

BODY SCULPTING

Fact, Fiction, and Fat

By Dr. Babak Farzaneh

Fact: There is no miracle machine that will give you a bikini-ready body.

Fiction: 1-800-2GOOD-2B-True is the fiction that commercial body-contouring “businesses” want you to believe.

The truth of the matter is that the right surgeon makes all the difference. First, the right surgeon is the one who will help choose the procedure specifically for YOU. Second, the surgeon’s skill and absolute dedication to the outcome of the procedure is essential. And third, unlike the mass marketing for body contouring, the right surgeon will never treat the patient as a product on an “assembly line”. No matter how great the machine, it is the operator’s skill that controls the results.

What are your options? Tummy Tuck, Mini Tummy Tuck, or Liposuction

Tummy Tuck is a popular procedure because of its capacity for slenderizing the mid-section. This is achieved by tightening the loose abdominal muscles, which recreates the internal corset and narrows the waist. The procedure also removes the extra skin and leaves the belly button reshaped.

The incision required for the tummy tuck surgery is longer than with other cosmetic surgery procedures. The resulting scar typically starts very, very low across the lower abdomen just above or into the pubic-hair area. It is most commonly hidden by a modest bikini or undergarment. The incision from the tummy tuck procedure can also eliminate previous scars from hysterectomy, laparoscopy, appendix removal surgery, and cesarean surgery. Although the recovery ranges from one week to two weeks, my patients report the ability to drive by nine days post-operatively. The use of pain pumps has made this procedure much more comfortable to such a level that patients can switch to just Tylenol as early as two to three days post-op.

I hear the story over and over from patients who have had children and subsequently lost their pre-pregnancy figure. Their waist is not as narrow and the bulge along the loose skin over the abdomen is just not going away despite dieting, Pilates, yoga, and endless sit-ups. The fact is that no amount of muscle build-up can bring the separated abdominal muscles back together. What holds the abdominal muscle tightly together and keeps the waist narrow and the tummy flat is NOT muscle, which is why the area remains unresponsive to sit-ups. Sit-ups can give you bigger and thicker muscles yet leave the abdominal muscle spread apart, perpetuating the bulge around the area.

For those whose conditions do not warrant a full tummy tuck, a **mini tummy tuck** may be a great alternative. With this less-invasive procedure, the incision is made directly above the pubic region. Liposuction can address the areas of unwanted fat followed by the removal of excess skin and fat from the area below the navel. This procedure is appropriate where there is minimal loose skin or muscle bulging above the belly button.

Body **liposuction**, better referred to as body sculpting, can reshape a patient’s tummy, back and waist by recreating more desirable line angles. This procedure is most effective when there is minimal loose skin. The critical point to remember is that it is not how much fat can be removed, but how to create the right curves and reestablish balance and proportionality. For example, lower-back liposuction can significantly improve the waistline and highlight rounder buttocks to create a more youthful, slimmer, hourglass shape.

Of course, there is nothing wrong with being any shape you are. After all, no one needs cosmetic surgery, but if it is important to you, then you should choose the right procedure and the right surgeon - someone who offers you individualized care and all the alternatives, and protects you from the fiction while delivering the most skillful care to the ultimate results.

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