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Fountain of Youth

by Gretchen Eichenberg

IT MAY BE CLOSER THAN YOU THINK

“There is a fountain of youth: it is your mind,
your talents, the creativity you bring to your life and the lives
of people you love. When you learn to tap this source,
you will truly have defeated age.”

The insightful words of Academy Award-winning actress
and international sex symbol Sophia Loren ring true.

“Our minds are our control panels to our entire well-being,” said Kimberly Damm, local yoga instructor and owner of Yoga8 in Waco.

But there’s no doubt that time takes its toll on the body and mind, leaving even the most successful, most beautiful and most captivating people searching for ways to slow the aging process — or at least the outward signs.

“When patients first come to us, we hand them a mirror and ask them what they see,” said Amy Peper, owner of NuGenesis Medical Spa & Vein Care. “It is not about what we see. It’s about making our patients feel good about themselves and treating what they see.”



Dr. Daniel Smith, co-owner of Skin & Body Refinery Medical Spa in Waco, explained what happens to one of the most visible indicators of age over time: the skin.

“Several changes occur affecting the skin’s appearance,” Smith said. “Beginning around the age of 30, we lose a teaspoon of soft tissue in the face every year. We lose the fat pads under our eyes and in our temples, leading to a hollowed-out appearance and a loss of structure, which leads to sagging skin. Hormones decrease as we age, leading to thinner skin, a decrease in collagen and oil production resulting in wrinkles and thinning skin. Additionally, sun damage and environmental toxins result in discoloration and possible skin cancers.”

For these reasons and more, people around the world have searched for thousands of years for the mythical Fountain of Youth where they could drink or bathe in life-giving waters that restore youth and vitality with just a single drop.

While you can travel the globe to find spas and clinics that offer anti-aging treatments and regimens, local yoga instructors, aestheticians, physicians and holistic healers offer some of their ideas about how to maintain — or regain — a youthful appearance and mindset, right in your own community.

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— Amy Peper

HYDRATE TO HEALTH

Water — the regular drinking kind — certainly is one proven component to good health. This month, the National Institutes of Health released a study in the journal eBioMedicine that finds drinking enough water is linked to more favorable biological aging and less risk of chronic disease and even early death.

“Water has a significant effect on your overall health and youthful skin,” Smith said. “Adequate water intake hydrates and plumps the skin along with helping to maintain the skin’s elasticity. Dehydrated skin appears duller, with wrinkles and blemishes.”

Smith explained that, both internally and externally, water serves to flush our bodies of harmful toxins, which can lead to premature aging.

“A well-hydrated body will not only appear healthier but will also lead to an increased sense of well-being,” Smith said.

While no single amount of water intake fits every person, the Mayo Clinic recommends eight glasses a day as a good starting point to get rid of waste, regulate temperature, lubricate and cushion joints and protect sensitive tissues.

TAKE YOUR VITAMINS

During the aging process, the body naturally can become depleted of certain vitamins that are essential to good health and wellness. Skin & Body Refinery specializes in customized drip IVs that target an individual’s needs and goals.

“Vitamin therapy has become very popular, either IV or via intramuscular shots,” Smith said. “Vitamins, along with amino acids and other naturally occurring compounds, are involved in energy production, especially B vitamins.”

Smith also explained that vitamin therapy supports a strong immune system with ingredients such as vitamin C, astaxanthin, vitamin D and glutathione.

“These same ingredients make excellent antioxidants involved in overall



Custom drip IV is a form of vitamin therapy that replenishes vitamins that the body loses at it ages. The therapy supports the immune system, weight loss and provides energy to the body.

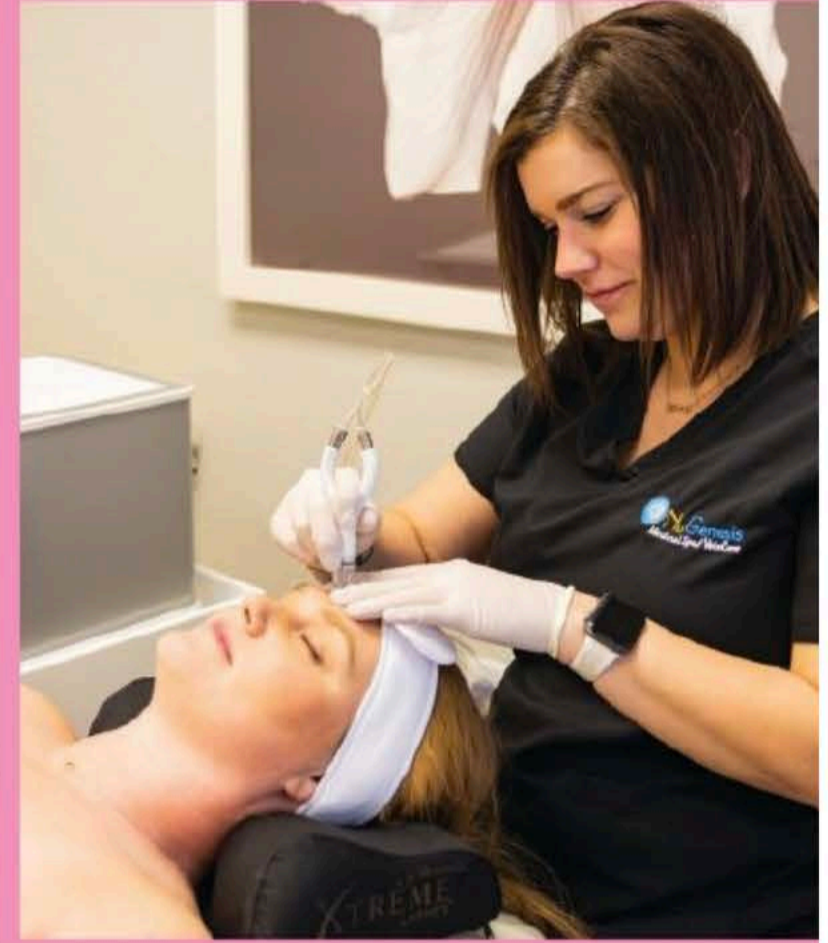
health, anti-inflammation and anti-aging,” Smith said. “We customize every IV bag and stock over 65 ingredients to ensure freshness and optimal treatment for patients’ individual needs.”

There’s an IV “cocktail” for everyone — to improve age defiance, focus, athletic performance, weight loss and more — all administered in a relaxing spa setting.

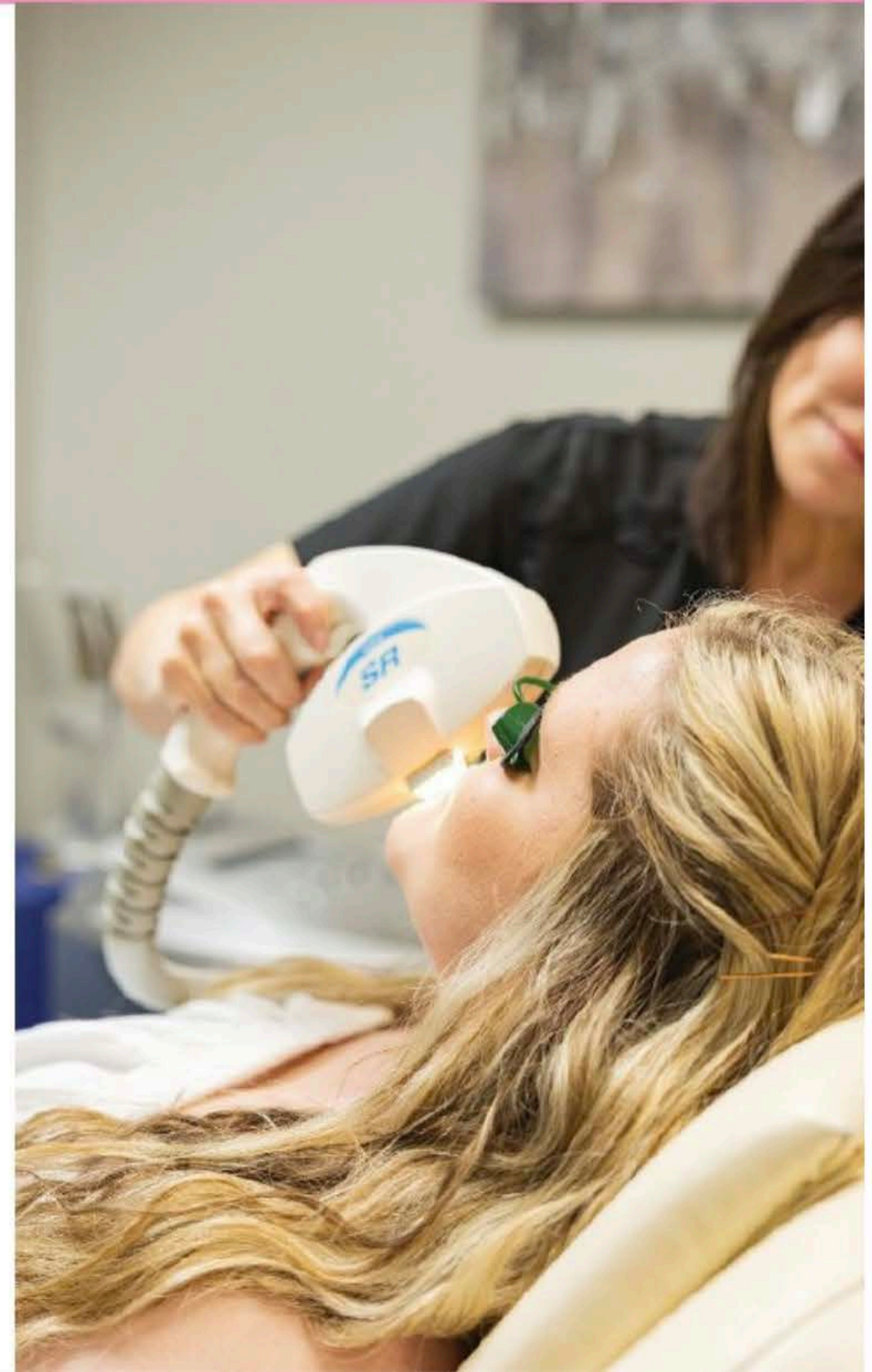
MEDITATE THE YEARS AWAY

The mind, spirit and emotions thrive with routine maintenance, just like the physical body, according to Cassie Robertson, a local holistic healer, former EMT and owner of The Jaunty Jungle, a holistic healing practice in Waco. Meditation, she believes, is a key component to that maintenance throughout the aging process.

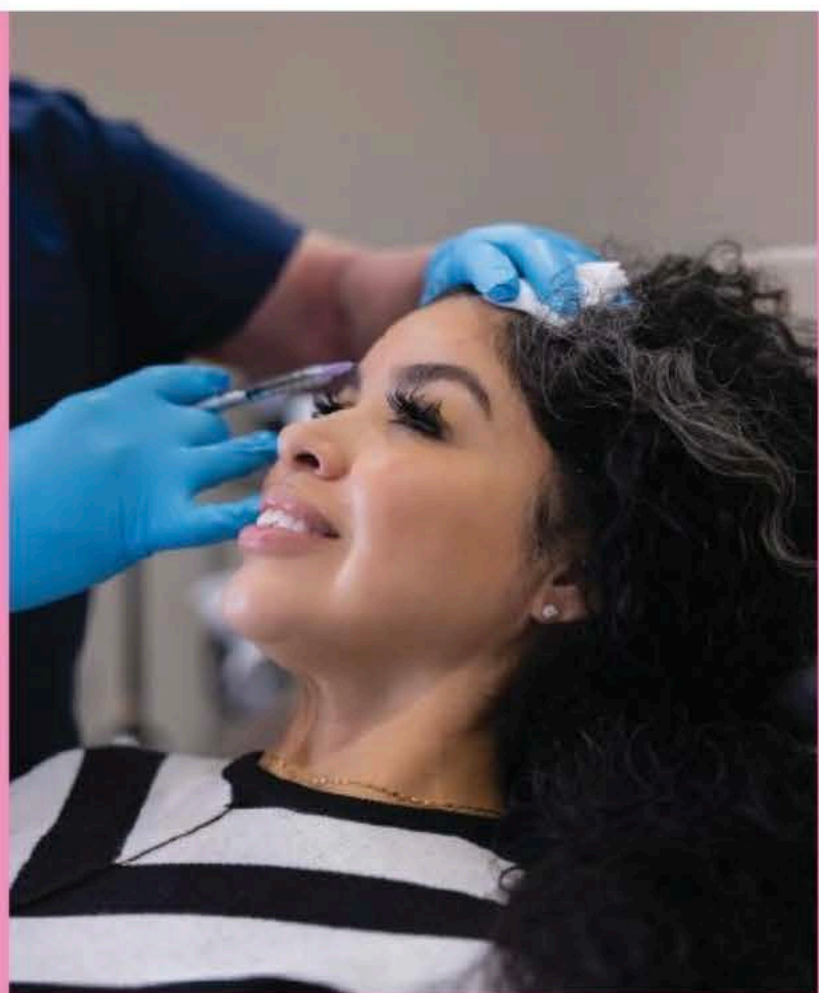
“When we neglect these areas of ourselves, we can begin to experience a wide range of symptoms, sometimes as simple as increased irritation throughout the day or inability to navigate conflict and stressful situations,” Robertson said. “Some people begin to isolate themselves in an attempt to minimize these situations, which furthers the problem. Because we are very intrinsically connected beings, over time, our neglected mental and emotional health begins to adversely affect our physical bodies.”



Opposite page: Owner of The Jaunty Jungle, Cassie Robertson, offers a holistic approach to combating the aging process. Top Left: Botox stimulates the body's natural ability to rejuvenate by releasing collagen to fill the lines formed over time as the body ages. Top Right: DiamondGlow works like a super exfoliator, leaving the skin glowing immediately after treatment. Bottom Left: Sunscreen is the number one product that experts recommend for protecting skin and keeping a youthful appearance. Bottom Right: Intense Pulsed Light therapy smooths out the texture and color of the skin to create a more even skin tone.



Top Left: Botox requires routine maintenance every three to four months just like many other aesthetic procedures such as hair coloring and massages. Top Right: Steam facials soften the skin and open pores to purge those unwanted substances under the skin. Bottom: Hydrafacials remove dead skin cells, extracts impurities and hydrates and moisturizes the skin to treat many types of skin concerns.



CONNECT YOUR BODY AND MIND

It is important to move the body to maintain a youthful and healthy body, according to Damm.

“To live a vibrant, youthful life as we age, we must nurture and love the one and only body we have,” Damm said. “As we age, our bone density starts to shrink, our muscles can become weak and our flexibility deteriorates if we do not have a consistent exercise routine.”

Muscle weakness and inflexibility can lead to broken bones, restricted movement and limited physical activity, Damm said. Yoga is an all-encompassing practice that can catapult a body into strength, flexibility, mobility and youthfulness, she added.

“Yoga focuses on physical postures that require holding body weight. This is how we increase our bone density and muscular strength,” Damm said. “It also is focused on deep stretching with breath work. This helps our flexibility, mobility and respiratory system.”

Damm said a bonus of yoga is that it offers a chance to take time out and calm the mind.

“This helps us find peace and relaxation,” Damm said. “Living a life of less stress can limit chronic illnesses, keeping the body and mind youthful.”

Chronic stress contributes to premature aging, for the brain and the immune system.

“We hold tension and stress in our bodies. The more we live in that state of stress, the more our mental health and bodies deteriorate,” Damm said. “This causes us to age more rapidly and have more physical restrictions.”

Yoga connects the mind, body and breath.

“The focus of the practice is to be mindful and be in the present moment,” Damm said. “When we live in the present moment, we do not stress about the future or stay hung up on the past. We are being present.”

This, Damm explained, helps calm the mind and helps ignite the parasympathetic nervous system.

“Our systems require rest,” Damm said. “Yoga allows us to tap into the PNS while strengthening the body, stretching our muscles and increasing our bone density. It is the all-encompassing practice that will keep the mind refreshed and the physical body strong and mobile.”

A simple search of yoga videos on YouTube can be a good place to start exploring.

“There is also something very valuable about being part of a community that keeps us youthful,” Damm said. “Connection, fellowship and yoga in a yoga studio, gym or church can be the cherry on top.”

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— Dr. Daniel Smith



SMOOTH THINGS OVER

Fine lines and wrinkles, due to aging, are a number one concern of Amy Peper’s patients at NuGenesis, she said.

“Unfortunately, as we age, our skin starts to break down,” Peper said. “We lose the elasticity and also get lines and wrinkles.”

And Botox is still the number one cosmetic procedure Peper’s clinic administers. Smith also puts a lot of faith in the product for patients who want to address fine lines and moderate wrinkles, he said.

“Neurotoxins such as Dysport and Botox are an amazing way to address fine to moderate wrinkles,” Smith said. “They weakly paralyze the muscles that cause wrinkles. Neurotoxins are traditionally used to treat the upper face including the forehead, the ‘elevens’ and crow’s feet.”

Peper agreed.

“The way that I explain it when patients ask me about Botox is that you make these [facial] lines over the years by being expressive,” Peper said. “But I call them trenches. When you start making a line, which I call a trench, [it is because] you’re making the same face over and over again. The whole idea behind Botox is to smooth out the muscle contractions so that you are not making that frown face or that squinting face — and then making that trench line.”

