

We've frozen

The gym saved me

HILARY RIFKIN, 47, lives in London with her children, Benjamin, 10, and Hannah, nine

Exercise has always been important to me. Before I came to the UK, I used to run or go to the odd aerobics class. Then, nearly seven years ago, I moved here from America because of my husband's job. I'd stopped work and didn't exercise because I had no time and no one to look after the kids.

I fell into depression. I was overwhelmed by loneliness from being at home with the children all day and having no friends and family to fall back on. I had no energy and no appetite.

I'd just turned 40 and would look in the mirror and think, 'You look so old.' My face looked worn out and my body had lost its muscle tone. I hated what I'd become.

After six months, I realised that I was the only one who could

change how I was feeling. I had to help myself. I didn't want pills. I knew exercise was good for me so I joined a gym where I could work out for an hour while the children were in a crèche.

Within a few weeks I noticed a big change. I got my muscle tone back and, because I started feeling better about myself, I began making an effort with my hair, make-up and clothes. The years started to fall away.

Now I exercise for an hour five times a week. I've started teaching blast classes, where you do sets of exercises in quick succession, and doing personal training at Lomax, the gym where I work in south-west London.

Now I have masses of energy and my dark days are behind me.

What's more I don't think I look 47. I feel and look better than ever.

● www.lomaxpt.com

AGE 47 STOPPED AGEING AT 38



AGE 47 STOPPED AGEING AT 37

I budget for Botox

ELLE FOX, 47, lives in London. She is single and works in admin

When I was in my early thirties, I started noticing lines forming around my eyes. I've always had a very expressive face so it wasn't that much of a surprise. At work, I'd be squinting in front of a computer for hours and I was starting to see a deep ridge in the middle of my forehead.

A friend told me she'd started having Botox and filler injections. She looked great so I decided to find out more about it. I liked the idea of a preventative measure, rather than resorting to a facelift further down the line.

So 15 years ago I had Botox around my forehead and eyes. I loved the result - I looked so much fresher and younger.

Since then I've been having it twice a year.

Once a year I also have fillers injected into my cheeks and lips. Some people find it makes them a bit sore, but maybe I have a high pain threshold. All I really feel is a little scratch, almost like giving yourself a vigorous facial scrub.

The Botox costs £280, and the fillers are £250. It's expensive, but considering how effective it is and how long the results last, it's worth it, so I make sure I budget for it.

People tell me I look like I am in my late thirties - and they're often surprised when I tell them how old I really am.

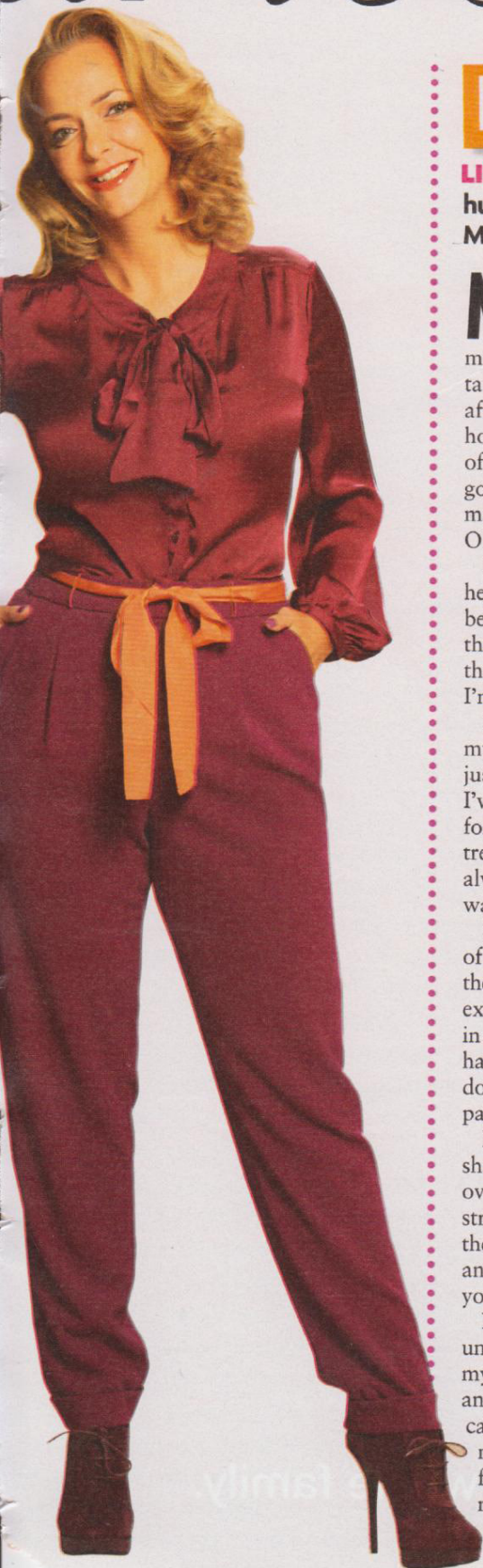
Botox and fillers are a standard part of my beauty routine now - I would never think of giving them up.

● www.courthouseclinics.com or call 0845 555 5050



our looks

These women look much younger than their real age. So just what are their secrets?



Facial exercises really work!

LINDA ROBINSON, 54, lives in Barnsley with her husband, Michael, 51. She's mum to Nicola, 29, and Michael, 27, and has a five-year-old grandson

My parents were very young looking and my mum made sure she taught me how to look after myself, drumming home the simplest pieces of advice, like never going to bed with my make-up on and using Olay moisturiser.

It's partly thanks to her that people never believe me when I tell them I'm 54. Instead, they often assume I'm about 45.

But I don't think my youthfulness is just down to genes. I've never been one for expensive spa treatments, but I'm always looking out for ways to stay youthful.

So when, at the age of 20, I read about the benefits of facial exercises and massage in a magazine, I had to have a go. And I've been doing them daily for the past 34 years.

First I make 'e' and 'o' shapes with my mouth, over-exaggerating the stretches. These tighten the muscles in my chin and neck that slacken as you age, causing jowls.

Next, I tap gently under my eyes with my fingertips to move any fluid that could cause bags. Finally I massage outwards from the top of my nose to just past the

start of my brow to prevent frown lines.

Sometimes I go through this routine in the morning after a shower and sometimes in the evening in front of the TV. And on top of that I massage my skin for three minutes before going to bed. I'm religious about it – I've never missed a day.

As a result I'm sure my skin is tighter, softer and more glowing and, so far, nothing has started to sag! I'll admit I have a few crow's feet but that's it – they're proof of how much I laugh, so think they can only be a good thing.



AGE
54
STOPPED
AGEING AT
45



Words Alison Palmer and Abigail Jackson Photos Tony Ward Styling Fiona Parkhouse
Hair and make-up Julia B and Hanan HILARY Dress, £89; 8-16, The Pretty Dress Company;
shoes, £80; Miss KG at Debenhams ELLE Blouse, £16.99; 8-18, New Look trousers, £45; 8-18,
Roksanca Ilincic/Editions at Debenhams; shoes, £24.99; New Look LINDA Dress, £89; and shrug,
£39; both 8-16, The Pretty Dress Company; shoes, £49; Autograph at M&S