

Radius

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For Health, Healing, Happiness

Lifting the veil from ...

Plastic Surgery

by Scott R. Miller, MD, FACS

Correction can improve self-esteem and self-confidence. Thus, you can not only look better, but feel better as well.



Most people agree that what is on the inside is most important, but the outside can effect how you feel about yourself as well. An unwanted feature or appearance can make you self-conscious and less confident. That is what plastic surgery is all about, not vain, narcissistic people. It is about ordinary people with problems.

These problems may be present at birth or come with age. They are problems not so much because of the way they make you look, but the way they make you feel. Correction can improve self-esteem and self-confidence. Thus, you can not only look better, but feel better as well.

There are two types of aesthetic plastic surgery procedures: rejuvenation and alteration.

Rejuvenation focuses on minimizing the effects of aging. Aging can cause someone who feels young and alive to look old and depressed. Although often the realization is sudden and painful, the tired and older look of aging is the culmination of a process that began many years before.

Sun, gravity, and genes drive the aging process. As the

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tissue loses its youthful elasticity, gravity pulls downward, resulting in bags, wrinkles, pouches, and jowls. Unfortunately, there is no potion, cream, or medicine to shrink the skin, fat, or muscle back to its youthful contours. Only a plastic surgeon can make the tissues fit the frame snugly once again.

Alteration improves parts of the face or body which have an undesirable size or shape. If you are born with something that you are not happy with, approach it as you would any other physical problem (crooked teeth, poor eyesight or bad hearing...a nose that is too big, a chin that is too small, breasts that never developed or would not stop). Plastic surgery can often solve these problems and millions of people each year accept this help.

Cosmetic plastic surgery trends:

The number of patients seeking plastic surgery has not only increased, but they are younger as well. The same complaints are being addressed ten to fifteen years sooner than they once were and many more of these patients are

The top ten most commonly asked questions about plastic surgery:

1. Will it hurt?

During the procedure, you are comfortable and feel no pain. After surgery, the pain and discomfort can be controlled with medication and will subside in a matter of days.

2. How soon can I get back to work?

It depends on the procedure and the job. Most plastic surgery patients are back to work in seven to fourteen days.

3. Will anyone know?

Usually not. Good plastic surgery does not leave you looking plastic. It enhances your looks naturally. The improvement is often attributed to a vacation, new diet, or exercise regime.

4. How long will the results last?

Rejuvenation procedures cannot stop the clock, but they can reset it and it tends to tick slower. The benefits from a facelift, facial peel, and eyelid surgery can turn back the clock five to fifteen years and one always looks younger than they otherwise would. Alteration procedures that reshape or correct an imbalance (such as surgery of the nose, chin augmentation, breast augmentation, or breast reduction) create definitive changes that last a lifetime.

5. Will there be scars?

Yes. Will they be noticeable? Probably not. Plastic surgeons make every effort to minimize scars and hide them in natural lines and creases. For the majority of procedures, scars fade over time, becoming barely noticeable.

6. Where do I go afterwards?

Most procedures are performed on an outpatient basis. Procedures that are more extensive require overnight stay in a recovery facility to optimize safety and comfort.

7. Is it expensive?

This varies. People undergoing plastic surgery come from many occupations and make a personal decision regarding the value these changes hold for them. One should not go bargain hunting; SEEK QUALITY.

8. Will insurance cover it?

Usually not. However there are exceptions when a procedure is medically necessary. This often involves coverage for only a portion of the expenses.

9. Can I finance it?

In most cases, yes. Financing is now a readily available and accepted form of payments for those who qualify.

10. What do I do next?

A consultation with a qualified surgeon is a quick easy, no obligation way to find out what plastic surgery can or cannot do for you.

** Adapted from "Everything you've always wanted to know about plastic surgery, "Personique."*



men.

The goal of any plastic surgery is to look better, more youthful, and energetic, not surgically changed. The change must look understated, as if no one touched you. The stigma of “going under the knife” has subsided significantly and an array of new methods for improving one’s appearance and reducing the signs of aging have become common place for men as well as women.

The interest in plastic surgery among men has risen sharply over the decade. In fact, the number of male plastic surgery procedures has nearly doubled since 1997, because many men believe that their appearance has a direct impact on their careers.

In today’s extremely competitive business world, being qualified often is not enough. You have to look qualified too! Worn down, tired looking, out of shape executives may be passed over for younger looking, healthier colleagues. According to Personique, this is what men expressed in a national survey:

- 84% believed physical attractiveness is important for power and success on the job.
- 42% felt that improving one thing about their face would help their career.
- 32% agreed that a more youthful appearance would improve their job success.
- 22% confirmed that they use personal appearance to an advantage on the job.

Many of the men and woman seeking cosmetic improvement are working professionals. One reason for the increase in the number of professionals undergoing plastic surgery is that the detectability of having a surgical procedure and recovery time are less now. In addition, modern anesthesia tracks blood pressure, heart rate, and blood oxygen contents during and after surgery and has made it much safer to proceed.

The plastic surgery issues particular to men are ones that the new techniques solve the best. Today, these issues are just as important to women. Newer techniques include endoscopic access and double layer

support. Such advances have made procedures more discrete and the healing more rapid. Incisions are smaller and scars are shorter and thinner than ever.

The idea of what is acceptable body alteration is shifting. People who would have had a facelift under a veil of secrecy ten years ago, now speak openly and enthusiastically of “having work done.” Those who would have only wished for surgery ten years ago now have it done but may not tell.

For those in image industries or high visibility positions, professional pressure to look young may play a roll in their motivation. More often, it is just one of many things people do to “optimize” themselves. Their goal is to make the outside appearance match their inner vigor and vitality and put their best face forward.

There are many exciting new developments and trends, which explain the improved results and increased popularity of cosmetic plastic surgery.

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- A device called an endoscope allows surgeons to maneuver through small incisions placed in discrete locations.
- Smaller tubes for suctioning fat make liposuction less traumatic than in the early days.
- There is an array of new “filler” alternatives for dents, lines, and wrinkles.
- Surgeons can work with underlying muscles and deeper tissue to yield contours that are more natural.
- There is a greater appreciation of the components of natural aesthetic beauty and the processes of aging, thus leading to refinements in addressing each of these issues.
- When people have a procedure at an earlier age, the extent of surgery is often less. Because the skin is more elastic when a patient is younger, the results are apt to look better and last longer.

However, for the patients of any age, surgery offers improvement, not a cure. Moreover, cosmetic plastic surgery is real surgery with real risks and involves real post-operative recovery to achieve real long-term results. No procedure should be undertaken lightly.

SUCCESSFUL PLASTIC SURGERY

There are things you can do to maximize your chances for a good result. Have the right motivation, realistic ex-

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pectations, and a good surgeon. Be informed and do it for yourself – not for your spouse, your kids, your friends, or anyone else.

Be realistic about the effects. Plastic surgery cannot save a bad marriage, turn you in to a movie star, or make an unhappy life a happy one. However, plastic surgery can do a lot – it can improve your looks, it can help you look as young as you feel, in turn it can boost your self-esteem and self confidence.

Be realistic about results. Plastic surgery gives an improvement—not perfection. If improvement is your goal,

chances are you will be pleased with your result.

A Qualified Surgeon

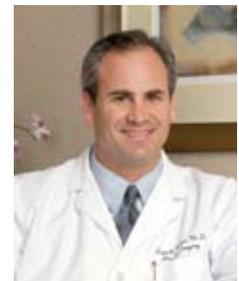
Many doctors from all fields perform plastic surgery. With a general medical degree, doctors can practice any specialty regardless of whether they have had any advanced training. The American Board of Medical Specialties authorizes different boards to certify in their respective fields. The American Board of Plastic Surgery oversees the field of plastic surgery and reviews training for eligibility and certification.

Many aesthetic procedures are performed safely in outpatient settings. Nevertheless, a surgeon should have privileges to these same procedures in a hospital. This indicates that their qualifications have been approved by the hospital. Find out about the experience your surgeon has with your desired procedure. A qualified surgeon who concentrates on aesthetic or cosmetic surgery tends to be better at it.

Choose a surgeon you feel comfortable with, not intimidated by. Choose someone who is easy to talk with, friendly, and professional. If your doctor does not listen, he/she will not hear and the chances of achieving your desired result diminish. Choose someone who listens closely to what you want and cares about what you need.

Plastic Surgery Is an Art

An aesthetic plastic surgeon must combine artistic and scientific qualities with study, training, creative skill, and experience. Plastic surgery, when done well often goes unnoticed. It should improve your looks without drawing attention to itself. The ideal result looks natural, healthy, and beautiful. Many patients will not only look better – they will feel better too.



Dr. Miller is an attending surgeon at Scripps Memorial Hospital in La Jolla, a Clinical Assistant Professor of Plastic Surgery (vol) at the University of California, San Diego and the author of numerous articles. He is a member of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons, the American Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgery, and the California Society of Plastic Surgeons. Dr. Miller is also active in the Inter-face International Surgery Program, operating on children with disfiguring birth defects. Learn more about Dr. Miller by visiting www.radthemag.com.