

Meghan Markle Says Facial Exercises Keep Her Looking So Young

It may sound a bit silly, but "face yoga" may actually be supported by science.



By [Jenae Sitzes](#) May 23, 2018



Your face is the first thing anyone sees, so it makes sense that we're all a *little* obsessed with making sure our skin stays as smooth and youthful as possible—including the newly married Duchess of Sussex, Meghan Markle.

The 36-year-old (yes, really!) has spoken extensively about her passion for health, fitness, and beauty, from her semi-vegan diet to minimal makeup that showcases her natural freckles. When it comes to her face, Meghan is clearly blessed by genetics, but she reportedly turns to an unconventional method for keeping her cheekbones and jawline firm.

"I do facial exercises from one of my favorite aestheticians, Nichola Joss, who basically has you sculpt your face from the inside out," Markle told Birchbox in 2014. "I swear it works, as silly as you may feel. On the days I do it, my cheekbones and jawline are waaaaay more sculpted. There's a reason she is in high demand around awards season when every actress wants to look A-plus."



Markle has praised Joss's signature "inner facial," calling it her favorite beauty treatment in another interview with Glamour. "She literally massages your face from inside your mouth! Insane, right?" Markle said of the technique, which Joss describes as a "natural facelift" to help sculpt the face. The celebrity aesthetician said she uses lymphatic massage inside and out to de-stress the muscles.

"When a muscle holds tension, it breeds toxins, which age your muscles but also have a detrimental effect on the skin. When the skin holds toxins, it can get congested and saggy. So we're eradicating all of that," Joss told Fashion magazine in 2017. "It also stimulates the lymphatic system, so we actually drain the toxins. The lymphatic system works to keep the skin clear and clean, so it's really important to stimulate."

Do facial exercises (or "face yoga") really work?

Turns out there may be some truth to the technique. A 2018 study from the Northwestern University School of Medicine found that 30 minutes of daily facial exercise improved the appearance of middle-aged women over 20 weeks, with noticeably fuller upper and lower cheeks by the end.

The theory is that building up muscle under the skin helps the face look fuller, counteracting the loss of fat pads and elasticity in the face over time. To test this idea, researchers had participants learn and perform 32 different facial exercises, each for about a minute. The women did the exercises daily for the first eight weeks and every other day for weeks nine through 20. Both dermatologists and participants reported seeing improvement in the before-and-after photos, and the average perceived age of the women decreased by almost three years over 20 weeks.

"Now there is some evidence that facial exercises may improve facial appearance and reduce some visible signs of aging," lead author Dr. Murad Alam said of the results. "The exercises enlarge and strengthen the facial muscles, so the face becomes firmer and more toned and shaped like a younger face."

Alam emphasized that the findings would need to be confirmed in a much larger study, as only 16 of the 27 women recruited actually did the exercises for the duration of the study. And because the participants were all women 40 to 65 years old, it's not clear whether the results could be generalized to the wider population, he said.

Dermatologists aren't convinced yet, either. "It is likely that people who perform facial muscle exercises also are more diligent about skincare and protecting their skin from the sun, which may in part explain the results of this study," Joshua Zeichner, MD, a New York City-based board-certified dermatologist, told our sister brand, *Women's Health*, earlier this year. There's also a chance that excessive facial exercises can have the opposite effect by increasing wrinkles formed by muscle use, added [Gary Goldenberg, MD](#), assistant clinical professor of dermatology at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai.