

in search of adonis

Nowadays Men Want a Lift (Or a Tuck) Too

by Dr. Stuart B. Kincaid, M.D., F.A.C.S.

Not so many years ago, cosmetic surgery was considered the sole domain of women, but the trend is rapidly changing. A recent study by the American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery reported that the number of men undergoing cosmetic surgery has doubled since 1992. In fact, more than 1 million men underwent cosmetic surgery last year representing approximately 14 percent of all cosmetic cases. Many men are discovering that they, too, can benefit from cosmetic surgical procedures and non-surgical treatments. Men are requesting these treatments in ever-increasing numbers to preserve a youthful look, maintain a professional edge, improve a physical feature that has bothered them, or to achieve a physique that has eluded them by diet and exercise alone.

The top five surgical procedures, in order, are nose reshaping (rhinoplasty), eyelid surgery (blepharoplasty), liposuction, hair transplantation, and breast reduction surgery for male breast enlargement (gynecomastia). Nose reshaping surgery is frequently requested to reduce an oversized nose or to contour a poorly-shaped nose resulting from a birth defect or sports injury. Men frequently request liposculpture (liposuction) to remove "love handles," eliminate a double chin or contour a potbelly. Another commonly requested procedure is forehead lift (brow lift) to eliminate heavy droopy eyebrows or the worn-out look.

Chin augmentation is also popular and provides men with a more powerful jaw profile.

The top five non-surgical procedures in order are chemical peels, laser hair removal, Botox® injections, microdermabrasion, and collagen injections.

The baby boomers are the first generation refusing to quietly retire into the sunset and turn over the reigns to younger generations. The average life expectancy of a man in 1900 was approximately 46 years of age and presently it is 72 years of age and is ever increasing. As such, many men are planning to work well into their 60's and beyond. Burned-out executives wearing their "resumes on their faces" can be fearful of being passed over for advancement. Men are becoming increasingly aware that the way they look can have a significant impact on their jobs and careers. Being qualified just is not enough anymore. You have to look youthful as well! Furthermore, men's appearance affects their personal lives as well. Over 50 percent of marriages end in divorce leading to dating and new partner selection. Frequently, their female partners are substantially younger further motivating them to look younger.

It is important to note that men are not just concerned about their faces, but their bodies as well. Ideals of male body image as projected by young models and actors have become increasingly more

difficult for the average male to achieve. The average male gains approximately 20 pounds of weight from 25 to 55 years of age. In fact, approximately 10 percent of all eating disorder cases—anorexia and bulimia—occur in males. Surprisingly, a National Runners Survey found 21 percent of male runners said they are "terrified" of gaining weight, either, often, usually, or always.

Approximately 59 percent of American men have been determined to be overweight. Even the last Bastion of physical prowess, the US military, has been effected as well with approximately 54 percent of its members officially overweight and 6.2 percent are considered obese. To compound matters, overweight men often carry their excess weight in an android or "apple-shaped" distribution as opposed to the typical gynoid or "pear-shape" pattern in females. It is the android-type of fat distribution about the waist and "love handle" area that significantly increases the risk of developing cardiovascular disease.

Frequently, prospective cosmetic male patients present to a surgeon with such comments as, "I want to look the way I used to look" or "I want to look as good as I feel."

A reputable cosmetic plastic surgeon knows that it is imperative that the patient be highly self-motivated, emotionally healthy, and have realistic goals and expectations. Also, the patient should be willing to undergo lifestyle changes to achieve and maintain the best results.

There are subtle differences between male and female cosmetic patients. In recent years, there has been a trend for cosmetic patients to want "natural-appearing" rather than "supernatural" results. This is especially true for male patients. Leaving some wrinkles and creases is more acceptable than in females. Also, overdone surgery can have a feminizing effect on males, for example, exaggerated eyebrow elevation or stylized eyelids.

Anatomically, men have thicker, more vascular and elastic skin than women, which can potentially lead to more swelling and bruising in the post-operative period. Surgeons have more difficulty concealing the scars of facial surgery in men since they usually do not camouflage their scars with makeup or have hairstyles conducive to covering the scars as

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readily. Receding hairlines and facial beard growth in men can present further challenges for the cosmetic surgeon. Even today, men are still more likely to be guarded about their cosmetic surgery and are less apt to admit they are having any surgery done.

One prominent cosmetic plastic surgeon recently stated, “ I believe men are every bit as vain as women—only we shut the door when we look in the mirror.”

Cosmetic surgery for men, like women, is not just for the “rich and famous” executives, entertainers and politicians. Today, men of every job description are electively going under the knife.

Moreover, there are psychological differences between male and female patients. Men are less likely to bring in photographs of models with attractive features they crave. They are less likely to quibble over prices and generally are more goal-oriented than their female counterparts. Reasons frequently given are job interviews, marrying a younger woman, or not wanting to be mistaken for a grandfather. Men can be more demanding and more likely to request multiple procedures to have all the surgery completed in one session.

Even young males, not uncommonly, present for cosmetic surgery. For instance, boys who are born with prominent projecting ears often feel self-conscious and are frequently teased by their peers. An ear pinning (otoplasty) procedure can offer hope to these young men. Similarly, many young adolescent boys develop benign breast enlargement (gynecomastia) making them feel uncomfortable in gym classes and on the beach.

Liposuction alone, or in conjunction with male breast reduction surgery, can provide a marked improvement, not only in physical appearance of their breasts, but provide an improvement in their self-esteem as well.

It would appear that the old adage really is true—“What’s good for the goose is good for the gander.” ■

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