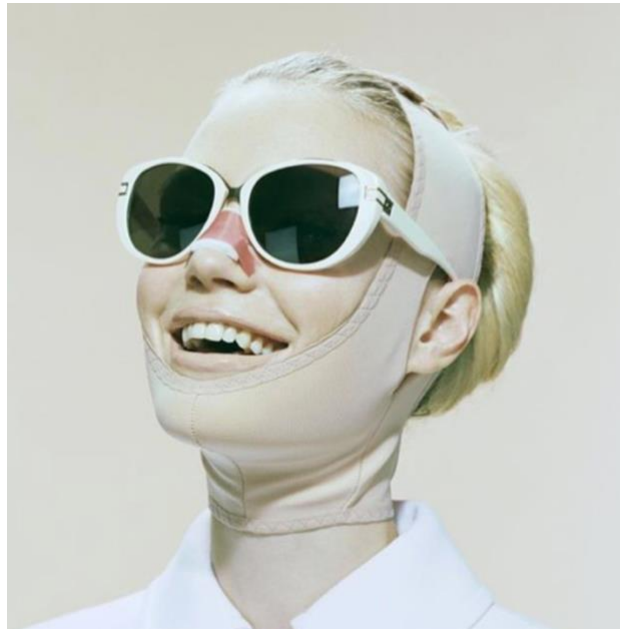


HOW THE PANDEMIC IS CHANGING PLASTIC SURGERY

• by Michaela d'Artois



During quarantine, have you found yourself spending more time looking in the mirror? Using fancy face filters on social media? Considering booking a long-desired procedure? You're not alone! According to New York's much-sought-after plastic surgeon [Melissa Doft, MD](#), the industry of nips and tucks is, in a word, *booming*. We asked her our most burning questions about plastic surgery during a global pandemic, and where she thinks the industry will go from here.

So, what kinds of changes are Dr. Doft seeing firsthand as patients trickle into her Manhattan practice? "The work-from-home mantra of COVID has dramatically increased the number of invasive procedures," she says. Safely, of course.

Recovery time may have once kept some from taking the plunge. But now, fewer social engagements and more mask-wearing allows for optimal recuperation time, especially for facial procedures. When you do have to run errands, your mask not only saves lives but becomes a great way to conceal any signs of healing. That increased downtime is also allowing individuals to feel empowered to seek a professional opinion and potential procedure. "I actually don't think that patients are finding new things to criticize about themselves, but instead are taking action to fix something that has always bothered them," says Dr. Doft. She also notes that non-invasive procedures, "particularly [laser procedures](#) and [lip fillers](#)" are on the rise as well.

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The biggest concern in the world of plastic surgery is simply prioritizing patient well-being above all else. And in these times, that means avoiding coronavirus. To start, her office has limited the volume of patients in the practice at any given time. And while cleanliness is always key in such settings, practices are kicking it up a notch. “We wear a mask all of the time instead of just in the operating room,” she says. “And instead of a traditional surgical mask, I opt for an N95 when seeing patients.”

Further, COVID testing and tracking is imperative. Patients are asked to disclose how they’re feeling or if they’ve been in contact with anyone who is sick. Once you’re booked for your procedure, timing is everything. “After their COVID test, we ask patients to quarantine at home before surgery,” says Dr. Doft. And for good reason: “We now know that having surgery and COVID increases your risk for deep vein thrombosis, pulmonary embolism, and stroke, even in young healthy patients,” she says. She suggests booking into a private clinic instead of a hospital for your procedure to “decrease potential exposure to other sick patients or staff.”

So what does Doft see for the future of plastic surgery? As the world bounces back, she believes we will see “an influx of filler and botox, as patients return to the city and start meeting up with friends.”

If you’ve been hankering for a procedure of your own, we say go forth and consult. Just be sure your surgeon of choice has the stamp of approval from The American Board of Plastic Surgery, and that the two of you vibe. Yes, we said vibe. It’s important to trust in the hands of your surgeon, and to feel that they, in the words of Dr. Doft, “understand your aesthetic.” She also reiterates our own beliefs on plastic surgery being “less about vanity and more about confidence.” A form of freedom if you will, allowing an individual to feel comfortable in their skin, maybe for the first time in their lives. And isn’t that what we want for everyone?

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