



Lowe Plastic Surgery (LPS)

Dr. Lowe's Facts about Facial Surgical Rejuvenation

(Excerpts from Dr. Lowe's Mentor Dr. Fritz Barton)

Introduction

Complete facial rejuvenation entails returning the entire facial regions to a more youthful state either at one time or through a series of nonsurgical and surgical steps. Facial rejuvenation involves lifestyle modifications, weight loss, skin care regimens, laser treatments, injectables, and a number of surgical procedures. Dr. Lowe usually provides individualized recommendations in these areas during the course of a facial cosmetic consultation. This document focuses on the most common facial cosmetic surgeries used to address facial aging. Facial harmony or balance is often best achieved by combining or staging one or more of these surgical procedures.

Facelift

How long will the facelift it last?

The vast majority of facelifts are skin lifts. That is – using the same incisions that are common to all techniques. The skin is timidly elevated in front of the ear, and the cheek mass is pulled upward using the skin as a handle. This limited technique is popular because it's simple and recovery is very fast. **There is only one problem.** Skin is like taffy. It stretches when pulled and you lose half of your fabulous result in as early as six months. That is where the concept of facelifts “falling down” came from. So what do you do? You go back to your surgeon in a year or two and have a “little tuck” or a “mini lift.” Redoing facelift procedures too often can give your face an over stretched look.

There is a better way.

Under the skin of the face there are deep supporting structures called fascia. Their job is to hold things in place so your face retains its general shape. By definition, these layers do not stretch like taffy or they couldn't do their job. The deep supporting structure of the face is called the “SMAS”. If the deep supporting structure is used as the handle to lift the cheek, two good things happen. First, the lift is much more solid and long lasting. The skin is not pulled under unnatural tension so you don't look stretched. That's the good news. The bad news is that it is a more extensive procedure so you swell longer. Instead of looking better than you started out at two weeks, it will take four to six weeks. You'll feel OK at the end of two weeks, and you won't scare anyone, but you won't fool anyone for four to six weeks post-op. Unfortunately, a facelift is like everything else in life. If you want more, you have to put more into it – meaning, you have to be patient with the postoperative period. Dr. Lowe's advice for looking your best longer is to do a facelift **LESS OFTEN** and **MORE THOROUGHLY**.

Eyelid Surgery (Blepharoplasty)

Will my eyes look younger?

The vast majority of eyelid tucks are simple skin removals procedures. That is – using the same incisions that are common to all techniques. The skin is timidly removed or treated with a laser above and below the eyelid margin, and a small amount of skin is removed without addressing deeper structures. This limited technique is popular

because it's simple and recovery is very fast. **There is only one problem.** Skin is like taffy and it stretches when pulled and you may not see significant improvement of the deep circles or grooves around the eyes. So what do you do? You can accept the results or undergo multiple treatments with injectables or lasers to try to conceal or hide irregularities.

There is a better way.

Under the skin there are supporting structures that support the fat and muscles around the eyelids. These structures hold things in place, but become displaced and loose with time. Unfortunately, these structures often contribute to the bagginess around the upper and lower eyelids. In order to improve these bags around the eyelid, structures must be cut and reposition to address the grooving. The bad news is that this is a more extensive procedure so you swell longer and have more bruising. Instead of looking better than you started out at two weeks, it will take four to six weeks. You'll feel OK at the end of two weeks, but you won't fool anyone for four to six weeks post-op.

Unfortunately, advanced eyelid surgery is like everything else in life. If you want more, you have to put more into it – meaning, you have to be patient in the postoperative period. Sometimes these procedures will require a tightening of the lower eyelid to avoid pulling down with healing. All patients will be required to perform an aggressive regimen of eyelid massage and eye-drops.

Brow Surgery (Browlift or Browpexy)

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 requires 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. It also can improve the crow's feet around the eye. As patients age these agents improve the wrinkles at the

expense of facial animation and brow position. The wrinkles improve but the forehead and eyelids 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 or eyelid surgery 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 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 undergoing 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.

Facial Cosmetic Surgery as an Art

How do avoid looking “operated” on?

Getting through your operation safely relies on medical science; the way you look is pure art. Facial cosmetic surgery performed by different surgeons can be very different. It’s not like shopping for a fancy car because a car is the same product at each dealership. The difference with a car is merely price and service. Not so with art. In any museum with fine paintings, the only elements the paintings have in common are canvass and paint. After all, they are different based on the style and skill of the artist.

The same is true of facial rejuvenation with facelifts, eyelid tucks, brow lifts, or any other cosmetic surgery. Every surgeon's artistic approach is different and each patient is a new canvass. The artistic goal is not to remove every line from a face, eyes, or forehead, but to rejuvenate the region in a natural way. Many lines are caused by facial muscles, and to remove all the lines would result in loss of facial expression. While a perfectly smooth face, eyelids, and forehead might look good in still photography, it looks like a mask in real life without passion or personality.

Facial cosmetic surgery is not for everyone. Just because a patient is older does not mean they will look better after surgery. 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 patients are afraid. The wrong procedure, performed by the wrong surgeon, on the wrong patient, for the wrong reason, result in a wrong look. These are the patients who often look “weird.”

Nothing is as frightening and obvious as bad facial cosmetic surgery. Many of these people actually believe or convinced themselves that they look good. Some even rave about the cosmetic surgeon who performed the procedure. Simple and quick is good in fast food, but is rarely better in facial rejuvenation. Sadly, good plastic surgery is often what patients fear the most. After a full recovery, good cosmetic surgery should subtle and difficult to identify. Patients who have great facial rejuvenation simply look great for their age. These patients rarely admit to the surgery; and why should they?

Dr. Lowe tries to make patients look good without looking like a different person. His approach is individualized based on the patient's unique features, concerns, and expectations. Combining cosmetic surgery procedures increases time in the operating room, but save money and only requires one recovery.

Conclusions

Surgical rejuvenation of the face, neck, eyes, and forehead can be performed together or separately. These procedures can also be combined with liposuction, fat injection, resurfacing, nose jobs, etc. The rate limiting factor is usually time and complexity. Some patients prefer to take their time while others want to do as much as possible. Dr. Lowe helps patients decide how and when to do surgery in the safest and most effective way. Facial harmony and balance can almost always be achieved at affordable price with a predictable recovery. Good surgical rejuvenation is often the right thing for the right person. For further information check out our website or other helpful links at www.drjlowe.com