

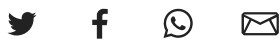
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## Why men are queuing up for 'back to work' Botox

The return to the office has seen a huge rise in men booking anti-ageing tweakments – from jawline fillers to tear trough reduction

By Sonia Haria, BEAUTY DIRECTOR

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Tucked away in a backstreet of Knightsbridge in London is the [Taktouk Clinic](#), run by the 44-year-old ex A&E doctor Wassim Taktouk. Dr Taktouk has earned a reputation for subtly enhancing tweakments for men and women. Since opening his own clinic in April, he estimates 35 per cent of his clientele are now male – a rise from 20 per cent pre-lockdown. As many of his clients work in the City, he puts much of this rise down to the

pressure to look well-rested ahead of a return to the office, where there may be fewer chances of promotion and the threat of [redundancy post-pandemic](#).

‘As we move from a more virtual life to re-entering the physical world, there’s been a striving to make faces fit for work,’ he explains. ‘Five years ago, most of the men I’d see would be the husbands of existing clients. Now, men are coming in off their own back.’

The award-winning [Cosmetic Skin Clinic](#), based in London and Buckinghamshire, has seen a 27 per cent increase in male patients in May this year compared with January 2020, and the Sk:n Clinic, a group with 70 locations nationwide, has had a 13 per cent increase year-on-year in dermatology treatments and injectables for men.

It seems that men are feeling the pressure more than ever to look the part and they see injectables, such as [Botox and fillers](#), as a way to do that. In a recent survey by the cosmetic brand Uvence, 24 per cent of male respondents said that they are going back to the workplace feeling the least confident they ever have, and 21 per cent are stressed and reluctant because of the impact that lockdown has had on their appearance.



The idea of these tweakments is to give a subtle, youthful lift | CREDIT: Getty

A good example of this is Taktouk's client Frank Rees, a 48-year-old single accountant from London. Prior to the pandemic, he had a small amount of filler added under his eyes, or 'tear trough', to mitigate a loss of fat in the face, which gives a sunken look. However,

with re-entry to office life in sight, he wanted to erase the impact that enforced WFH has had on his appearance. 'I feel like I've been walking around under bad lighting for an entire year,' says Rees. 'As I return to work, I want to look refreshed. There's always the younger competition coming through the ranks, so I want to put my best face forward.'

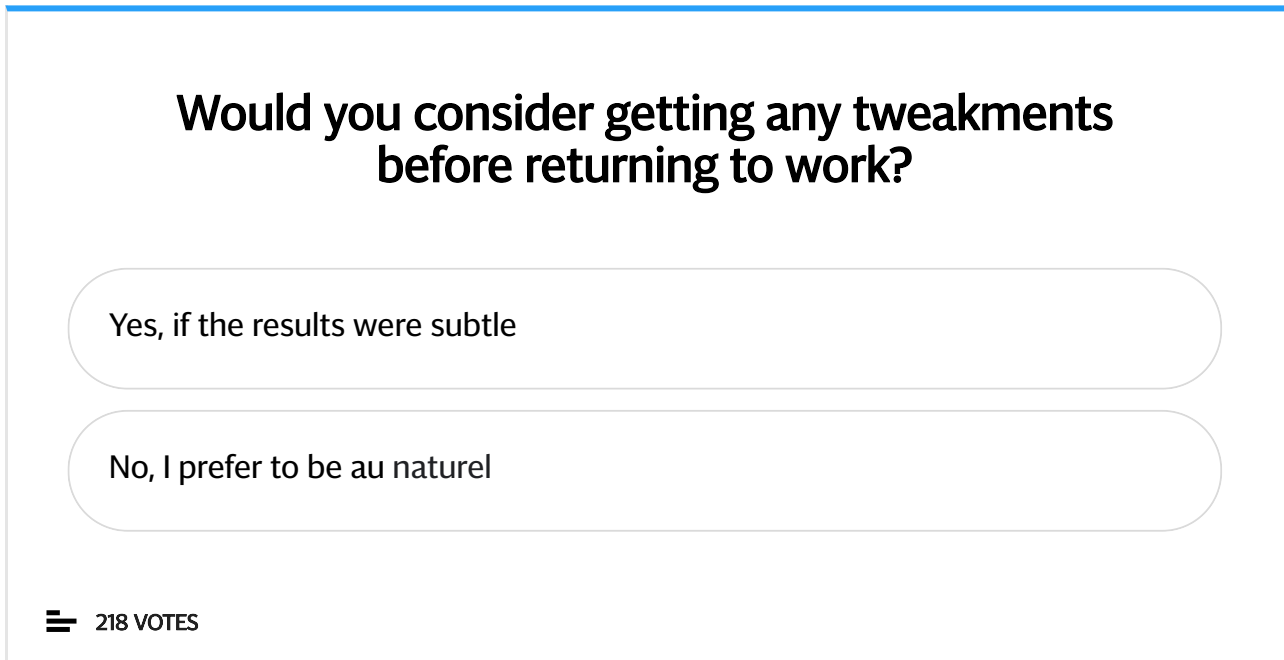
Men like Rees know what they want, and Taktouk has noticed a shift towards men coming to him with more informed requests. Prior to the pandemic, they would typically visit his clinic for a little tweak with the popular anti-wrinkle injection Botox, which lasts for six months and costs from £250. In the past few months, he has noticed an increase in men wanting full-face treatments that give more noticeable rejuvenation, using fillers – these start at £450 and last up to two years.

A full-face rejuvenation was the treatment plan for Rees. Taktouk artfully used a 'dynamic, flexible' filler, by leading injectables brand Teoxane, in Rees's forehead. Unlike old-fashioned dense fillers that can lead to an obvious 'filler look', this won't leave you looking as though anything has been frozen. 'As men get older, the skull changes shape from the profile, and you get a more pronounced bump in-between the brows, which is what you imagine cavemen with,' explains Taktouk.

There's little Taktouk doesn't know about facial anatomy. By injecting filler in the right compartment in the forehead, 'it softens the troglodyte appearance, and in the process it opens the eyes and gently softens forehead lines'. This is the important part. For men, Taktouk always keeps horizontal forehead lines in, so as not to 'feminise' the face, while lessening 'elevenses' (the two vertical frown lines in-between the brows). He also added a small amount of filler to Rees's jawline, to give a stronger appearance.

'There's always been a preconception [with injectables that men will look drastically changed](#), but these are just slight changes and it makes me feel happier,' explains Rees. 'I'm otherwise very low maintenance – aside from washing my face and putting on a basic moisturiser, there's nothing else I do, but I see the injectables as an investment in my face.'





Taktouk is his own guinea pig, and has Botox twice a year in his forehead ('not to remove my lines, but to slow down the development of deeper lines', he says). He also has a treatment of Prophilos every winter. Prophilos is a hydrating injectable 'biostimulant', often described as an injectable moisturiser, placed in five points either side of the face to stimulate collagen. This routine of slight, undetectable tweaks, which he has been doing since he turned 40, make Taktouk look like he's forever 'just back' from a relaxing holiday.

So why have men now become more open to the idea of cosmetic treatments? 'They have been more interested in skincare, and so the natural progression is to go into treatments,' says behavioural psychologist Jo Hemmings. 'It's been over a year since their colleagues last saw them in an office situation, and it's all part of presenting your best self. It's not seen as inappropriate for men to seek out injectables any more.'

For Nilam Holmes, the 50-year-old director of Dermaspa in Milton Keynes, whose celebrity clients include David Beckham, former pop star Duncan James and TV presenter Mark Wright, the 'ideal' of men has changed in the past five years, away from the 'Hollywood' look – an overly strong jawline, as seen on George Clooney and Brad Pitt – to a face that keeps its character, while subtly anti-ageing it. 'If done properly with the right practitioner, having "work" done now, in 2021, couldn't be further away from the cartoon character, Desperate Dan face,' she says. 'Men nowadays still want to look mature, just not old.' She adds that they are seeing cosmetic work as investments in themselves, rather than spending money on cars, holidays or going out.



Celebrity fans of a few tweakments: David Beckham and former pop star Duncan James | CREDIT: Getty Images

And as Benji Dhillon, a cosmetic doctor, 39 and based in Buckinghamshire, explains, the fact that he has Botox himself helps to reassure his clients that the treatment will look natural. 'There are so many myths around injectables for men, concerns that it will feminise the face, so I want to show that it doesn't have to be that way. You don't want to freeze the muscle, you just want to weaken it a bit,' he says.

Dhillon explains Botox to his male clients with an exercise analogy: 'It's the equivalent of you being able to do a bicep curl with 20kg. And then I could put 100 units of Botox in that bicep and you wouldn't be able to lift it at all. Or you could put in 50 units, and you can still lift it, but maybe just halfway because the muscle is weaker. It's what I do for the face, so you still have some movement.'

As with Taktouk, most of Dhillon's male clients are in their 40s and 50s. 'These men are largely in competitive environments and want to stay ahead, or are recently divorced and are just about to go back on the market.' His client, James O'Neill, a 42-year-old global sales director, booked in for a Botox treatment to his upper face in May this year, in an attempt to look less tired before he goes back to the office in September.

His aim is to appear 'young and healthy for as long as possible'. 'I've been putting my health first in lockdown and eating well, and I want to make my face match how I feel.'

And as long as I keep myself fresh, I won't feel like I'm getting left behind. Also, socially, you don't want to be that person at the end of the bar who looks really old.'



The old aesthetic Vs the new aesthetic | CREDIT: Getty

***The old aesthetic:*** The pronounced jawline of chiselled Hollywood stars such as George Clooney and Brad Pitt was once the male ideal.

***The new aesthetic:*** Now, men are seeking subtle anti-ageing treatments so their faces look ever-fresh, like Robert Pattinson's and Regé-Jean Page's.

As for what the future holds, 2021 is seeing a huge increase in injectables across the board. A new survey by Grand View Research found that the global facial-injectable market size was estimated at \$13.4 billion in 2020, is expected to reach \$15.3 billion in 2021, and will average an 8.8 per cent increase per year up to 2028. While Mintel forecasts that over the next year we will see the opening of more treatment spaces geared towards men in the UK, with 43 per cent of adults saying that non-surgical procedures are becoming a normal part of beauty and grooming routines.

'I know friends who have had injectables, and it's more acceptable now,' says O'Neill. 'I probably wouldn't go into the office and shout that I've had Botox, but if someone asked me I'd have an open conversation.'



Taktouk agrees it's less of a taboo subject. 'Leading up to the summer, men would go to the gym for months to look in shape for a week. And they don't think that's vain. But their faces are on view all year round – so why wouldn't they take care of that?'

## What men want

Gentle rejuvenation to combat ageing is popular, including softening 'elevenses' (the two vertical frown lines in-between the brows). 'The elevenses can make you look angry, so, going back to work, men want to look like they can do the job, and that they're not tired or anxious,' explains Dr Wassim Taktouk. Botox can cost in the region of £250-£350 and lasts around six months.

To 'masculinise' their faces, men have jaw and chin filler to give a wider jaw appearance. According to 2011 research from Aberdeen and Stirling universities, 'larger jawbones, more prominent cheekbones and thinner cheeks are all features of male faces that differentiate them from female faces... From an evolutionary view, extremes of these characteristics indicate that the owners... possess good genes.' Fillers can cost from £450 per area and last up to 24 months.

Some men want the skin to have a more hydrated appearance, without tweaking lines or structurally changing anything with fillers. For this, Taktouk uses Prohilo, which costs from £450 and lasts about six months.



Dr Taktouk added a small amount of filler to Rees's jawline, to give it a stronger appearance | CREDIT: Andrea Zvadova

## Non-injectable tweaks on the rise

### Morpheus8

A popular treatment Nilam Holmes performs on her male clients, especially those in their 50s and 60s, Morpheus8 hit the headlines earlier this year when Judy Murray revealed it as her treatment of choice for her 'turkey neck'. (Her doctor, Judy Todd, practices at Taktouk's clinic in London.) A tool that emits radio frequency through microneedling – mainly around the jowl area – Morpheus8 can tighten sagging skin for up to 18 months. One treatment can cost up to £1,500.

### Collagenwave

For more skin maintenance and less of a dramatic 'makeover', Holmes uses a combination of radio frequency, gentle microneedling and deep-cleansing facials. This is what 'no fuss' David Beckham, who has been a client of Holmes for several years and doesn't have Botox, books in for.

### CoolSculpting

Benji Dhillon often uses CoolSculpting in his clinic, which involves freezing smaller areas of fat to dissolve away the fat pads (particularly useful for double chins). It can be followed up a few months later with filler to bring back definition to the jawline. Treatments start at £500.

### Hair transplants

Along with facial improvements, hair treatments are on the rise too. Over the past year the Farjo Hair Institute, a hair-loss clinic based in London and Manchester, has seen a 30 per cent year on year growth in the number of men making enquiries about hair transplants. Prices start at £6,500.

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