

# ARM LIFT

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# WHAT IS AN ARM LIFT?

Fluctuations in weight, growing older, and heredity can cause your upper arms to have a drooping, sagging appearance. This is a condition that cannot be corrected through exercise. If the underside of your upper arms are sagging or appear loose and full due to excess skin and fat, an arm lift may be right for you.

***An arm lift, or brachioplasty, is a surgical procedure that:***

- Reduces excess sagging skin that droops downward
- Tightens and smoothes the underlying supportive tissue that defines the shape of the upper arm
- Reduces localized pockets of fat in the upper arm region

***In general, candidates for an arm lift include:***

- Adults with significant upper arm skin laxity
- Adults of any age whose weight is relatively stable and who are not significantly overweight
- Healthy individuals without medical conditions that impair healing or increase risk of surgery
- Non-smokers
- Individuals with a positive outlook and realistic expectations

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# CONSULTATION & PREPARING FOR SURGERY

## *During your consultation be prepared to discuss:*

- Your surgical goals
- Medical conditions, drug allergies, and medical treatments
- Current medications, vitamins, herbal supplements, alcohol, tobacco, and drug use
- Previous surgeries

## *Your surgeon will also:*

- Evaluate your general health status and any pre-existing health conditions or risk factors
- Take photographs
- Discuss your options
- Discuss likely outcomes of arm lift surgery and any risks or potential complications

## *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
- Avoid taking aspirin, anti-inflammatory drugs, and herbal supplements as they can increase bleeding

Arm lift surgery may be performed in an accredited office-based surgical facility, ambulatory surgical center, or a hospital. 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.

Be sure to ask your plastic surgeon questions. It's very important to understand all aspects of your arm lift 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.

# THE PROCEDURE

## **Step 1 – Anesthesia**

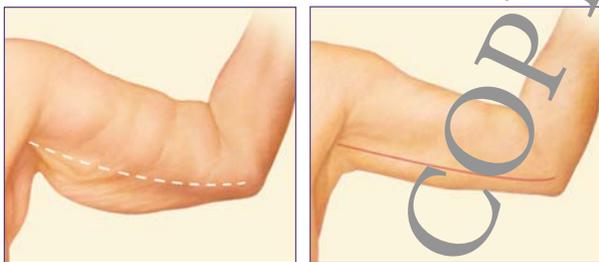
Medications are administered for your comfort during the surgical procedures. The choices include intravenous sedation and general anesthesia. Your doctor will recommend the best choice for you.

## **Step 2 – The incision**

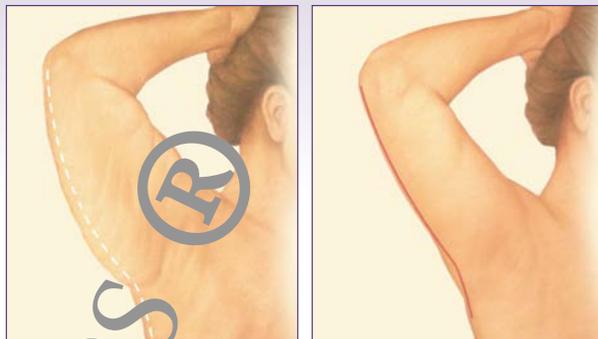
Incision length and pattern depend on the amount and location of excess skin to be removed, as well as the best judgment of your plastic surgeon. Incisions are generally placed on the inside of the arm or on the back of the arm, depending on the surgeon's preference, and may extend from the underarm (axilla) to just above the elbow. Excess fat may be directly excised or treated with liposuction.

Depending on your specific condition, incisions may be more limited. Then, underlying supportive tissue is tightened and reshaped with internal sutures. Finally, the skin is smoothed over the new contour of your arm.

*Inner Arm Incision*



*Back of Arm Incision*



*Minimal Incision*



## **Step 3 – Closing the incisions**

Your incisions will be closed either with absorbable sutures, or stitches that will be removed within one to two weeks following your arm lift.

## **Step 4 – See the results**

The smoother, tighter contours that result from brachioplasty are apparent almost immediately following your procedure, although there will likely be swelling and bruising. Your new upper arm will be dramatically improved both in appearance and feel.

# RISKS & SAFETY

The decision to have arm lift surgery is extremely personal, and you'll have to decide if the benefits, risks and potential complications are acceptable. You will be asked to sign consent forms to ensure that you fully understand the procedure.

***The risks include:***

- Anesthesia risks
- Bleeding
- Infection
- Poor wound healing
- Unsightly scarring
- Fluid accumulation (seroma)
- Damage to deeper structures such as nerves, blood vessels and muscles
- Fatty tissue under the skin might die (fat necrosis)
- Numbness or other changes in skin sensation
- Pain, which may persist
- Sutures may not absorb, but spontaneously surface through the skin, causing irritation, drainage and redness
- Possible need for revisional surgery

These risks and others will be fully discussed prior to your consent. It's important that you address all your questions directly with your plastic surgeon.

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# RECOVERY AFTER SURGERY

Following your surgery, dressings or bandages may be applied to your incisions, and your arms may be wrapped in an elastic bandage or a compression garment to minimize swelling. A small, thin tube may be temporarily placed under the skin to drain any excess blood or fluid.

You will be given specific instructions on how to care for the surgical site and drains, medications to apply or take orally to aid healing, specific concerns to look for, 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?

# RESULTS

The smoother, tighter contours that result from an arm lift are apparent almost immediately following your procedure. Initial results will be obscured by swelling and bruising and a scar will remain where the incision was made.

Although good results are expected from your procedure, 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.

The results of arm lift surgery will be long lasting, provided that you maintain a stable weight and general fitness. As your body ages, it is natural to lose some firmness, but most of your improvement should be relatively permanent.

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

# COST

Prices for an arm lift can vary. A surgeon's fee will be based on his or her experience, the type of procedure used, and the geographic location of the office. Many plastic surgeons offer patient financing plans, so be sure to ask.

## **Cost may include:**

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

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

## **Your satisfaction involves more than a fee:**

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

Plastic surgery involves many choices. The first and most important is selecting an ASPS member surgeon you can trust. ASPS member surgeons meet rigorous standards:

- Board certification by the American Board of Plastic Surgery® (ABPS) or in Canada by The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada®

- Complete at least six years of surgical training following medical school with a minimum of three years of plastic surgery residency training
- Pass comprehensive oral and written exams
- Graduate from an accredited medical school
- Complete continuing medical education, including patient safety each year
- Perform surgery in accredited, state-licensed, or Medicare-certified surgical facilities

## **Do not be confused by other official sounding boards and certifications.**

The ABPS is recognized by the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS), which has approved medical specialty boards since 1934. There is no ABMS recognized certifying board with "cosmetic surgery" in its name. By choosing a member of The American Society of Plastic Surgeons, you can be assured that you are choosing a qualified, highly trained plastic surgeon who is board-certified by the ABPS or The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada.

*This brochure is intended strictly 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.*





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