



How To Get Fuller Lips



Let's be honest, full lips never really go out of style. Still, there's no denying that as dedicated as we always are to an iconic red lipstick or sexy nude shade, lips have really stepped up their game in the last few years in the contest to become your buzziest facial feature. Maybe it's that Kylie Jenner influence. Or maybe the rise of a new generation of pillowy hyaluronic acid fillers has spurred it on. Either way, big lips are bigger business than ever – the American Society of Plastic Surgeons reported more than 28,000 lip augmentations were performed in the US in 2016 a whopping 53% increase since 2000.

If your lips are smaller than you'd like-fear not. We've got the scoop on the latest cosmetic treatments and makeup tips to make your lips plumper right away and over time.

The big innovations on the lip scene lately have come in the form of fillers, especially those featuring moisturizing wunderkind hyaluronic acid. “All of the fillers I recommend for lips are based on hyaluronic acid (HA), which is the major component of the body’s own collagen,” says plastic surgeon Lara Devgan. “This means that they have biologic characteristics that look and feel more natural. It also means that they are fully dissolvable, which is an excellent feature for patient safety.”

In particular, products like Juvederm, Restylane, Belotero, and Volbella, all of which are HA-based, have gained major followings among docs. “Each company has several different types of HA fillers which differ based on the HA concentration and how the molecules are linked together,” explains plastic surgeon and RealSelf contributor David Shafer. The tighter those bonds are, the thicker the filler gel is, and the thicker the gel, the more plumping power it packs. But opting for the thickest gel around isn’t always the path to your perfect look, even if you want more major lips. “The goal is not to make your lips look like a frankfurter,” warns dermatologist Patricia Wexler.

See, part of the appeal of hyaluronic acid fillers compared to the silicone injections of yore is that they look more natural – the ultimate “your lips but better” – so it’s all about sitting down with your doctor, discussing your goals, and figuring out what works best for your mouth. “My choice of fillers depends on a patient’s unique anatomic characteristics, as well as their desired results, but roughly speaking, the ones I use most often are Volbella for a subtle result, Belotero for a moderate result, and Restylane Refyne for a full result,” says Devgan.

Since HA is naturally absorbed by the body over time (six months to a year, for most patients) these fillers can be an ideal option if you're not ready to commit to permanently altering your lips, but they're not exactly an impulse-buy either; depending on which filler you choose and the amount used, HA lip fillers can range from \$500-\$800. Looking to get a more long-term solution? Fat transfers (when a small amount of your own fat, typically from the belly or thighs, is removed, prepared by your doctor, and then reinjected into the lips) may be worth considering. The treatment, which Devgan refers to as "the next frontier in lip augmentation," can cost several thousand dollars but the results are permanent.

Another new in-office option are Nova Threads (cost: \$500) "Nova Threads are a new type of 'injectable' which is essentially similar to suture material which we use in surgery," Shafer explains. "The material stimulates collagen around it. In the office, using very small cannulas, we inject these threads under the skin and the collagen boost helps fine lines and wrinkles, but can also add some volume and shape."

If the idea of having something injected into your lips freaks you out, there are less invasive methods of getting fuller lips, though the results may be less dramatic. Of course, any heavy duty moisturizer will help your lips live up to their full potential, but dermatologists sing the praises of one ingredient above the rest: humble hyaluronic acid.

Just as it works inside of lips, HA applied to the surface of the lips can help giving a naturally full effect. The molecule pulls water into the skin and can hold up to 1000x its own weight in that plumping hydration, so applying an HA serum like Fillerina Lip Plump or HA-infused lip treatment like SkinMedica HA5 Smooth & Plump Lip System can take your lips up to their own natural max fill line. For an extra boost, some doctors combine an HA serum with microneedling, using an ultra-fine set of needles to help the serum penetrate into the deeper layers of skin. The downside, of course, is that the natural absorption of HA happens much faster when it's applied topically, so think of this one more like a supercharged lip balm than a baby sister to fillers.

Other non-invasive procedures that you might be familiar with for your face can also go to work on giving you smoother, more plumped lips. Shafer is a fan of CO2RE fractional laser treatments (cost: up to \$1000) for resurfacing to smooth the skin and boost collagen while Wexler favors ThermiSmooth, a radio-frequency treatment that can stimulate collagen for up to two years after six 10-minute sessions (\$750 per session).

Remember back when the Kylie Jenner Lip Challenge was making internet waves and bloggers everywhere were busy puffing their lips up to balloon-like proportions with repurposed shot glasses? Well, suction devices had been used as a lip plumping technique since well before that, but that doesn't make them a good idea. "Suction devices for lip plumping are a bad and dangerous idea- they can damage the substance of the lips, stretch and distort tissues, and potentially even cause disruption of blood vessels, causing a hematoma or aneurysm," warns Devgan.

On the more high-tech end, nanocurrent devices like Ziip send electrical wavelengths into your skin, which they say can fight all kinds of signs of aging including, you guessed it, wrinkles and shrinkage around the lips. Both Shafer and Devgan agreed that there's no evidence that such devices are harmful, though there's not much to prove that they'll actually make your lips any bigger, either.

Of course, you can skip the doctor's office and head to Sephora instead. Makeup artist Vincent Longo suggests exfoliating lips (use a toothbrush to provide a smooth surface before you apply lip color. Then don't forget to moisturize well. Longo is a fan of Elizabeth Arden Eight Hour Cream Intensive Lip Repair Balm, while makeup artist Kimara Ahnert recommends using foundation: "It blurs the line between lips and skin, ensuring that the definition you create with color is the only definition you see." Liner is a must; use a pencil that is close to your natural lip color. "Go slightly over your natural lip line with your pencil," Longo explains. "When you get to the Cupid's bow and the corners, come back into your natural contour. Then fill in the rest with the same pencil."

A pearly lipstick will make your lips look bigger than an all-matte formula. Meanwhile, more mature lips should stay away from dark hues. "They make you look severe and emphasize the small shape," warns Ahnert. No matter which shade you choose, dabbing clear gloss on the center of your lips will reflect light and make your mouth look fuller and poutier in seconds.