



eyes

# IN THE GROOVE

FOR DEEP-SET CROW'S FEET AND GLABELLA LINES THAT RESIST THE EFFECTS OF MUSCLE RELAXANTS, SYDNEY PLASTIC SURGEON **DR WARWICK NETTLE** SAYS THERE IS A PERMANENT TREATMENT OPTION. GEMMA GARKUT REPORTS.

When it comes to some of the most obvious effects of ageing, the eye and brow areas have a lot to answer for. Sydney plastic surgeon Dr Warwick Nettle says when non-surgical options fail to reduce the appearance of the glabella and crow's feet, there are surgical options which can help reduce them permanently.

'The activity of the corrugator and orbicularis muscles around the eye area is responsible for the glabella and crow's feet respectively, and in some people these muscles are more active than usual,' says Dr Nettle. 'Of course, the first line of defence to reduce the appearance of these wrinkles is Botox, but there is a group of people who are tired of their frequent muscle relaxant injections and are looking for a more permanent solution.'

The corrugator muscle runs across the top of the nose horizontally along the eyebrows, and contracts to create the vertical grooves of the glabella that become deeper with age.

A corrugator transection is a surgical procedure that involves removing a section of the corrugator muscle, and replacing it with the patient's own fat. 'It is usually carried out as an adjunct to upper and lower "pinch" blepharoplasty procedures, where the fat bags are reorganised and



BEFORE



AFTER crow's feet transection via facelift incision and upper and lower eyelid surgery by Dr Nettle



BEFORE



AFTER crow's feet transection via facelift incision and upper and lower eyelid surgery by Dr Nettle

excess skin is trimmed to create more open, vibrant eyes,' says Dr Nettle. 'We use the upper eyelid incision to remove a small section of the corrugator muscle, about the width of your index finger, and replace it with fat removed from the upper and lower eyelids. This is a very effective procedure for the right patient and can enhance the results of a blepharoplasty procedure beautifully.'

Dr Nettle emphasises that Botox is the most common treatment for an overactive corrugator muscle and is the best treatment option to utilise in the first instance. 'There are three groups of people who are suited to a corrugator transection: those who haven't had Botox injections but are looking to have a blepharoplasty procedure, those who are tired of maintaining their Botox injections, and those who have an unusually hyperactive corrugator muscle,' he says. 'Corrugator over-activity has also been linked with a propensity for migraines, and an interesting effect of lessening the power of the corrugator muscle has been shown to decrease migraine frequency and severity in many cases.'

The operation is quite delicate, adding about 40 minutes to normal eyelid surgery, taking it to a two-hour procedure. 'There are sensory nerves that run through the corrugator muscle which affect the forehead and the scalp, which is why only the central third of the muscle can be removed. These nerves are not disrupted during the surgery but the patient might feel temporary numbness in their forehead and scalp for about eight weeks after the procedure.'

'Patients shouldn't take this procedure lightly; it's for those who haven't experienced results with non-surgical treatment options,' Dr Nettle adds. 'For the right patients the procedure is very effective, with at least 60 percent of the corrugator muscle's activity reduced permanently,' says Dr Nettle.

Similarly, the orbicularis muscle can be surgically altered to permanently reduce the appearance of crow's feet. 'The orbicularis muscle is a bigger muscle which goes around the eye, in a kind of egg shape. The activity of this muscle is responsible for the deep crow's feet either side of the eyes that come about with age,' says Dr Nettle. 'Again, if the patient has exhausted non-surgical options to reduce their



BEFORE



AFTER upper and lower eyelid surgery, corrugator transection and dermabrasion of her upper lip by Dr Nettle



BEFORE (not frowning, this is how the patient looked at rest due to corrugator overactivity)



AFTER upper and lower eyelid surgery and corrugator transection by Dr Nettle



BEFORE



AFTER upper and lower eyelid surgery and corrugator transection by Dr Nettle

crow's feet, we can cut a triangular section of the muscle where the crow's feet form and flip it upside down so that the smoother side of the muscle faces outside.'

This procedure is only performed in conjunction with a facelift, as the same incision points are used so that no extra scarring is involved. 'This kind of surgery is only an option for those seeking a facelift and is not an an-office procedure like Botox. However, it is a very good option for suitable patients as it permanently reduces the appearance of crow's feet and further enhances the rejuvenated effects of a facelift.'

Both procedures increase the length of the recovery period of a blepharoplasty and facelift but not significantly, says Dr Nettle.

'Creating balance and harmony in the face is central to any facial surgery, and softening harsh lines using surgical techniques can ensure that the rejuvenated effect of a facelift or blepharoplasty is not compromised by stubborn lines,' he says. 'For the right patient, it's a great complementary procedure for a balanced anti-ageing effect.' **acsm**