

Could This Minimally Invasive Procedure Be a Better Idea Than Lip Fillers?

Lip injections with hyaluronic acid–based [fillers](#) (popular options include the Restylane and Juvéderm family of products) have been the gold standard for adding volume to thin lips in 30 minutes. But, lip fillers don't deliver the same results in everyone, and depending on the outcome you're looking for, they may not be the answer. If volume is your desired result, fillers are great; if enhanced definition to the lip and [Cupid's bow](#) is what you're after, New York plastic surgeon Melissa Doft, MD, says a lip thread lift may be a better idea.

“There are many women who are looking for more definition without adding any volume,” explains Dr. Doft. “As women age, the white line around the lip flattens and often has vertical lines running across it. Threads can easily be used to smooth these lines and deliver a more vertical lift rather than an outward projection,” she explains.

But how does this all work? The minimally invasive [procedure](#)—Dr. Doft says you'll be in and out of the office in less than 45 minutes—involves the insertion of threads (made of the same dissolvable material used for suturing the skin during surgery) via a needle along the edge or body of the lip to create definition. These “threads” are lined with small cones, which grab hold of the skin from underneath and pull up to suspend the skin back to its youthful positioning. “Topical numbing cream is typically used, along with lidocaine injections for comfort,” says Dr. Doft. The numbing takes around 15 minutes and the procedure a short 20.

Similar to lip fillers, lips are left [swollen](#) and somewhat bruised for the first week, but Dr. Doft says that the main downtime difference is that the threads “tug” when you smile and eat during the first week. “This will stop once they ‘settle in.’” But, the results are worth it. While lip fillers last for up to six months, Dr. Doft says the results from a lip thread lift should last a year. As for cost, expect to pay anywhere from \$800–\$1,200.