

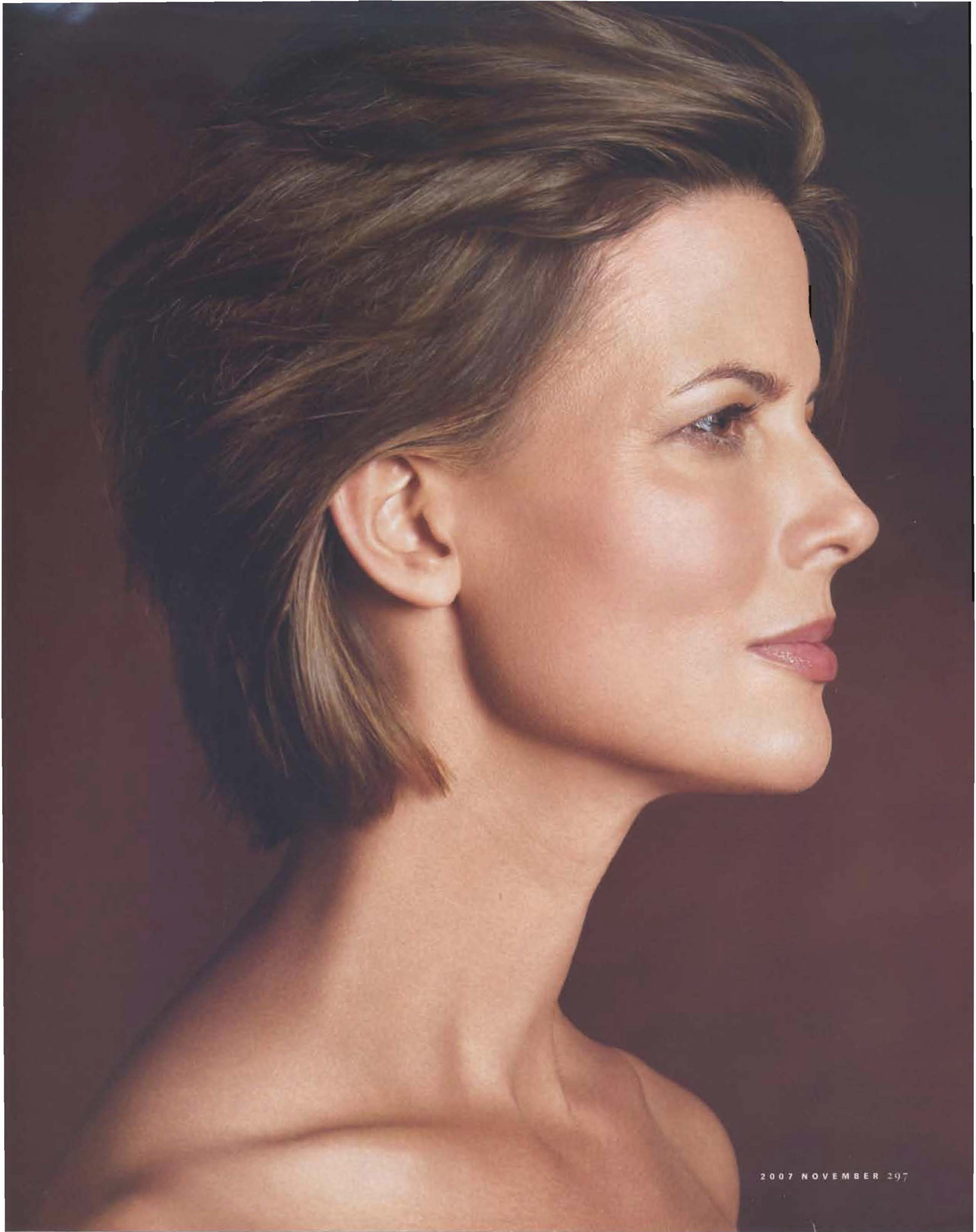
*I FEEL
BETTER
ABOUT
MY
NECK*

Thanks to Nora Ephron, we know how obsessive we can be about gravity's wattling effects on our necks. But thanks to some very stylish experts, we also know that there are smart, subtle ways—no desperate measures, no major surgery—to flatter that space between head and shoulders.

DRESSING THE NECK

An improved attitude (don't be so sore about your throat) and some strategic beads can turn fowl play into swan's way. Necklace, David Yurman. ▶

STILL LIVES BY TAMARA STAPLES
PORTRAITS BY FERNANDO MILANI



NECKLINES THAT ROMANCE THE THROAT

Camouflage loses its usefulness when people start suspecting that you have something to hide. "Turtlenecks are incredible, but we can't wear them all the time," says TV fashion reporter Christine Schwab, author of *The Grown-Up Girl's Guide to Style*. "The point is to frame the neck, not cover it up." This can be as simple as turning up the collar of a tailored shirt or jacket, or shopping for tops with attractive details that conceal the throat partially but don't throttle it.

THE RIGHT NECKLINE is crucial: Deep V's or low-cut tank tops will make the neck look longer, Schwab says, but they also display lots of possibly sun-damaged skin. Consider higher-cut versions as well, and go in for **STRATEGIC LAYERING**—V-necks over shirts, tank tops under shirts, turtlenecks with anything (find the soft, easy-fitting kind that don't constrict the neck). You should **TEST-DRIVE ANY TOP** by twisting and turning your head in a three-way mirror: Often the neck looks fine until it moves, making the skin scrunch up. You don't want to emphasize those creases with a style that's too tight or revealing.

GIVE YOURSELF A RIBBING
A well-textured turtleneck in gray—the color to get right now—is topmost on our fall priorities list (Michael Stars, \$240). There's a little give in the fit, so you don't feel all choked up. Jacket, Talbots, \$188. Jeans, Levi's, \$48. Necklace, John Hardy. Belt, model's own.

"YOUR NECK CAN BE TOO THIN," SAYS STYLE REPORTER CHRISTINE SCHWAB. "A FEW EXTRA POUNDS PLUMP UP THE SKIN AND SOFTEN THE JAWLINE."



**Clockwise from top left:
IT'S GOT YOU
SURROUNDED**
*The high-drama collar
on this fitted blouse
(Hache, \$330) encircles the
throat with lashings of
rich brown taffeta.
Elbow-length sleeves are a
lovely bonus for people
with upper-arm issues.
Ring, Christine J. Brandt.*



LATTER-DAY RUFF
*One reason Elizabeth I looked
so queenly for so long
is that ruffles enclosed
and softened (and perhaps
saved) her pretty little Tudor
neck. This long-sleeved
modern version (Lafayette 148
New York, \$448) gets the royal
treatment in deep purple silk.*



HERE'S THE SCOOP
*Check that your décolletage
is really, truly suitable
for viewing before slipping on
this silky red smock
top (Kenneth Cole Reaction,
\$119). A slightly lower neckline
is elongating, but it isn't for
everyone. Jeans, !iT Jeans, \$74.
Cuff, Verdura.*

THE FRILL OF IT ALL
*Micropleated flounces
follow every curve
on a slimming black tie shirt
(Coldwater Creek, \$90),
not only disguising the throat
but also giving people
more alluring things to look
at—like a waist-emphasizing
belt that offsets the
discreet high neck. >*



YOUR FRIEND THE SCARF

Warmth is hardly the only rationale for wearing scarves: They're an absolute godsend for those with neck issues, surrounding the problematic area with color and texture—and doing it with such verve that even basic clothes seem more sophisticated. Schwab swears that she never goes out without one, switching from thin wool and silk in winter to gauze and linen when summer comes. Her advice: • Pick **SOLIDS OR UNDERSTATED PRINTS** in a muted palette; brights can be overwhelming near the face. • Stick to **LOW-BULK**

FABRICS that can be wrapped or tied easily. • Avoid tightly wound scarves or self-conscious arrangements: "They should look offhand, as if you just threw them on," Schwab says. A silk or chiffon **NECK SQUARE** is an attractive ploy for filling in the neckline of a shirt or jacket; a gently draped oblong sets up a vertical line that makes the torso seem leaner. Bargainista alert: Schwab likes to buy luxury yard goods from a fabric store and have them made up into scarves by a local seamstress (or do it yourself if you sew).



LOOP-THE-LOOP
(left) *Fold a rectangular scarf (Bottega Veneta, \$720) lengthwise, then form a loop, one end slightly longer than the other. Place doubled-up scarf around neck and slip ends through loop, twisting slightly. A fine, supple weave works best.*

ALL TIED UP
(right) *Form a triangle (Hermès, \$325) by bringing two points together; fold into a narrow strip. Place around neck with ends in back, then bring ends to front and knot off-center. Don't try this with a small scarf—you want a bit of flutter.*



THE NEW PEEKABOO

Put a long cashmere scarf (BEGG, \$350) around your neck, loose ends in front. Toss one end over your shoulder; tuck the other under a low-buttoned belted cardigan (TSE, \$295) for a great compromise between covered and bare. Pants, Nicole Farbi, \$245. Necklace, Mattioli. Belt, Pelle Melle. ▶



“WE DON’T WANT TO HAVE THE FACE OR NECK OF A 20-YEAR-OLD,” SAYS CHRISTINE SCHWAB. “WHEN THE REST OF THE BODY DOESN’T MATCH, WHO ARE WE KIDDING?”

A KINDER CUT

Divert attention up and away from a slack neck with a well-defined bob that hits right below the chin, says

New York City stylist and salon owner John Barrett.

Longer hair draws the eye downward, spotlighting the neck rather than minimizing it. "And a style that has movement also helps focus attention onto the hair," says Dickey, a New York City stylist who did the hair on these pages.

NECK MAINTENANCE

Our faces shouldn't hog all the products. Let's do something for our highly susceptible (but often neglected) necks. The skin in this zone is thin and sensitive, explains Susan Taylor, MD, a dermatologist in Philadelphia. "That means **CLEANSING GENTLY**—no scrubbing—and using the same moisturizers as under your eyes."

It also means including the neck when you apply **YOUR DAILY SUNSCREEN**. Foundation isn't necessary, though, unless you have sun-damage spots (best concealed, according to makeup artist and cosmetics entrepreneur Trish McEvoy, with a pressed mineral-powder base—cream or

liquid is too heavy). To escape the jarring vision of a face that's a shade or two lighter than the neck supporting it, McEvoy suggests doing a visual check with **A DIGITAL SELF-PORTRAIT** (even more objective than a mirror). How about more drastic remedies? Alan Matarasso, MD, a plastic surgeon in New York City, tells us that necklifts tighten sags but won't improve crepey texture. For that you could try nonsurgical treatments like lasers, but they don't last and aren't consistently successful.

Learning to live with your natural-born neck is, we think, a cheaper and less risky proposition.

JEWELRY RULES

Bold but not heavy is the idea here—unless you want to resemble a *Masterpiece Theatre* dowager, all jowls and jeweled chokers. “Massive necklaces can make a big statement,” says Schwab. “But they can also create wrinkles by pinching the skin.” Look for comfortably lightweight pieces that are large enough to cover the chest—you can even layer on several for a more intense effect. Collarbone length is ideal because it establishes **A DECORATIVE FRAME** for the neck. (Tight chokers, however, are problematic: They press the flesh, causing creases when you turn your head.) **VIVID EARRINGS** in unusual shapes can deflect attention from your neck (chic, eye-catching glasses do the same), but again, beware anything weighty—if the ponderous silver hoops you found in Puerto Vallarta are pulling down your lobes, everything will start to look droopy. It takes discipline to handle jewelry well. Schwab allows herself **A SINGLE FOCAL POINT**: either an elaborate necklace or imaginative earrings, not both—or, if she wants to shift the emphasis altogether, an armful of stacked bracelets.

GO FOR BAROQUE

A strand of seven quartz stones (Me&Ro) and a mauve pearl on an antique gold chain (Dean Harris) echo the Mozartean ruffled collar of the shirt (Anne Fontaine, \$265). A necklace worn inside a shirt or jacket is one of Schwab's standbys: “The jewelry makes a statement while the collar covers—the best of both worlds.”

For details see Shop Guide.

*Fashion editor: Jenny Capitain.
Hair: Dickey for hairrules.com at
See Management. Makeup: Anthea King
for artistsbytimothypriano.com.
Set design: Marissa Gimeno for Halley
Resources. Manicure: Myradith.*

