

BODY CONTOURING

After Major Weight Loss



The Symbol of Excellence in Plastic Surgery®

A public education service of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons®.

The first step:

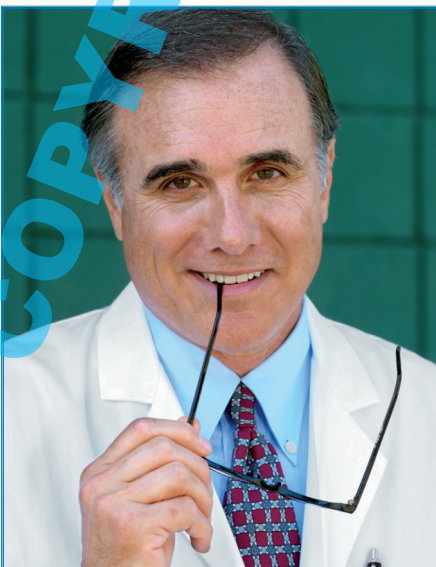
Choose a surgeon you can trust

Plastic surgery involves many choices. The first and most important is selecting a surgeon you can trust. A doctor's board certification is one of the best indicators of his or her training. Ask for certification from The American Board of Plastic Surgery® (ABPS), the only one of the 24 boards approved by the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) that certifies physicians in plastic surgery of the face and all areas of the body. To be ABPS board-certified, a physician must meet these rigorous standards:

- ▶ Graduate from an accredited medical school
- ▶ Complete at least **five** years of surgical training following medical school with a minimum of **two** years of plastic surgery residency training
- ▶ Pass comprehensive oral and written exams

American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS) Members must:

- ▶ Be certified by the ABPS or in Canada by The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada®
- ▶ Complete continuing medical education including patient safety each year
- ▶ Perform surgery in accredited, state-licensed or Medicare-certified surgical facilities



Beauty for life:

Enhancing your appearance with body contouring surgery

Following weight reduction surgery, or any substantial amount of weight loss, the skin and tissues often lack elasticity and cannot conform to the reduced body size. As a result, skin that has been severely stretched now is unsupported:

- ▶ Upper arms may sag and appear loose and full
- ▶ Breasts may flatten and hang with nipples pointed downward
- ▶ Abdominal area may extend around the sides and into the lower back area, resulting in an apron-like overhang
- ▶ Buttocks, groin and thighs can sag and cause hanging pockets of skin

Surgical body contouring following major weight loss improves the shape and tone of your underlying tissue that supports fat and skin, and removes excess sagging fat and skin. The result is a more normal appearance to the body, with smoother contours. This is, in essence, the final phase of your total weight loss experience.

Is it right for me?

Before you decide to undergo body contouring following major weight loss, your weight loss must be stabilized. If you continue to lose weight, sagging pockets will redevelop. If you rapidly regain the weight, you will traumatically stress your already weakened and thinned skin, causing further stress to the skin, visible stretch marks and wide scars.

If you had weight reduction surgery, your plastic surgeon will work closely with your physician to determine when it is appropriate for you to begin body contouring.

Good candidates for body contouring are:

- ▶ Adults of any age whose weight loss has stabilized
- ▶ Healthy individuals who do not have medical conditions that can impair healing or increase risk of surgery
- ▶ Non-smokers
- ▶ Individuals with a positive outlook and realistic goals for what body contouring can accomplish
- ▶ Individuals committed to leading a healthy lifestyle including proper nutrition and fitness

What to expect during your consultation

The success and safety of your body contouring procedure depends very much on your complete candidness during your consultation. You'll be asked a number of questions about your health, desires and lifestyle.

Be prepared to discuss:

- ▶ Why you want the surgery, your expectations and desired outcome
- ▶ The options available in body contouring surgery
- ▶ Medical conditions, drug allergies and medical treatments
- ▶ Use of current medications, vitamins, herbal supplements, alcohol, tobacco and drugs
- ▶ Previous surgeries

Your surgeon may also:

- ▶ Evaluate your general health status and any pre-existing health conditions or risk factors
- ▶ Examine and measure your body, including detailed measurements
- ▶ Take photographs for your medical record
- ▶ Discuss your options and recommend a course of treatment
- ▶ Discuss likely outcomes of your surgery and any risks or potential complications



Preparing for surgery



Prior to surgery, you may be asked to:

- ▶ Get lab testing or a medical evaluation
- ▶ Take certain medications or adjust your current medications
- ▶ Stop smoking well in advance of surgery
- ▶ Avoid taking aspirin, anti-inflammatory drugs and herbal supplements as they can increase bleeding

Special instructions you receive will cover:

- ▶ What to do on the day of surgery
- ▶ The use of anesthesia during your body contouring surgery
- ▶ Post-operative care and follow-up

Your plastic surgeon will also discuss where your procedure will be performed. Body contouring surgery may be performed in an accredited office-based surgical center, outpatient or ambulatory surgical center, or a hospital.

You'll need help

If a component of your body contouring surgery is performed on an outpatient basis, be sure to arrange for someone to drive you to and from surgery and to stay with you for at least the first night following surgery.

Procedural Steps:

What happens during body contouring surgery?

The procedures necessary to achieve your goals will be defined along with a plan for the timing of these procedures. Plastic surgery procedures that may be recommended by your physician include:

- ▶ Lower body lift: to correct sagging of the abdomen, buttocks, groin and outer thighs
- ▶ Breast lift: to correct sagging, flattened breasts
- ▶ Arm lift: to correct sagging of the upper arms
- ▶ Thigh lift: to correct sagging of the inner, outer and mid thigh

Step 1 – Anesthesia

Medications are administered for your comfort during the surgical procedures. The choices include intravenous sedation and general anesthesia. Your doctor will recommend the best choice for you.

Step 2 – The incision

All body contouring procedures require incisions to remove excess skin. In many cases, these incisions may be extensive. Incision length and pattern depend on the amount and location of excess skin to be removed, as well as personal preference and your doctor's surgical judgment. Advanced techniques usually allow incisions to be placed in strategic locations where they can be hidden by most types of clothing, but this is not always the case.

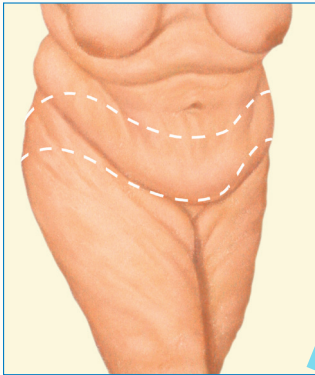
Body contouring is often performed in stages. Your particular condition and goals, as well as your plastic surgeon's best judgment, will all influence how your doctor defines a surgical plan. While it may have taken you two years or more to lose all the excess weight, it may take equally as long for the results of your body contouring to be complete.

Procedural Steps:

What happens during body contouring surgery?

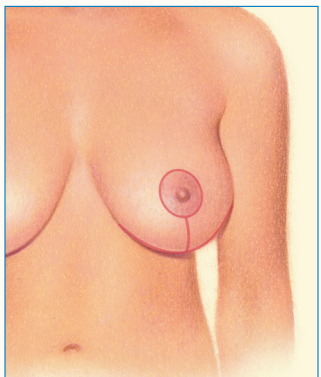
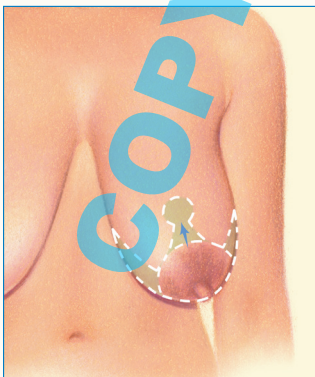
Body Lift

A complete lower body lift treats sagging buttocks, abdomen, waist, hips and outer thighs in one procedure or in staged procedures. Incision patterns vary, and may include a circumferential incision around the body to remove the “belt” of excess skin and fat.



Breast Lift

The incision patterns for lifting a woman's sagging breasts will be determined based on the amount of excess skin to be removed. These may include one or a combination of incisions in a circular pattern around the areola, in a line extending from the areola to the breast crease, and horizontally along the breast crease. A breast implant also may be recommended to enhance breast shape and size.

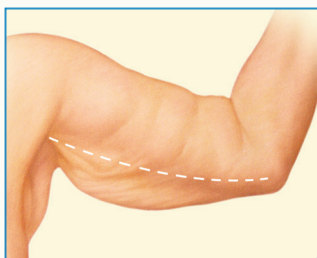


Procedural Steps:

What happens during body contouring surgery?

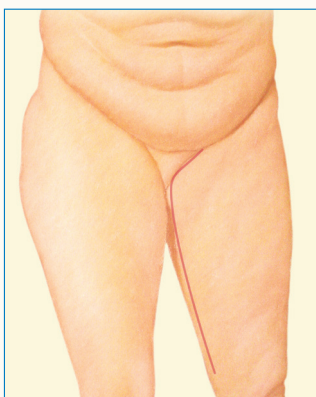
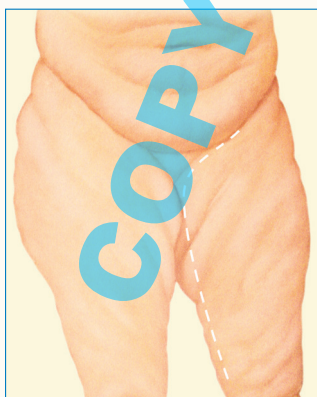
Arm Lift

Sagging skin in the upper arms is treated with an incision from the underarm area extending along the inside or back of the upper arm. Additional incisions on the arms may be necessary anywhere excess skin has formed sagging pockets. The smoother, tighter contours that result from upper arm contouring are apparent almost immediately, although initially obscured by swelling and bruising. In addition, skin quality is dramatically improved in both appearance and texture.



Thigh Lift

Reshaping of the thighs is achieved through incisions in the groin that can extend downward to the knee along the inner portion of the thigh. Improving contours of the outer thigh may require an incision extending from the groin around the hip. Through these incisions your plastic surgeon will tighten tissues for a smoother, better toned thigh.



Important facts about the safety and risks of body contouring surgery

The decision to have body contouring surgery is extremely personal and you'll have to decide if the benefits will achieve your goals and if the risks and potential complications are acceptable. Your plastic surgeon and/or staff will explain in detail the risks associated with surgery. You will be asked to sign consent forms to ensure that you fully understand the procedure you will undergo and any risks and potential complications.

Possible risks of body contouring following major weight loss include:

- ▶ Unfavorable scarring
- ▶ Bleeding (hematoma)
- ▶ Infection
- ▶ Fluid accumulation
- ▶ Poor wound healing
- ▶ Skin loss
- ▶ Blood clots
- ▶ Numbness or other changes in skin sensation
- ▶ Anesthesia risks
- ▶ Skin discoloration and/or prolonged swelling
- ▶ Fatty tissue found deep in the skin might die (fat necrosis)
- ▶ Major wound separation
- ▶ Asymmetry
- ▶ Recurrent looseness of skin
- ▶ Pain, which may persist
- ▶ Deep vein thrombosis, cardiac and pulmonary complications
- ▶ Persistent swelling in the legs
- ▶ Possibility of revisional surgery

Be sure to ask questions: It's very important to ask your plastic surgeon questions about your body contouring procedure. It's natural to feel some anxiety, whether it's excitement for your anticipated new look or a bit of preoperative stress. Don't be shy about discussing these feelings with your plastic surgeon.

My recovery

After your body contouring procedure is completed, dressings or bandages will be applied to the incisions. A small, thin tube may be temporarily placed under the skin to drain any excess blood or fluid that may collect.

You will be given specific instructions that may include: How to care for your surgical site(s) following surgery, medications to apply or take orally to aid healing and reduce the risk of infection, specific concerns to look for at the surgical site or in your general health, and when to follow-up with your plastic surgeon.

Be sure to ask your plastic surgeon specific questions about what you can expect during your individual recovery period.

- ▶ Where will I be taken after my surgery is complete?
- ▶ What medication will I be given or prescribed after surgery?
- ▶ Will I have dressings/bandages after surgery?
When will they be removed?
- ▶ Are stitches removed? When?
- ▶ When can I resume normal activity and exercise?
- ▶ When do I return for follow-up care?

When you go home

If you experience shortness of breath, chest pains, or unusual heart beats, seek medical attention immediately. Should any of these complications occur, you may require hospitalization and additional treatment.

The practice of medicine and surgery is not an exact science. Although good results are expected, there is no guarantee. In some situations, it may not be possible to achieve optimal results with a single surgical procedure and another surgery may be necessary.

Be careful

Following your physician's instructions is key to the success of your surgery. It is important that the surgical incisions are not subjected to excessive force, abrasion, or motion during the time of healing. Your doctor will give you specific instructions on how to care for yourself.

The results will be long-lasting

The results of a body contouring following aggressive weight loss are visible almost immediately. However, it may take as many as one to two years or more for the final results of all the recommended body contouring procedures to fully develop. Visible scars will remain, but the overall results are long lasting, provided that you maintain a stable weight and general fitness. As your body ages, it is natural to lose some firmness. However, most of your initial improvement should be relatively permanent.



How much will body contouring surgery cost?

Cost is always a consideration in elective surgery. Prices for body contouring procedures can vary widely. A surgeon's cost for body contouring procedures may vary based on his or her experience, the type of procedure used, as well as geographic office location. Many plastic surgeons offer patient financing plans, so be sure to ask.

Cost may include:

- ▶ Surgeon's fee
- ▶ Hospital or surgical facility costs
- ▶ Anesthesia fees
- ▶ Prescriptions for medication
- ▶ Post-surgery garments, and
- ▶ Medical tests

Your satisfaction involves more than a fee

When choosing a plastic surgeon for body contouring surgery, remember that the surgeon's experience and your comfort with him or her are just as important as the final cost of the surgery.



Most health insurance does not cover cosmetic surgery or its complications.

Words to know

Areola: Pigmented skin surrounding the nipple.

Arm lift: A surgical procedure, also known as brachioplasty, to correct sagging of the upper arms.

Breast implants: Medical device placed in your body to enhance an existing breast size or to reconstruct your breast. Breast implants can be filled with either salt water (saline) or silicone (elastic gel).

Breast lift: Also known as mastopexy, surgery to lift the breasts.

Breast contouring: A surgical procedure following massive weight loss to improve shape and tone and remove excess fat and skin.

Circumferential incision: A surgical incision around the body to remove the “belt” of excess skin and fat and additional incisions that may resemble a bikini bottom pattern.

General anesthesia: Drugs and/or gases used during an operation to relieve pain and alter consciousness.

Hematoma: Blood pooling beneath the skin.

Intravenous sedation: Sedatives administered by injection into a vein to help you relax.

Local anesthesia: A drug injected directly to the site of an incision during an operation to relieve pain.

Lower body lift: Surgical procedure to correct sagging of the abdomen, buttocks, groin and outer thighs.

Macerated skin: Excess skin that hangs and becomes wet or infected underneath.

Medial thigh lift: A surgical procedure to correct sagging of the inner thigh.

Outer thigh lift: A surgical procedure to correct sagging of the outer and mid-thigh.

Sutures: Stitches used by surgeons to hold skin and tissue together.

Questions to ask my plastic surgeon

Use this checklist as a guide during your consultation

- ☐ Are you certified by the American Board of Plastic Surgery?
- ☐ Are you a member of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons?
- ☐ Were you trained specifically in the field of plastic surgery?
- ☐ How many years of plastic surgery training have you had?
- ☐ Do you have hospital privileges to perform this procedure?
If so, at which hospitals?
- ☐ Is the office-based surgical facility accredited by a nationally- or state-recognized accrediting agency, or is it state-licensed or Medicare-certified?
- ☐ Am I a good candidate for this procedure?
- ☐ What will be expected of me to get the best results?
- ☐ Where and how will you perform my procedure?
- ☐ What surgical technique is recommended for me?
- ☐ How long of a recovery period can I expect, and what kind of help will I need during my recovery?
- ☐ What are the risks and complications associated with my procedure?
- ☐ How are complications handled?
- ☐ How can I expect to look over time? After pregnancy?
- ☐ What are my options if I am dissatisfied with the cosmetic outcome of my procedure?
- ☐ Do you have before-and-after photos I can look at for this procedure and what results are reasonable for me?

This brochure is published by the American Society of Plastic Surgeons®, including text, graphics, illustrations, and images, and is strictly intended for educational purposes. It is not intended to make any representations or warranties about the outcome of any procedure. It is not a substitute for a thorough, in-person consultation with a board-certified plastic surgeon.

Notes

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