

Health

MICROPIGMENTATION

LIKE A TATTOO THAT MAKES HAIR LOOK FULLER

Maria Sonnenberg | Special to FLORIDA TODAY USA
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Jean Dewell feels like she's 30, but the mirror used to tell her she had long ago passed that magic age. • "I would look at the mirror and I couldn't recognize myself," the Sebastian resident said. • Her too-thin, too-short eyebrows bugged her enough to seek help with micropigmentation, a process that is basically a form of tattoo. • At Imami Hair Restoration in Melbourne, permanent makeup artist Ashley Bathurst presented Dewell with the eyebrows of her dreams.

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Ashley Bathurst, permanent makeup artist, works on patient Jean Dewell as she undergoes an outpatient procedure to restore her hairline. TIM SHORTT/FLORIDA TODAY

Work places are encouraging employees to improve health



Melbourne Athletic Club
Mary Failla

Aside from being employed in a job they (hopefully) enjoy, workers can get more from their company than just a paycheck. They can get healthier.

Employers are focusing on investing in the wellness of their workforce by offering health screenings, incentives for being active and access to health coaches and mental health services.

It's a win-win for both employer and employee.

Healthy, active employees have a lower rate of absenteeism, are more productive and have lower health-care costs.

A Harvard study estimated the return on investment into employee wellness to be \$6 for every dollar spent.

Add to that the fact that a well-designed and implemented wellness program can make employees feel more valued and increase morale.

This makes for a better work environment, but more importantly, can carry over into improved life-style choices for years to come.

In as little as six weeks individuals can make changes that will lower their health risks dramatically with everything from being overweight to high blood pressure to high glucose to high cholesterol being improved through steady, incremental improvements.

Just look at local companies like L3Harris Technologies, Northrup Grumman and Nuance, which have put efforts and resources into helping employees take the first steps and stay on track.

"Employees have been given the option to complete a health assessment that will keep their medical premiums



Having a support system of co-workers with similar goals can provide the motivation you need to get and stay on track with a fitness routine. GETTY IMAGES

flat," said Jessica Brashear, who spearheads Nuance Wellness Week. "This data has allowed us to target real-life issues that our employees are experiencing with their health and wellness. We provide monthly webinars on these topics, such as skin health, mindfulness, heart and sleep health, to name a few.

"We also organize an annual global Wellness Week and offer discounts on local gym memberships. The employees really love that Nuance offers these programs.

"It can be challenging to take care of

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Micropigmentation

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"It was an amazing difference," Dewell said.

Dewell was so satisfied with the results she opted to have Bathurst place permanent eyeliner on her upper and lower eyelids. Again, she loved it, loved it, loved it.

"Before, I could never remember to put makeup on, now it looks like I have makeup on all the time," she added.

Continuing on her quest to revisit her 30s again, Dewell then asked Bathurst to work her micropigmentation magic on her lips. With these, Bathurst gave Dewell a bonus decade.

"She made them look fuller and poutier, just like I had when I was in my 20s," Bathurst said. "They look plump, but feel normal."

Dewell then decided to head north to her scalp, where her once full mane was becoming scraggly, thanks to surgeries and medication. The part above her forehead was particularly bothersome.

"I have fine, thin hair and when I would pull it back into a ponytail, you could see the skin on my scalp," she said.

She had tried extensions, but these just slid right out. Transplants would be costly and the results would take time to see. What was a girl to do?

You probably guessed it: Bathurst again came to the rescue, this time working on the hair-thin areas of Dewell's scalp. In a procedure that lasted about an hour-and-a-half, voila! Dewell had "hair" where there was none before.

"It really looks like hair," she said.

Using micro-fine needles and special, natural-looking and hypo-allergenic pigments, Bathurst creates tiny impressions that give the illusion of hair by using a technique reminiscent of pointillism, the painting technique in which small dots of pigment are applied in patterns to form an image. You could also say her work is a bit of trompe l'oeil, another artistic method that aims to fool the eye.

"It really is like painting a picture," Bathurst said. "You have to really know what you are looking for to see that it is not real hair."

Micropigmentation can be effective on everything from eyebrows to the scalp. While it has been used for years around the face, its efficacy in masking hair loss on the head remains relatively unknown.

Bushnell resident Russ Viola, who typically wears his shoulder-length hair in a ponytail, had noticed his locks were not what they used to be.

"It had started to thin at the crown, as it does with many guys," Viola said.

Looking at different options, Viola happened upon micropigmentation. He liked the fact that it provided him with almost instant results at a fraction of the price of transplants and hair grafts, which also require extended time before the full effect appears. Since he was no stranger to tattoos, he had no fear of getting inked by Bathurst.

"It was like getting a regular tattoo, with the exception that I could hear the vibration of the needle and that the needles are much smaller than a tattoo gun," Viola said.

In a couple of hours, Viola, for all intents and purposes, reappeared from the micropigmentation procedure with a thick head of hair again.

"It was immediate gratification," he said.

The needles used in micropigmentation do not penetrate as deeply as tattoo



Patient Jean Dewell undergoes an outpatient procedure to restore her hairline with a technique called micropigmentation of the scalp with Ashley Bathurst, permanent makeup artist, and Dr. Emran Imami. PHOTOS BY TIM SHORTT/FLORIDA TODAY

guns, but the pigments still do not blur or fade for some time. In the head, it can provide definition in the front or the crown and even restore a full bald head with the look of a buzz cut.

Men and women with diffused thinning are often not good candidates for transplantation, but with micropigmentation, they need not put up with any less-than-ideal look, for the technique blends the existing hair with the injected pigments so the hair appears fuller and denser.

Micropigmentation also works well in hiding scars, birthmarks, age spots and burns, and can also hide ugly broken capillaries on the face.

Treatment costs from \$600 to \$2,000, depending on the complexity of the issue.

Eventually, micropigmentation will experience some fading over the years, because the pigment is deposited in the skin only to depths around .08 mm to 15 mm, at the border between the epidermis and the dermis. No problem. Just get another treatment.

Unlike the permanence of tattoos, the look can be changed, so the micropigmented "hair" on the scalp can change from dark to salt-and-pepper if the client wishes it. Darker micropigmentation can be made lighter and vice versa.

A topical anesthetic is all that is required to perform the procedure. Recovery time is minimal, with perhaps some local swelling, soreness and redness that disappears in a day or so.

The skin must be kept moist to prevent scabbing, and the individual should keep away from the sun for a few days afterward.

"You have to put on this special ointment five times a day for five days," Dewell said.

A follow-up appointment around two months after the initial procedure fine-tunes the results.

Micropigmentation is considered safer than traditional tattooing, because the risk for allergic reactions and infections is less, as long as the procedure is performed by a reputable practitioner. Bathurst cautions clients to choose carefully when shopping for micropig-



Patient Jean Dewell is getting a matching hair color by adding pigment to the skin's dermal layer.



Ashley Bathurst, permanent makeup artist, works on a patient's hairline at Imani Hair Restoration in Melbourne.

mentation.

"There is a medical side to micropigmentation," Bathurst said. "When you have a consultation with a permanent makeup artist, you should ask how long they have been practicing and ask to see 'before' and 'after' photos of clients."

Viola is already planning his next foray into micropigmentation. When he fi-

nally decides to cut his locks, he intends to get a "Marine cut" of short, thick hair, courtesy of micropigmentation.

"This experience has sold me," he said. "It's a real option."

Imami Hair Restoration is at 1140 Broadband Dr., Melbourne. For more information, call 321-312-4168 or visit imahair.com.

Faila

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ourselves while working full-time, raising families, etc..." she added. "To be able to take an hour out of the day to hear about different wellness topics from our desk saves time. The gym or weight loss discounts and reimbursements are an item that employees find very beneficial."

Investigate your company's offerings, which can be everything from reduced gym memberships, daily walks, corporate boot camps and wellness fairs on-site where you can learn about local opportunities to improve your fitness levels.

More importantly, take advantage of them!

Many people feel they can make changes on their own, but few do. Having a support system of fellow employees working toward similar goals can provide the motivation and accountability you need to get and stay on track.

And if your company is smaller, or doesn't have a formal wellness program, grab your co-workers and start something on your own.

Agree to meet at lunchtime for walks, schedule an inter-department basketball tournament or join a gym together and make your workouts an appointment on your calendar as important as any work meeting.

Locally, fitness centers like the Melbourne Athletic Club will set up boot camps exclusively for companies and they are ideal for fitness and team-building.

They also offer a complete Corporate Fitness Challenge where teams within a company compete with each other over a six-week period to earn points for physical activity, but wellness and workout videos, access to a health coach, a private social media group and incremental incentives are also included.

And remember, in as little as those six weeks, initial changes of eating healthier, being more active, giving up smoking or working on your stress levels aren't new anymore.

It becomes your fit, healthy, productive way of life.

Faila is a group cycle instructor at Melbourne Athletic Club, located at 1218 Sarno Road in Melbourne. To learn more about classes or schedules, call 321-425-5838 or visit melbourneathleticclub.com



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