

At-Home Beauty Treatments Offer Lower Costs, Lower Risks

by *bendweekly*

(NU) - There has been an increase recently in Americans' obsessions to look and feel better. Reality makeover programs such as "Extreme Makeover" use cosmetic surgery to erase signs of aging or to change the size and shape of specific body parts. However, for some people, invasive procedures are not an option.

Many are afraid to undergo surgery because of the risks or the expense that is often associated with these cosmetic procedures. Fortunately, there are now products that can be used in the privacy of your own home for a fraction of the cost, are more convenient and offer great results.

For years, those searching to get rid of fine lines and get that healthy glow went to a physician for microdermabrasion, a treatment where dead skin cells are removed with tiny silicon or aluminum-oxide crystals blown against the skin using a hand-held device and then sucked up with a small vacuum. Costing about \$1,200 a visit, the procedure was not easy on the wallet. But there's a new generation of at-home alternatives that allows you to get similar results within weeks. Creams and serums that contain Retinol (pure vitamin A) exfoliate the skin, giving a more youthful appearance. Those who want to go a step further can now buy their own high-tech beauty treatment system, a microdermabrasion machine, at a cost of \$79.95 (www.sharperimage.com).

Some women are unhappy with the size or shape of their bust. They might have always wished they were a cup size larger so that their clothes fit them better, or they may have noticed changes in their shape after childbirth. Regardless of the reason, many of these women are afraid or unwilling to undergo the pain associated with implants. Others are simply not willing to fork over the average \$5,000 cost for surgery. Now there is another option available, a system that is clinically proven to grow a woman's own natural breasts about a cup size without surgery, pills or creams. At a cost of around \$1,000, the system, called Brava (www.brava.com), is about a fifth of the cost of breast augmentation surgery. More information can also be found by calling 1-800-422-5350.

The shade of one's pearly whites has also become part of the beauty fix-it phenomenon. Until recently, whitening was only available in a dentist's office and was costly, ranging about \$500 to \$800. Now in less than two weeks, it is possible to get whiter teeth and a gleaming smile. Products such as Crest Whitestrips (www.crestnighteffects.com), wipe on gels and whitening toothpastes can be used at a fraction of the cost. In a matter of a few days, teeth will be shades whiter and brighter without ever having to sit in a dentist's chair.

These are just a few of the do-it-yourself at home beauty treatments that are easier on your wallet, provide you with more control of your looks and can be done on your own time. To find out more about these treatments, log on to their Web sites or try the procedures yourself for the ultimate proof.

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