

How cosmetic surgeons decide what small changes will make a woman beautiful

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The surgery season is upon us, when women seriously consider drastic action to get a new look. And January 2008 is already shaping up to be the busiest ever month for cosmetic surgeons.

The desire for a revamped face or body for the New Year is so strong that record numbers of women are choosing the scalpel or the syringe.

Top surgeon Dai Davies of Reform Surgical says: "January is always busy. It's a case of 'new year, new me'. People often take the opportunity to do something they have been planning for a long time."

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Women with wide-set eyes are considered to be more attractive

Shami Choudhry, a spokesperson for Transform Cosmetic Surgery, adds: "This January we've already seen a record number of web-based inquiries on the first Monday back to work.

"Inquiries are up 20 per cent from last year at the same time, and appointments are up by 15 per cent, with bookings coming in thick and fast."

According to Transform, the most popular surgical procedures during January are breast augmentation, liposuction and tummy tucks.

For non-surgical procedures, Botox leads the way, closely followed by teeth whitening and laser hair removal.

But if you are thinking of succumbing, then read on.

These days, getting "work" done is not just about eliminating lines and getting a ski-jump nose.

Instead, surgeons and beauty professionals are carefully looking at what really makes women beautiful before they apply the knife.

New studies involving thousands of people reveal what we really find attractive, and the often surprisingly small things that make the difference between a plain woman and a pretty one, and between an attractive woman and a dropdead gorgeous one.

Here we look at what you can do to make that transition.

THE ANGLE OF BEAUTY

In 2005, leading British consultant plastic surgeon Rajiv Grover investigated the relationship between a woman's face shape and beauty.

He measured the facial angles of 100 models and actresses to define the "angle of beauty" and found that 81 degrees is the ideal angle between the centre of the chin and the outer edge of the cheekbones.

This creates a triangular-shaped face like that of Kate Moss or Michelle Pfeiffer.

THE BEAUTY TREATMENT: Restylane SubQ fillers by Dr Elisabeth Dancey, from £750 (www.elisabethdancey.co.uk, 020 7821 8257).

This is a thick, natural hyaluronic filler that can be used to create cheekbones worthy of a supermodel.

The procedure, which takes about an hour, but can last for more than a year, involves putting the filler onto the bone under the muscle via a narrow cannula, carried out under local anaesthetic.

"This technique makes women of all ages look instantly prettier and more feminine," says Dr Dancey.

"Fuller cheekbones also improve your lower face by raising the skin and giving it a natural face-lift, creating a narrower jawline and emphasising a beautiful triangular shape to the face."

VA-VA-VOLUME

The old-fashioned face-lift is becoming much less fashionable as studies reveal that facial volume is sexy and youthful while stretched faces aren't.

Rajiv Grover and New York cosmetic surgeon Sydney Coleman studied facial scans taken at different ages and, in a study published in the American Journal Of Aesthetic Surgery, reported that we lose volume from our faces around seven years before our skin starts to sag.

This changes the face shape from a triangle to a flat rectangle.

And while slim faces are more attractive than broad ones, the right curves on the face are as sexy as curves on the body.

"Flat faces appear more masculine. Curved ones reflect light, which is youthful and beautiful," says Grover.

A 2007 study by Dallas plastic surgeon Rod Rohrich reveals how we lose fat on our face. First, it goes from around the eyes, then from the middle of the cheek under the eye, then from cheekbones, the inner jawline either side of the mouth and the nose-to-mouth lines, and finally from the forehead and sides of the face.

THE BEAUTY TREATMENT: Sculptra by Vicky Dondas of *glowmedical.co.uk* (020 7043 2022), from £400 per treatment, recommended course is three treatments.

Sculptra involves injections of a substance called Poly-L-lactic acid, which is rapidly absorbed by the body, but effectively stimulates collagen growth.

"It takes six weeks for the results to show, but the effect can last up to two years and gives a soft, completely natural look to gaunt faces," says Dondas.

THE LOW DOWN

Dozens of studies show that women with short lower faces, such as Penelope Cruz, are considered beautiful.

According to a recent article published in the *Journal Of Sex Research*, this is because a testosterone surge in men during puberty causes the lower part of the male face to grow bigger and longer.

So in women, small but not receding chins, narrow jaws and short philtrums (the space between the nose and upper lip) are a sign of femininity and fertility and make females appear prettier.

While men's noses are most attractive at a 90-degree angle to the face, women's noses are judged most attractive when they are at a 105 to 110-degree angle.

THE BEAUTY TREATMENT: Carboxy Therapy, from £100 per treatment, with Dr Jules Nabet of London's Soma Centre(020 7361 1995).

Dr Nabet uses injections of carbon dioxide to remove fat and sagging from the jawline, making it appear narrower.

Studies show that receding jaws are unattractive because they create the illusion of a longer face.

"To correct this, I might use a temporary but long-lasting filler such as Surgiderm to create a short, feminine but more prominent chin," says Dr Nabet.

"It allows the surgeon to enhance the chin, sculpting it to the shape of the patient's facial anatomy. This is far more advanced in comparison with the old-fashioned 'one size fits all implants'."

Once the receding jaw is corrected, the profile becomes more balanced and the nose appears smaller. As a result, some women decide against a nose job.

BABY FACE

In 2006, Dr Martin Grundl, chair of applied psychology at the University of Regensburg in Germany, ran a study using computer-generated faces to find which features people found most attractive.

Women with high, wide foreheads were found more beautiful. Grundl says this is because we are attuned to prefer babylike features because they indicate youth and fertility.

"Given a set of female faces morphed with those of children, the test subjects were asked to indicate which version they found most attractive," he says.

"The results show that childlike characteristics - large round eyes, a large curved forehead and a small, short nose and chin - can enhance attractiveness.

"Only very few (9.5 per cent) rated women with mature features as being most attractive. Most of the preferred female faces contained childlike proportions of 10 to 50 per cent."

Actresses such as Charlize Theron and Helen Hunt and models Amber Valetta and Tyra Banks all have high foreheads.

THE BEAUTY TREATMENT: Endoscopic brow lift, by Alex Karidis, from £4,000 (020 7432 8727, www.niptuck.co.uk).

"I think the most beautiful faces have a balance of one-third forehead, one-third mid-face, and one-third lower face," says cosmetic surgeon Alex Karidis.

"Brow lift surgery can give a higher hairline."

He sometimes performs endoscopic brow lifts on younger women simply to create a higher hairline.

"It brightens and opens up the face. Patients can go home the same day," he says.

Or, for a less invasive treatment, he recommends Botox.

"In the right hands, it can give a real lift to the brow, smooth out lines and give the illusion of a wider, higher forehead."

GET LIPPY

Full lips signify high oestrogen levels and thus fertility in women. Studies show the ideal width of the mouth is 50 per cent of the width of the jaw.

A well-defined cupid's bow and philtrum are signs of femininity and genetic health.

Melanie Griffith looks less attractive because over-use of filler in her lips has obliterated her cupid's bow.

However, full lips enhance looks only in women with short lower faces.

The German study showed that women with longer faces, such as Jamie Lee Curtis or Sigourney Weaver, should avoid the Angelina Jolie look because bigger lips may make them less attractive.

THE BEAUTY TREATMENT: Restylane Lipp treatment, from £450, with Marie Duckett, who is a qualified nurse and cosmetic practitioner at Fiona and Marie Aesthetics in London.

Smooth-textured fillers such as Restylane Lipp create natural-looking plump lips and are long-lasting, but not permanent, so there's no risk of a trout pout.

"Less is more when it comes to lips. I aim for a natural effect that works with the shape of your face," says Marie.

"Done correctly, lip enhancement gives the face a soft, pretty and youthful look."

EYES RIGHT

Surprisingly, the German attractiveness study showed that even though big, Bambi-like eyes were considered appealing, they aren't vital to beauty.

It was more important to have eyes that are slightly wide-set with no dark circles, like those of small-eyed sex kitten Ellen Barkin.

THE BEAUTY TREATMENT: Perlane fillers from around £600, and Botox starting at £350, with Raman Malhotra, a consultant ocular plastic surgeon at the McIndoe Centre and Harley Street.

Dr Malhotra uses Perlane to correct "tear trough" hollows which create dark shadows under the eye.

"When you lose volume under the eye, it creates shadows which appear dark," he says. "Fill the hollows and people look less tired, more youthful and prettier."

Botox can open up and smooth the space between the brows, creating the illusion of wide-set eyes.

BROWS AND LASHES

The same German study showed that lush, well-arched, dark brows were a key factor in the difference between a plain and a pretty face, with sparse, thin eyebrows reducing attractiveness levels.

Kamini Vaghela (020 7937 2411, £40 per treatment), London's eyebrow queen, uses her unique, painless threading technique to create bespoke eyebrows for celebrities including Sophie Dahl.

"People under-estimate the effect that eyebrows have on your appearance," she says. "Women often over-pluck or have eyebrows that are too thick in one area and too thin in another."

"I create the perfect curve for your bone structure. If you have thin or pale eyebrows, I tint them to create a thicker look. My specialist threading technique makes all eyebrows look thicker and healthier."

THE BEAUTY TREATMENT: For those with thin eyebrows, semi-permanent make-up by an expert such as Debra Robson Lawrence (www.permanent-makeup.com, 0845 230 2021, from £400) looks amazingly natural.

She uses injected micropigments to replicate each hair individually. The results last from six months to a year.

Long eyelashes were also rated as more important than eye size. A new cream called DermaLash (£98) stimulates hair follicles, resulting in naturally longer, fuller eyelashes.

For a quicker fix, lash extensions offer the biggest impact.

For £100, a Jinnylash expert (www.jinnylash.com) will attach between 20 and 100 individual synthetic lashes to your natural eyelashes. They last up to nine weeks and the price includes a top-up after three weeks.

SKIN DEEP

In an Austrian study published in the journal *Evolution And Human Behaviour*, botchiness, age spots, sallowness and redness were shown to add ten to 12 years to a woman's perceived age.

"Skin tone and luminosity may be a major signal of a woman's attractiveness, as well as of her assumed age," says Dr Karl Grammer, who headed the University of Vienna research team.

THE BEAUTY TREATMENT: The Superceutical Anti-Pigmentation Peel takes just three minutes and evens out skin texture and colour from around £50 a treatment.

Aesthera PPx light treatments take just ten minutes to treat acne, thread veins and sun spots from £350.

And this spring is due to see the launch of a peptide anti-pigmentation cream from Dermaquest Skin Therapy (0845 555 2121), which the manufacturer claims to be the most effective treatment available over the counter.