

# EARRING AID

To make studs stand up straight, New Yorkers are getting lobe injections

By MOLLY SHEA

**M**ANY New York ladies can't imagine life without their favorite diamond studs. But years of trendy statement earrings — and the pull of good old gravity — can stretch out earlobes and make it hard for the little suckers to shine.

Laurie, an Upper East Side resident in her 50s, says her ears have grown thin and lightly wrinkled over the years. Her piercings were so stretched that they couldn't hold anything other than a tiny hoop.

"I had great ears before — not too big, not too small," she tells *The Post*. "Now I have my grandmother's ears."

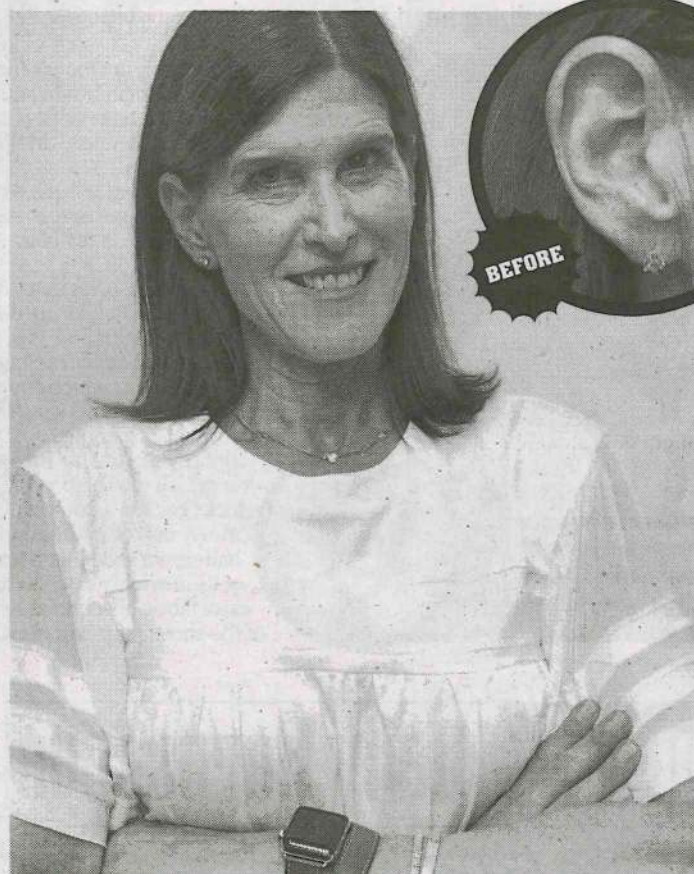
Her deflated lobes tanked her self-esteem — and seriously limited her jewelry options.

"I stopped wearing [dangling] earrings," says Laurie, who declined to give her last name for privacy reasons. "I don't wear studs because they'd look terrible ... They'd hang forward. I'd find little dinky earrings instead."

So when friends tipped her off to ear fillers, which can plump lobes with a hyaluronic acid such as Restylane, she knew she had to try it.

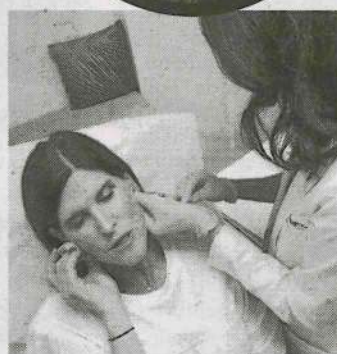
Dr. Melissa Doft, an uptown plastic surgeon, says that the extra volume from the fillers gives earring posts more cushion, which helps studs stick out straight and allows diamonds to catch the light.

Doft is one of the pioneers of



the popular procedure, and she says she stumbled upon the idea by chance. "As I was filling in [my patients'] cheeks, I started saving a little bit of filler and filling out their earlobes," says Doft, who treated Laurie and her UES pals. Word spread, and soon she started seeing patients for just the ear fillers, which cost between \$600 and \$800, depending on the amount of filler used.

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Photos by Annie Wernick/*NY Post* (4)

**Park Avenue plastic surgeon Dr. Melissa Doft (above right) injects hyaluronic acid into Upper East Side resident Laurie's earlobes to fight flop and plump up skin, which will help hold her earrings better. The procedure costs between \$600 and \$800.**

"The response has been great," she says. "There's just something cuter and younger about it."

Now, Doft estimates that she sees three to five ear patients per week at her Park Avenue office.

Unlike facial filler procedures, ear injections rarely go awry. There's a small risk of hitting a blood vessel, which could prevent healthy cell turnover, "but you're not going to lose your hearing,"

says Doft.

There's also no downtime post-treatment. "You can come in, have it done, and go to a luncheon afterward, or do a pilates class afterward."

The treatment may seem like something invented to prey on insecurity, but Doft says having floppy earlobes can be surprisingly upsetting. In many cases, she says, her clients most miss wearing the earrings they'd received as mementos of important life events or gifts — a struggle that Doft says she identifies with personally, as she was given a beautiful pair of diamond studs as a "push present."

"Every time I put on my diamonds, I think about that moment of becoming a mother for the first time," she says. "[It's upsetting] to think they're just going to sit in a safe somewhere, that you don't get to relive those memories."

Droopy lobes can prevent patients from buying new earrings that they love, too. Jewelry store owner Alice Kwartler says she sees countless customers who would love to splurge on a pair of earrings, but know they won't look good.

"It happens every day — women will say, 'I love the earrings, but I don't love the way they look in my ears,'" says Kwartler, who describes her customers as "the same kind of people that would shop at Barneys or Bergdorf's."

After getting her own ears filled a year and a half ago, Kwartler now sends her clients to Doft. They'll usually come right back ready to shop.

"I have person after person saying they're now wearing pieces they've had for years and [kept in drawers]," she says. "Or they go out and look for new jewelry."

Laurie says she'll be doing a little of both after getting her lobes filled at Doft's offices.

"I'm going to go and re-look in my little cubbies of earrings, and try on my beautiful earrings that I have," she says. "This little tiny thing makes such a big difference."

## WHAT A CROC High-end designers are all about notoriously bad shoes

**B**ALENCIAGA — whose recent fashion innovations include a \$2,000 Ikea-bag rip-off — sent Crocs down the runway of its spring 2018 show in Paris this season.

The label put its own high-fashion spin on the gardening shoe by adding a super-high platform and some "Balenciaga" charms.

Remarkably, Balenciaga isn't even the first fashion brand to embrace the hideous plastic clunker. Christopher Kane showed a marbled, crystal-encrusted version of the shoe last year, while Maison Margiela offers a studded calfskin version (currently priced at \$608!).

Apparently, Kane's luxe Crocs were successful enough for the British designer to

team up once again with the aesthetically maligned footwear company. For his latest spring show, during London fashion week, he showed rhinestone-studded Crocs.

What's next? FiveFinger toe shoes from Céline? Ugg boots from Vetements? Fashion world, we're begging you — please, stop the madness!

— Raquel Laneri

Balenciaga paired diaphanous dresses with plastic platforms punctuated with quirky charms on the runway in Paris (left).

Victor VIRGILE/Gamma-Rapho

