

## SHOPPING

# Puff Piece: Test Driving the Newest Solutions for Keeping Skin Fit and Firm

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Photographed by Ben Hassett, *Vogue*, April 2017

The first time it occurred to me that puffiness was a mortal sin, I was a 19-year-old model on the set of a beauty shoot. “She’s puffy,” I heard an invisible critic hiss from the back of the studio while an assistant spackled concealer under my eyes. “She’s *very* puffy.” Throughout history, women from Marilyn Monroe to Ashley Judd have suffered similarly for their ostensible excesses—too much champagne, too much surgery, too much filler, too much food. I have come to see my own puffiness as the voluminous souvenir of elective overindulgence, but the cause can also be unpredictable.

“Puffiness is a sign that there is an imbalance in the body,” Joel M. Evans, M.D., director of the Center for Functional Medicine in Stamford, Connecticut, tells me, sharing a list of balance-altering offenders, from stress and lack of sleep to alcohol and processed foods, which can incite inflammatory chemicals called cytokines throughout the body. When detecting individual puffiness, Evans explains, “the first thing we do is find out what kind of living a person is doing,” a lifestyle assessment David Colbert, M.D.—the dermatologist and internist behind the New York Dermatology Group—often follows with a blood draw to check metabolic functions and to ensure sudden swelling isn’t caused by something more serious, such as hypothyroidism or high blood pressure. After a particularly hedonistic dinner (multiple rounds of dim sum, with multiple glasses of wine), Evans’s words strike a chord. Could I in fact be *living* better?

“One of the top requests I hear from clients is how can they effectively combat puffiness,” says Kimberly Snyder, a Los Angeles-based certified nutritionist whom I enlist to help guide my path toward self-improvement. She reiterates that diets heavy on processed foods (guilty), refined sugars (guilty), and dairy (guilty) often lead to poor digestion and the sluggish removal of sodium and fluid from our systems. “That retention alone can accumulate up to several pounds of excess water weight,” Snyder says, recommending a mealtime dose of digestive enzymes to further assist in breaking down protein, carbs, and fat. I immediately start consuming one of her [Solluna Feel Good Digestive Enzymes](#) before each meal, while doubling down on a session of mechanical depuffing at the newly opened [Ricari Studios](#) in Manhattan, a SoHo pop-up of Anna Zahn’s Beverly Hills temple of lymphatic drainage.

As I step into what can best be described as a sheer skin suit, Zahn walks me through the ICOONE, a futuristic depuffing device with a pair of oscillating roller heads that glide over the face and body to gently reduce cellular deposits, relax the nervous system, and enhance blood and lymphatic flow. “There is no main organ in the lymphatic system to keep things moving along, like the heart does for the circulatory system,” she explains as the hour-plus-long, totally painless sci-fi massage gets under way. So Zahn and her machine assume that responsibility and optimize it. My abdomen is miraculously flat, my cheekbones newly chiseled, when I peel myself off her jasmine-scented table. I’m hooked on the \$275 treatment and book another six weeks later.

In the interim, I head to [The Light Salon](#), the cultish London-born LED atelier, where the collagen-stimulating and inflammation-reducing menu of services is as easy to access as a blowout. “We spotted a gap in the market,” explains Laura Ferguson, a longtime spa manager in the U.K., who cofounded the company to bring the NASA-approved light-emitting diode technology out of exclusive facialist studios—and, as of this fall, into a Nordstrom near you. (A U.S. flagship at the newly opened New York store is joined by three additional locations.) “The light also helps cortisol levels go down and serotonin levels go up,” Ferguson elaborates on the 40-minute session of facial LED with a collagen mask add-on and lymphatic massage compression pants that I select. And the feel-good hormones *do* feel good. But looking in the mirror after my treatment feels better. “Nothing else comes close,” celebrity facialist Angela Caglia tells me of the sculpting and brightening power of LED, which prompted her to start distributing [a portable mask](#) from the Korean company Cellreturn that can extend the benefits of her in-office treatments. With 1,026 individual LEDs—“the highest number currently available for at-home use,” she says—it is deliberately excessive. Caglia tells me I can use the mask every day—just the kind of overindulgence I’ve been looking for.