

Will my forehead look younger?

The vast majority of brow-lifts involve simple skin undermining and securing to deep structures. That is – using small incisions the brow is released and then secured with several small sutures. The forehead is usually sutured to the skull far above the brow margin using a device, screw, or other hardware. The brow is timidly pulled and the excess forehead skin re-draped. This simple procedure touted by many as the modern “high tech” brow-lift is supposed to provide a natural long-term brow-lift. The technique is anything but modern as it has failed to give consistent results for over two decades.

The typical endoscopic brow lift is popular because it is fast and simple. It is so simple that even an untrained plastic surgeon can perform. **There is only one problem.** Patients often do not look better, but may actually look worse or just “weird.” Patients who can benefit from brow-lifts have true skin redundancy. It does not just disappear with simple re-draping placed on absorbable sutures. Skin is like taffy and it stretches when pulled. It is impossible to see significant improvement of forehead grooves unless the forehead skin and muscles are addressed. Forehead wrinkles persist as patients continue to raise their brow to compensate for excess skin. So what do you do? You can undergo multiple small treatments to try to cancel irregularities or get a real brow lift.

Are there other options that make sense?

Surgery like life sometimes required compromise. Botox or other paralyzing agents can provide a medical or nonsurgical brow lift. This works by temporarily paralyzing forehead muscles that pull down and relaxing muscles that pull up. These procedures have replaced surgical brow lifts in the majority of patients. As patients age these agents improve the forehead wrinkles at the expense of brow position. The wrinkles improve but the forehead droops as the skin becomes more lax.

Upper eyelid tucks or blepharoplasties allow patients to continue non-surgical treatments longer but not indefinitely. Removing upper eyelid skin allows the brow to relax and compensate thereby improving forehead wrinkles. Upper eyelid tucks are often combined with brow tightening (browpexy) through the same incisions. Securing the brow directly along the orbital rim stabilizes brow decent and avoids additional scars. This is often the best option for patients with thinning hair or a receding hairline. In most patients the need for a real brow lift is obvious, but in others it can be a difficult clinical and cosmetic decision. Patients should carefully weigh the pros and cons of forehead rejuvenation with a skilled board certified plastic surgeon such as Dr. James Lowe.

There is a better way.

The brow has supporting structures and muscles that secure and move the forehead. These structures hold things in place while allowing for facial expression. As patients age these structures become overactive causing unsightly forehead creases. Increased forehead animation, continue activity to improve visual field, and genetic differences make some patient foreheads look older than others. The skin must be surgically removed and structures repositioned to reliably improve deep forehead grooves, open the brow, and decrease upper eyelid hooding. Although the current limited or open brow lift is more extensive then patients have come to expect, it really works. Instead of several very small ineffective incisions on the forehead, patients often require slightly longer longer incisions hidden in the temporal hair. Recovery is not

several days, but several weeks. Patients feel OK at the end of a week, but do not fool anyone for at least 3 weeks. Patients do not have to be convinced their brow looks better, but they can truly see noticeable long term results.

Unfortunately, real brow lifts are like everything else in life. If you want more, you have to put more into it – meaning, you may have to undergo more surgery and more recovery for a more natural result. Most brow-lifts are combined with upper eyelid tucks to adequately offload the forehead and provide a harmonious cosmetic result. Laser resurfacing and other injectables can be added to more effectively enhance the natural rejuvenation of the forehead. The plastic surgeons goal is to individualize patient care to ensure the patients forehead and eyelids are returned to a more youthful and cosmetic state. Dr. Lowe can review the cosmetic options best suited for each patient during consultation.

How do I avoid looking “operated” on?

Brow lifts are not for everyone. Just because a patient is older does not mean they will look better or more youthful after a brow lift. At least once or twice a week in America examples of bad cosmetic surgery can be seen at the mall, church, internet, or on TV. Although beauty is indeed in the eye of the beholder – bad cosmetic surgery is usually obvious. In some cities, the bad cosmetic surgery is so prominent that it scares patients from even seeking plastic surgery consultation. The wrong procedure, performed by the wrong surgeon, on the wrong patient, for the wrong reason, causes the wrong result. These are the patients who often look “weird.”

Nothing in cosmetic surgery is as frightening and obvious as a bad brow-lift. Many of these people actually believe or convinced themselves that they look good. Some will even rave about the cosmetic surgeon who performed the procedure. Simple and quick is good in fast food, but is rarely better in facial cosmetic surgery. Sadly, good plastic surgery is often what patients fear the most. It can be difficult to embrace a good brow lift performed the right way by the right surgeon. After a full recovery, good brow lifts are subtle and difficult to identify. Great facial rejuvenation is performed on patients who simple look really great for their age. These patients rarely admit to the surgery and why should they?

Getting through a cosmetic procedure safely relies a great deal on medical science; the way a patient looks is pure art. Brow lift surgery performed by different surgeons can be very different. The difference is not merely the price and service, but the approach and artistic skill of your surgeon. The artistic goal is not to remove every wrinkle from your forehead, but to rejuvenate the region in a natural way. Many lines are caused by the facial muscles, and to remove all the lines would result in loss of facial expression and animation. Although some movement will be lost following brow lift surgery, as the structures fully heal it does not usually impair normal expression. Brow lifts relying only on static hardware or sutures often appear strange, irregular, or overly surprised.

Dr. Lowe’s goal is to make each patient better without looking like a different person. He believes that facial aging begins with around the eye and brow resulting at times in a tired or angry look. He attempts to improve the regions so patients appear younger and more refreshed. His approach is individualized base on the patient’s unique features, concerns, and expectations. A good brow-lift or other rejuvenation procedure in this area can often be the right thing for the right person. For further information check out our website or other helpful links at www.drjlowe.com