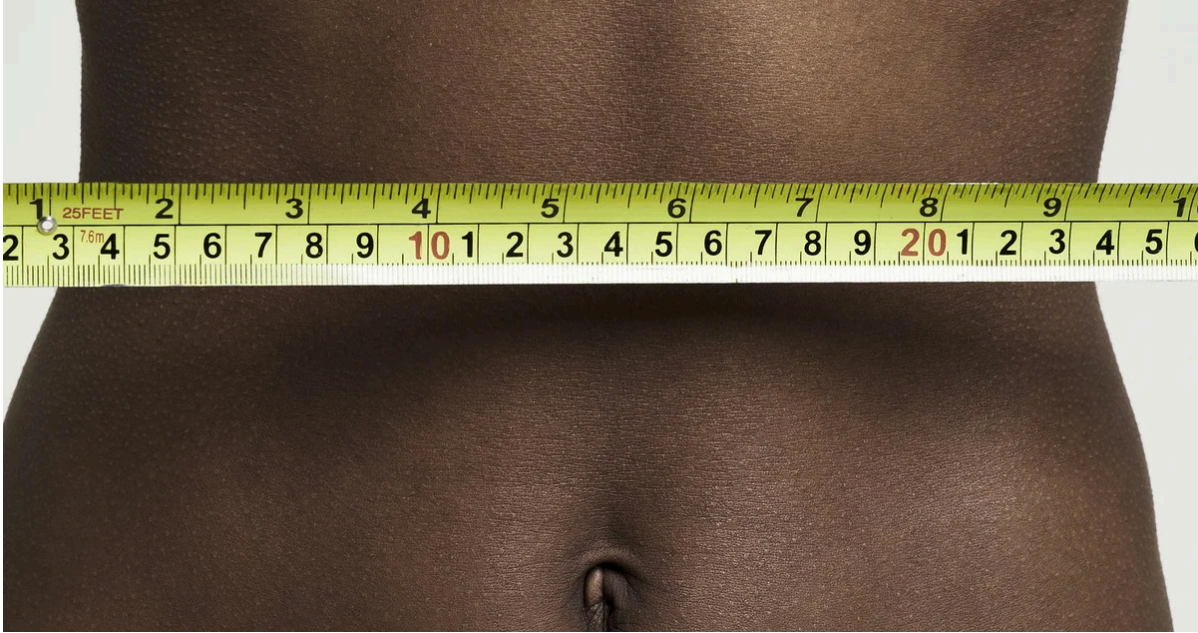


# ESSENCE

## Is Liposuction The New BBL? Surgeons Weigh In.

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The Brazilian Butt Lift (BBL) has been a trending surgery the last few years, with well over 30,000 BBLs performed by board-certified plastic surgeons in 2022. “The rise in popularity was linked to celebrities like Kim Kardashian, Jennifer Lopez, and Nicki Minaj as people speculated this is what they had done,” says Plastic Surgeon, Doctor Jeffrey Lind. Influenced by celebrities known for their Coke bottle body types, “Everyone was out to get a full butt and a ‘snatched’, tight waist.” But with patients leaning towards more natural-looking surgeries, has the popular BBL met its match?

In a BBL operation, fat is liposuctioned from other parts of the body then injected into the hips and buttocks to contour the body. However, poorly performed butt lifts can impact the physical appearance of the patient—including severe asymmetry, “ant booty” (butt too large for legs) and “diaper booty” (excess fat causing sagging)—which is a downside to the dramatic results of the popular procedure. But cosmetic alternatives, like butt implants, are not as safe as the butt lift, with complications from pain and discomfort, to scarring and infections. Because of this, no other surgery has been able to replace the popular BBL.

“I have not noticed a decrease in BBLs but I have noticed a decrease in patients wanting larger BBLs,” says Dr. Lind. Though the BBL has not been replaced, the beauty industry is becoming more interested in natural results as opposed to more dramatic body contour. “Patients are more commonly wanting the ‘skinny bbl’ now,” he says. This version of the butt lift is performed on patients with less body fat. “High-def liposuction is typically performed and then smaller amounts of fat are added to the buttocks and hip dips completing the ‘skinny bbl,’” he continues.

In both procedures, liposuction is a key step to complete the BBL. But can liposuction replace the BBL? According to the President-Elect of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons, **Dr. Steven Williams**, “liposuction can create half of the illusion of the BBL,” he continues. The board-certified plastic surgeon has performed well over 10,000 liposuctions in his career, as the most common operation performed by plastic surgeons in 2022. At approximately 325,000 procedures last year, liposuction removes excess fat from specific areas of the body often for a more proportional, slim body type.

“I think there’s been a trend towards more natural results when it comes to fat grafting,” Dr. Williams says. For Black women, our beauty standards have a strong ideal for larger butts, which is a common characteristic of our body features, according to the National Library of Medicine (NIH). “The secret of a BBL is you are working from both sides of the coin—you’re taking from the areas where patients don’t want it and you’re putting volume in the areas where patients do,” he says. But what if the patient has a voluminous natural butt? “If the other parts of the body are slimmer and curved, then overall, the general patient’s contour is also improved.”

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