

People are paying up to \$10,000 for plastic surgery to look good in yoga pants

One sign athleisure is more popular than ever? There's evidence more people world-wide are getting "work" done... just to wear workout clothes.

Earlier this week, the [British Association of Aesthetic Plastic Surgeons](#) correlated the U.K.'s 12% spike in liposuction procedures between 2017 and 2018 to the prominence of active wear trends. That spike had come after a few years of double-digit declines for the procedure. The [American Society of Plastic Surgeons](#) has reported a 5% spike in lipo on this side of the pond during that same period.

Former BAAPS president Dr. Rajiv Grover, who still audits the association each year, wrote that, "The rise comes at a time where a fashion trend for women is athleisure clothing, showing what kind of physique you have rather than covering up."

Plastic surgeons interviewed by MarketWatch report seeing the correlation firsthand in their own practices. As U.S. active-wear apparel has expanded beyond Nike [NKE, -0.53%](#) and Adidas [ADDYY, +1.88%](#) gym clothes to become a \$47 billion industry, with its racks of body-conscious leggings, shorts, tanks and crop tops, there's also been a rise in demand for procedures that address purported "problem areas" along the midsection, thighs or rear, like liposuction, tummy tucks and Brazilian butt lifts.

A Manhattan woman in her 50s, who asked to remain anonymous, told MarketWatch that she got liposuction (which involves breaking up and removing fat deposits) on her outer thighs just over a month ago in part to better fit into athleisure styles.

"I wear Lululemon leggings all the time, I wear a lot of sports clothing, and that's really form-fitting," she said. "It's also just about feeling good about yourself. I'd had these lumps on my outer thighs, even after exercising and losing weight, that I just wanted to get rid of. Now I'm so happy."

Her surgeon, Dr. Melissa Doft, has seen a "huge spike in liposuction patients due to leisure wear, as well as the warm weather approaching," she said.

"As more and more women wear leisure wear not only for the gym, but also around town, they are more conscious of their figures and any bulges. A little extra fat makes a difference when you wear a more fitted dress, skinny jeans or tights."

A Santa Monica woman, who asked to go by Marie, told MarketWatch that she added liposuction to her recent breast augmentation to keep up with the fitted

tights, high-waisted shorts and crop tops that other California girls are flaunting. “I’ve always tried to be active, but I had a stubborn stomach ‘pooch’ all of the time, I had love handles and a square abdominal area ... and it made me feel very insecure,” said Marie, 27. “I’d wear boxy blouses and I wouldn’t wear anything tight, and that’s really hard in California where it’s always summer.” So she spent \$15,000 on breast augmentation to boost her bust, and liposuction to smooth her flanks and abdomen, at Dr. Daniel Barrett’s Beverly Hills office.

“You want to wear what people are wearing around you, and we’re showing more of our bodies,” she said. “Now I finally feel confident enough to wear tights and form-fitted clothes, which is great.”

Dr. Barrett said that while he hesitates to say that Lululemon **LULU, -0.46%** tights and the studio-to-street styles from Nordstrom **JWN, -9.25%** or the Gap’s **GPS, -3.00%** Athleta brand are what’s bringing more people to his practice, “we do see a number of patients returning for their post-op appointments wearing form-fitting dresses, crop tops and leggings. Patients often report they feel more confident in their bodies, and feel like things just ‘fit right.’ ”

Of course, sculpting one’s body to find that perfect “fit” doesn’t come cheap.

The national average fee for liposuction is \$3,518, but that does not generally include anesthesia and operating room fees, so the tag can hit \$10,000 when factoring in those costs, especially in expensive markets like L.A. and New York City.

Meanwhile, the Brazilian butt lift, which involves using lipo to transplant fat from an area of the body where it’s unwanted, and using it to round out the patient’s derriere, has an average cost of \$4,341 in the U.S., though it, too, can run up to \$10,000 depending on the market and the facility. The procedure is more professionally known as “buttock augmentation with fat grafting” and has **ballooned 19% between 2017 and 2018**.

Americans spent more than **\$16.5 billion on cosmetic plastic surgery** and minimally invasive procedures in 2018, a 4% increase from the year before. “We are a country of indulgence, so liposuction has always been a very popular procedure. And the Brazilian butt lift is a double-whammy — if you have a lot of flank fat, and you want to take that out anyway, you can inject it into the posterior portion of the buttocks so that when you put on leisure wear, like leggings, your butt will really stand out,” said Dr. T.Y. Steven Ip, a plastic surgeon with medical practices in Beverly Hills and Newport Beach. He

estimates he's seen a 15% uptick in both lipo and butt lift procedures over the past few years.

Both the U.S. and U.K. cosmetic surgery organizations note that the majority of liposuction patients — and most people getting plastic surgery, period — are women, although the [rate of American men](#) getting lipo increased 23% in the five years before 2018.

The surgeons all caution that liposuction isn't a shortcut to weight loss, or a magic bullet for obesity. "The best candidates are not patients who are overweight; they're fit and exercising and working on their diet, but they just have a stubborn trouble area, and liposuction does the job of contouring that spot," said Dr. Ip. "The most you are really taking with liposuction is around five liters of fat, which sounds like a lot, but it only translates into about 10 pounds. If you are 30, 40 or 50 pounds overweight, taking 10 pounds doesn't really do a whole lot."

Plus, if you don't eat well and exercise often, the fat will just stack up in areas where you haven't had lipo. A [2011 study](#) found that women who had liposuction on their thighs and gained weight in the year afterward saw the fat accumulate on their upper abdomen, arms and shoulders, instead.

Direct Link: https://www.marketwatch.com/story/people-are-paying-up-to-10000-for-plastic-surgery-to-look-good-in-yoga-pants-2019-05-22?mod=mw_theo_homepage