

RECLAIM YOUR *body*

Exploring the top body procedures for aging concerns in each decade. BY STACEY STEIN



PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK

Perky breasts, slim hips and a flat tummy—all hallmarks of the fit bodies most of us enjoy in our early 20s, when it seems like we'll look that way forever. Then our 30s hit and suddenly our bodies morph into fleshier and flabbier versions of their former selves. Our breasts start inching towards our belly buttons, we inherit our mother's saddlebags, and the skin on our erstwhile tight tummies becomes loose and saggy. Just as we're trying to figure out where things went wrong, we're in our 40s and our previously hot body really starts to look—well, you get the picture. But fear not, because with a little help we can keep our bodies looking fabulous. So before you toss out your spandex gym clothes and incinerate your bikinis, read on to find out which procedures will help you look your best, regardless of your age.

30s

BREAST PROCEDURES, LIPOSUCTION AND NON-SURGICAL ALTERNATIVES

According to Dr. Stephanie Power, MD, MSc, FRCSC, women in this age group can be divided into two patient populations: those with longstanding concerns about certain body features and those with concerns related to body changes after pregnancy. "Those concerns commonly relate to the breasts and abdomen," says Dr. Power.

Pre-kids, thirty-something women often view their breasts as being too small or too large and also have weight-related issues, such as saddlebags and tummy issues that can be addressed with liposuction. After kids, concerns are more about postpartum changes, such as a bulging abdomen, sagging breasts and loose skin or stretch marks in the tummy area.

BREAST AUGMENTATION, REDUCTION OR LIFT

With a breast augmentation, an insert is placed inside the breast. "Implant size is determined pre-operatively based on patient goals, breast dimensions and surgeon recommendations," says Dr. Power.

A breast lift or reduction involves more incisions than an augmentation. Some women who get implants may return to a desk job the next day, although the downtime is two or three days on average. There's a longer downtime for a breast lift or reduction due to the time required for the incisions to heal.

Potential complications from a breast augmentation include bleeding, infection, sensation changes of the nipple or breast, asymmetry, implant failure or rupture and rippling, according to Dr. Power. With lifts and reductions, there is some incision pain and temporary numbness of the nipple. Costs range from \$6,000 to \$8,000 for a breast lift, \$7,000 to \$9,000 for a breast augmentation, and \$8,000 to \$10,000 for a breast lift with implants. Provinces typically cover the cost of a breast reduction.

LIPOSUCTION AND NON-SURGICAL ALTERNATIVES

Women who are looking to reduce fat can choose traditional liposuction or may opt for a non-surgical procedure, such as CoolSculpting or Vanquish. CoolSculpting uses liquid nitrogen to freeze fat under the skin, causing fat cells to die, while Vanquish is a newer technology in which radiofrequency waves are shot under the skin to kill fat cells. Meanwhile, with liposuction, tiny incisions are made and a cannula (a type of hollow tube) is inserted to break up fat cells and suck them out. The big advantage of non-surgical alternatives to liposuction is that there's no downtime. With traditional liposuction, most people are back at work within two to three days.

CoolSculpting is painful as the procedure is being performed (there's no pain after the procedure), whereas there's little to no pain during the procedure with Vanquish. With traditional liposuction, there's some bruising, however, depending on the type of lipo, this can be minimized. In terms of cost, it's approximately \$2,000 per treatment session for CoolSculpting and Vanquish. Liposuction is approximately \$3,000 to \$5,000 per body region.

40s

ABDOMINOPLASTY, AKA THE TUMMY TUCK

According to Dr. Power, given that women are having children at a later age, forty something women often express similar concerns as women in their 30s regarding body changes after childbirth. Sagging breasts, a bulging postpartum tummy and loose skin around the abdomen rank high on the list of concerns. As plastic surgeon Dr. Michael Kreidstein, MD, MSc, FRCSC, points out, tummy tucks are popular with forty something women for a few reasons. "I don't think it's just I'm done having my kids; it's also about having the freedom, and there are cost considerations as well," he says.

With a tummy tuck, an incision is made from hip to hip and most commonly around the belly button. "The muscle separation is repaired and stitched in the midline, providing support to the abdominal wall, which leads to an improved contour," says Dr. Power. Excess skin and fat are then removed. Patients may often return to an office job within a week of surgery.

Tummy tuck patients can expect temporary numbness of the skin, and it may take three to four months for the sensation to return. Dr. Power recommends that patients avoid returning to the gym for four to six weeks following surgery. The cost for an abdominoplasty is anywhere from \$5,000 to \$12,000.

50s and beyond

LOWER BODY LIFT

The body concerns for women in their 50s and 60s are essentially the same and mainly revolve around excess weight. Serious weight issues need to be addressed by a general surgeon or bariatric surgeon. "If you're cosmetically inclined and you didn't like your tummy or something else, this group has already taken care of those things," says Dr. Kreidstein. He adds that procedures such as arm lifts, lower body lifts and inner thigh procedures are popular with patients in this age group, who have already lost a lot of weight through a surgical procedure such as a gastric bypass.

With a lower body lift, incisions are made just above the buttocks; skin and fat are removed and the lower skin is pulled up. "Body lifts are for someone who was very heavy at some point, has now lost weight and is looking to get rid of extra skin and gain improved contours," says Dr. Kreidstein. On average, it takes three to six weeks before a person is able to return to work.

Pain and swelling are the primary post-op concerns. On the positive side, while a lower body lift will result in scars, Dr. Kreidstein points out that the appearance of scars tends to improve with age. "When you're older, your response to a wound is not as aggressive, so generally the scars are really good," he says. A lower body lift runs from approximately \$10,000 to \$20,000.