

# In Pursuit of Perfection

---

Felicia Yap



## For the Face

According to a new set of medical guidelines that was launched last year at the [38th Annual Meeting of the International Society for Dermatological Surgery](#), dubbed the “[Pan-Asian consensus](#)”, a series of measurements based on the theory of the Golden Ratio (1:1.618) has been identified as the most ideal for Asian faces. The guidelines, the first of its kind, also includes recommendations for medical practitioners on how best to help their patients whittle and sculpt their faces in order to fit these measurements.

Comparing and enhancing one’s facial features according to the Golden Ratio, however, isn’t new. In July 2017, [Dr Julian DeSilva](#), a UK-based plastic surgeon, declared that George Clooney possessed a visage that’s the closest to perfection than anyone else, at 91.86 per cent accuracy, 8.14 per cent off from the actual equation (Amber Heard came in a close second, at 91.85 per cent). South Korean plastic surgeons are notorious for churning out facial “clones” due to their strict adherence to the equation, giving their willing patients identical petite noses and flawless smiles, and critics the perception that all South Korean women look the same.

Features considered beautiful to Indian eyes, according to Dr Owen Sunga, executive director of regional medical affairs at [Merz Asia Pacific](#), an international aesthetics and neurotoxin company with its own research and development capabilities, might not have

the same reaction in South Korea, and vice versa. However, every Asian country shares very similar parameters of what's considered ideal; namely, an oval-shaped and vertically symmetrical face, with proportions that adhere to the Golden Ratio. That is, a facial height that is 1.618 times longer than its width, and the lengths from the forehead to brows, brows to nose, and nose to chin are equidistant.

“The Pan-Asian consensus realises that the consideration of finding beauty varies from everybody, but it does define beauty from a medical standpoint,” says Dr Sunga. “It’s a bit of a strict paradigm because medically, we don’t want to have something that is not defined and unclear. However, it also takes into consideration cultural standards and ethnicity variations, so that it is flexible enough to cut across all these countries. Our goal is not to make everyone look the same; rather, we want to show to the world that with the structure defined as an ideal face, Asian women will still look different from culture to culture.”

The recommendations in the guidelines include the use of injectables like dermal fillers and botox, medical devices to help lift and tighten the facial contours, as well as specific plastic surgery options. For example, forehead and temple augmentation, mid-face projection, and chin elongation with different types of fillers, along with narrowing of the jawline with botox or Ultherapy, can help change a round or square facial shape to the more ideal oval.

Does that mean, then, that a face that adheres exactly to the Golden Ratio be the most beautiful? Dr. Sunga disagrees. “I wouldn’t say it wouldn’t be beautiful, but it would look ordinary. There’s a paper published in South Korea which put together composite faces that conform to the ideal Asian shapes, but they look somehow ordinary.”

The bottom line: facial perfection may ultimately be achieved, but beauty still lies in the eye of the beholder.

## For the Hair

---

Contrary to popular belief, virgin, unprocessed hair might not be the healthiest. “If the scalp isn’t healthy, the hair growing out will not reach optimum perfection,” says Michelle Goi, a veteran hair and scalp specialist at [CYL Scalp Lab Solutions](#), a scalp and hair care centre specialising in personalised, custom-blended treatments for each individual. “Instead, even if the hair hasn’t been dyed or permed, it will grow out brittle, thin and sparse, and fall out at a faster rate than healthy hair.”

A healthy scalp, according to Goi, is a scalp that has a balanced sebum production, so that it’s neither too oily, leading to clogged follicles, nor too dry, with patches of flaky skin. Each follicle should be in an active state, producing at least three strands of hair. “The more follicles that are in a dormant state, when there are no hairs growing, the sparser the hair will be,” she says. “And if proper care isn’t taken, these follicles will eventually shrink and ‘die’, and hair will never grow from them, no matter what you do – barring hair transplant surgery.”

To grow strong and anatomically “perfect” hair, scalp care must take precedence over hair care, and be treated like one treats the face with products and treatments to stimulate the

follicles, remove pore-clogging residue from styling products and hardened sebum, and keep it moisturised and balanced.

At CYL, a comprehensive six-step scalp spa is designed to address whatever scalp concern one might have, from excessive oiliness or dandruff, to alopecia and male pattern hair loss. The process includes an in-depth scalp scan, light therapy, mask and essence application, and a proprietary circulation-improving massage. Regular visits are encouraged, as each programme is tailored to address the different stages of hair growth, with customised blends of botanical essences to aid the process.

“For people struggling with balding, there are essences with serenoa repens, a herb that inhibits DHT, a hormone that triggers male and female pattern hair loss, or black cohosh, which is rich in phytoestrogens and encourages hair growth,” explains Goi. “There’s also an essence for those who desire to prevent their hair from greying, using he shou wu, a TCM herb that regenerates melanocytes so the hair grows darker.”

Caring for your scalp doesn’t only help you to grow perfect hair, but also has another welcome benefit. “The skin on your scalp is connected to the skin on your face,” says Goi. “If you take care of your scalp and slow down its ageing, you’ll find that you’ll look younger as well.”

## For the Body

---

While every body is a perfect body, no matter the shape or size, it cannot be denied that smooth, airbrushed-looking skin from the neck down is still pretty much the ideal. Even in the paintings of the most voluptuous of beauties by Rubens and Botticelli, the skin on their bodies is creamy, firm and dimple-free – an anatomical impossibility as cellulite is prevalent in 85 per cent to 98 per cent of all women, including underweight and normal weight individuals, according to a [2014 medical review](#) published in the *Annales Academiae Medicae Stetinensis*, a Polish medical journal.

The gold standard treatment for body cellulite, as well as small pockets of body fat resistant to diet and exercise, is a combination protocol of non-invasive fat reduction and radiofrequency (RF). The former, which usually entails some form of ultrasound technology, targets the fat cells under the skin and breaks them down, while the latter stimulates collagen production in the skin for a firmer, tauter appearance.

Even if one is at a healthy weight and feel no need for further fat reduction, cellulite is actually a form of body fat that pushes through fibrous connective tissues under the skin, causing the dimply appearance familiar to those who struggle with the condition. At [Estheclinic](#), a Paris-based aesthetics salon founded by prominent French plastic surgeon Dr Gerard Boutboul, the approach to treating cellulite is using lipocavitation in conjunction with RF to eliminate excess body fat, including cellulite.

Lipocavitation, unlike other ultrasound-based treatments like high-intensity focused ultrasound (HIFU), is much less painful and doesn’t require any anaesthesia like HIFU does. Instead, the transducer is massaged over the affected area and it feels like a mild

suction and an occasional light stinging sensation. A high-pitched whine can only be heard by the person being treated, which is due to the low-frequency ultrasound applied onto the skin and “buzzing” through the body. After lipocavitation, the same area is treated with RF.

For achieving a lump- and bump-free body contour, no matter one’s shape and size, Dr Boutboul recommends an aggressive “boot camp”-style programme, like Estheclinic’s Intensive Body Perfection Programme. It involves six to 10 hour-long lipocavitation and RF sessions spaced three days apart, so that the progressive and cumulative stimulation of collagen and reduction of fat cells would result in quicker and more visible results.