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Plastic Surgeons Say These 5 Cosmetic Procedures Are Becoming Less Popular

Deanna Pai | April 1, 2024



Featured Experts:

Dr. Brandon Richland, a board-certified plastic surgeon in Fountain Valley, California

[Dr. Kimberly Lee](#), a board-certified facial plastic surgeon in Los Angeles

Dr. Dilip Madnani, a board-certified facial plastic surgeon in New York City

Dr. Norman Rowe, a board-certified plastic surgeon in New York City

Headlines tend to center on which cosmetic procedure is on the rise, be it breast implant removal or eyelid surgery. The spotlight is less often turned to what's actually *losing* steam in the industry. If 2022 data from the American Society of Plastic Surgeons—the most recent numbers currently available—are any indication, procedures such as neck lifts and brow lifts are trending downward.

Part of it is the overall loss of interest in invasive options, which board-certified plastic surgeon Dr. Brandon Richland, who is based in Fountain Valley, California, has seen in his own practice. "Many patients would rather have less downtime and less or no scarring compared to traditional techniques, which may leave a large scar," he says.

Not only does the recovery factor in, but so does the final result—namely, people don't want to *look* like they've had work. "There's a growing trend toward more subtle and natural-looking cosmetic enhancements," says Dr. Kimberly Lee, a board-certified facial plastic surgeon in Los Angeles. "Some people prefer treatments that preserve facial movement and expression rather than undergoing surgical procedures that may lead to a more 'worked-on' appearance."

That said, some of these stats aren't always set in stone; Dr. Lee, for instance, has found that there's been an uptick in forehead and neck lifts among both younger patients and men. With that in mind, we asked surgeons to share what's on the way out in their own practices—and why that is.

Neck lifts

There's still definitely a time and a place for neck lifts, especially for people who have significant excess skin on their neck, according to Dr. Richland. However, he says, "many noninvasive or minimally invasive treatments produce great results without having to go under the knife." Two such treatments, he says, are Renuvion, which uses cold plasma energy to tighten and lift skin, and microneedling with radiofrequency; these can often deliver the results patients want without the downtime of surgery.

Full forehead lifts

Traditional forehead lifts are now falling in popularity in favor of lateral brow lifts, in board-certified facial plastic surgeon Dr. Dilip Madnani's NYC practice. A lateral brow lift, which targets only the outer area of the brow, can "address areas of concern and not make patients look surprised," he explains. "Lateral brow lifts are more for beautification and address the issue of the brows dropping, whereas the full brow kits make people appear 'done' and surprised." The aesthetic is more nuanced as a result.

Dr. Lee also points to the breadth of nonsurgical options—and concerns about risk and recovery, since a forehead lift can require one to two weeks of downtime—as a reason fewer people are pursuing forehead lifts.

Hand filler

Hand filler is a surefire way to restore volume to the hands, which are among the first areas on the body to show signs of aging, and mask visible veins. However, patients are starting to avoid it, says New York City board-certified plastic surgeon Dr. Norman Rowe. While it used to be a very popular procedure, especially among older patients, that's changed recently. "I feel that this is due to the discomfort it can cause," he says, noting that many opt for laser resurfacing on the hands instead.

Buccal fat removal

A major procedure in 2023, buccal fat removal is on its way out. This surgery is "not for everyone, so surgeons and patients are being more selective," says Dr. Madnani. "It doesn't always solve

the issues the patients are asking to treat.” In some cases, injecting a neuromodulator in the jaw muscle, also known as masseter Botox, can shrink the area without sacrificing that fat—which can prove important as you age, since your face will naturally lose fat over time as it is. (The buccal fat removal trend explains why Gen Zers may look older than they really are.)

Kybella

As innovative as Kybella—a treatment that involves injecting a double chin to dissolve fat and contour the area—was when it debuted, it’s lost some of its initial popularity, according to Dr. Rowe. “I feel that patients would rather get liposuction of the area as opposed to multiple injections of Kybella spread out over months,” he says. If you compare chin lipo versus Kybella, liposuction is a relatively easy, one-and-done procedure, whereas Kybella can be a bigger investment of time—not to mention, more painful.

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