burn. The thick layer offers more protection from rash-causing friction, plus hydrates for superior smoothness.



TO SHRINK CANKLES

Toss several cups of Epsom salt into the tub and soak for 15 to 20 minutes to reduce ankle and calf swelling. The magnesium sulfate in the salt increases circulation to reduce puffiness.

PHOTOS, FROM LEFT: GETTY (2); FOTOLIA; GETTY. TEXT: REBECCA HAYNES