

The perfect shape

Improvements in body contouring techniques are allowing more people to realise the body of their dreams.

By Dr Karen Sng, Plastic Surgeon



The pressure on women to conform to prevailing trends of beauty has always been strong. With the advent of social media, the quest for a model-perfect body has gathered momentum. As women (and men) become aware of the plastic and cosmetic surgery options available, more are going for body contouring to achieve their desired figure.

The problem with curves

What we want are curves in the right places but all too often, we find too much where we don't want them, or too little where we need to have more. Body contouring refers to procedures that help to shape the body. Body contouring is applicable to many areas, from the breasts to the body, the limbs and even the neck.

Our bodies tend to accumulate fat in different areas depending on our body type. Typically, 'apple' shaped bodies accumulate fat in the central areas like the belly and flanks, while 'pear' shaped bodies have more fat deposits in the hips, saddle bag and thigh areas.

Liposuction remains the most predictable means of removing fat, and advances in techniques employ the use of ultrasound energy or water jets to emulsify or break up fat prior to removal. This reduces the amount of intraoperative bleeding, and hence bruising, in the recovery period. Ultrasound-assisted liposuction also facilitates tightening of the overlying skin for a better result. The combination of fat removal and skin tightening effects of ultrasound-assisted liposuction are of particular benefit in the neck area, where fat accumulation gives the "double chin" appearance.

Mummy tummy

Jennifer Garner may not have been shy to admit that she has a permanent 'baby bump' after three children, but the persistence of a 'mummy tummy' can be very disturbing to many other women. Some find it distressing when they keep getting asked if another baby is on the way, and no matter how they try exercising, the bump is hard to shift.

The mummy tummy is due to separation of the abdominal muscles as well as loose skin (and variable amounts of fat) left over from the pregnancy. A tummy tuck is the best way to deal with these issues, as it enables repair of the muscles, as well as removing fat and excess loose skin. And of course, some stretch marks can be removed at the same time.

Massive weight loss

For some who have lost significant amounts of weight, either through diet and exercise, or after bariatric surgery, what is left behind after the weight is shed is a lot of loose, hanging skin. This condition can be



demoralising for someone who has shed so much weight, yet remains dissatisfied because they are left with folds of loose skin. These extra folds 'get in the way' of their activities, and are also unsightly and limit one's choice of clothing. Unfortunately, there is no other way to treat this than to surgically remove the loose skin. This does leave behind scars, so it is important to talk to your plastic surgeon and think through the procedure before embarking on this.

Breast friends

For women, breasts remain a focus area of contouring as women seek to enhance both the shape and size of the breasts. Breast augmentation can be achieved through implants or through fat grafting. In general, implants give a larger and more predictable size increase, while fat is better utilised in women who only want a very modest volume enhancement. Injection of filler material into the breasts is not recommended.

For some women, nature has been too generous and their large breasts cause problems such as neck and back pain, and finding bras and clothes that fit is can be a real problem! Larger breasts also tend to droop more with age. Breast reduction gives women smaller and perkier breasts which are more proportionate to the rest of their bodies. A breast lift rearranges droopy breast tissues to give a better breast shape without necessarily reducing the size.

Regardless of the body contouring procedure, the keys to maintaining a great body are regular exercise and a healthy diet. It is the 'homework' that we all need to do to ensure the long-term success of body contouring surgery.



.....
Dr Karen Sng
The Plastic Surgery
Practice @ Orchard
3 Mount Elizabeth
Medical Centre
#12-02 Mount Elizabeth
Singapore 228510
Tel: 6235 7565
www.karensng.com.sg