

The Shape of Things to Come: Body Shaping Procedures

by Dr. Heidi Regenass, M.D.

As more men and women want to look and feel better, there is a growing interest in body contouring procedures. Patients want safe, cost effective treatment options with minimal downtime. Fortunately, there are excellent choices now available to meet their needs. Body-Jet contouring, Smartlipo (laser lipo), natural fat transfer, and tummy tucks (abdominoplasty) offer a range of treatments that are less invasive, less painful, and have a quicker recovery than traditional liposuction for body shaping. Here are the basic details about each of these procedures.

Smartlipo (LASER ASSISTED LIPOSUCTION)

Smartlipo is a precise, safe, and highly effective method for body sculpting that relies on cutting-edge technology to remove areas of unwanted fat. Using tiny incisions that do not require stitches, a small laser is inserted under the skin to gently rupture the fat cells. At the same time the laser is “zapping” the fat it also seals blood vessels, resulting in much less swelling, bleeding, and bruising than with traditional liposuction. The energy from the laser also provides collagen shrinkage which helps to tighten loose skin. This allows for faster results, less pain and downtime,



and much fewer risks. Because general anesthesia is unnecessary with Smartlipo, the procedure is very safe with minimal side effects. Most patients return to work and regular activities within 1-3 days.



Body-Jet Contouring

Typically used in combination with Smartlipo, another new, safe, and effective body contouring tool is Body-Jet or water-jet assisted liposuction. This revolutionary alternative to traditional liposuction actually works by a gentle, pulsating spray of fluid that loosens fat from the surrounding connective tissues. After a local infiltration of anesthetic numbs the treatment area, a small tube (cannula) is inserted to remove the loosened fat. This minimally invasive alternative for fat reduction is so gentle and safe that, with Body-Jet, there is less bruising and a much easier, quicker recovery over past liposuction methods. In addition, because general anesthesia is avoided, risks are further decreased. The tissue doesn't swell as much and the skin is tightened for a much smoother result. Generally, in a week or two, patients look like those who are two or three months out from traditional liposuction. Patients return to normal activities within 1-3 days.

The areas that can be treated using Smartlipo and Body-Jet are the same as those that respond well to traditional liposuction. The areas most frequently contoured are the abdomen, hips, flanks, thighs, and arms. The neck and chest area (for men troubled with gynecomastia or excess fat on the chest) also respond very well. Patients who have undergone traditional liposuction previously and then have Smartlipo and Body-Jet say that recovery is much easier, pain is less, and bruising is minimal. Whereas patients described the recovery from traditional liposuction as feeling like they had been hit by a truck, patients of Smartlipo and Body-Jet reported the discomfort to be similar to that experienced after a good gym workout.

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Natural Fat Transfer

A side benefit to Body-Jet liposuction is the ability to use fat that has been gently removed from one body area to augment another. It's a procedure called natural fat transfer. Why would a patient want fat transferred? As we age, many people gain fat in some areas but lose it in others. The loss of fat in some body areas can contribute to an aged appearance. When a patient has fat that is removed from Body-Jet contouring, their own fat can be used as a natural filler that is "all natural" and with a long term duration. Areas that are most often filled with natural fat transfer include the back of hands, the face, the buttocks, and the breasts.



Tummy Tuck

In some instances when there is a combination of extra fat and skin in the abdomen area, a tummy tuck or abdominoplasty may be the best treatment of choice. This procedure tightens the muscle layer under the skin and removes the extra, sagging skin of the abdomen. Patients who have completed childbearing or have lost significant weight and developed excess loose skin are ideal candidates. Although patients do undergo general anesthesia for this procedure, the surgery is done on an outpatient basis. The addition of a pain pump (which drips numbing medicine in the abdomen for a few days after surgery) makes the recovery much less painful than patients might think. The results are dramatic and the satisfaction rates are very high. A flat tummy is indeed possible, and nothing treats excess and loose skin better than a tummy tuck.

Almost anyone can be a good candidate for these body shaping procedures if they are in good health, exercise regularly, and are within about 25 lbs. of their ideal weight, but have stubborn areas of local body fat deposits.

Remember, the results from these procedures are permanent. Once fat is removed from a particular area, it will not return to that area. If a patient subsequently gains weight, it may be deposited elsewhere on the body.

To determine if any of these body contouring procedures may be right for you, we recommend you come in to the Gateway Aesthetic Institute & Laser Center for a complimentary consultation. It's never too late to get the body you've always dreamed of.

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