

Stalling the ageing process

Three of Perth's top surgeons reveal the most popular procedures to combat ageing



Picture: Getty Images/iStockphoto

Not all cosmetic options are surgical, specialist plastic surgeon Patrick Briggs says.

"There are non-surgical things we can do in the office to slow down, reverse or keep static the ageing process," he explains, referring to relaxers, Botox, fillers and products that replace lost volume in the face.

"Most Australians over the age of 40 have had some kind of minor skin cancer and quite a lot of sun damage. We look at trying to reverse some of that sun damage and pigmentation."

Surgically, Dr Briggs says the most common procedures are tummy tucks, arm lifts, breast lifts and breast augmentation.

"What happens to the breast is fairly similar to the face," he says. "As we age the breast loses volume; now if you throw pregnancy and breastfeeding into it, then the breast will lose volume at an accelerated rate."

A breast augmentation costs between \$10,000-\$13,000 and an augmentation and lift about \$20,000. A tummy tuck will set you back from \$10,000-\$12,000, Dr Briggs says.

"The problem with the tummy is that you usually need two to three nights in hospital, so that can push your costs up considerably."

Western Australian Plastic Surgery Centre specialist plastic surgeon Mark Hanikeri says the shape and tone of the

neck can be a surprisingly big influencer in your overall facial appearance.

"Neck-lift surgery can be performed on its own or in combination with a face lift or other surgery to create a natural and more pleasing neckline and jawline," he says.

Expect to pay between \$3000-\$5000 for a neck lift. If you are more concerned with sagging skin on your upper arms, brachioplasty — or an arm lift — is the treatment that may interest you.

"This is an area where skin often droops with age, or after diet or weight loss," Dr Hanikeri says. "While exercise may help tone underlying muscle, it cannot remove any extra skin that has lost its elasticity. The procedure involves removing excess fat through liposuction, tightening underlying muscle of the upper arm to define the new shape, then removing excess skin before closing with stitches." Dr Hanikeri says surgeons' fees vary but expect to pay from \$3500-\$6500.

In WA, the biggest trend for the face is the increasing volume of dermal fillers being used, according to Jayson Oates, the medical director of Academy Facial Plastics & Laser Specialist and spokesman for the Australasian Academy of Facial Plastic Surgery.

"When I started 15 years ago we would use half a millilitre or one millilitre of collagen for a typical patient," he says. "Now it would be between two and four millilitres and up to four or six. Fillers have got a lot better and last longer and we're

now using them in more places like the temples, around the eyebrows and in the forehead."

Dr Oates says the biggest change he has seen in the past year has been the demand

for vaginal surgery and treatment called the Mona Lisa Touch, which is very similar to the laser facial rejuvenation treatments.

"People have a lot less hair in certain areas, so can see more than you used to. This is popular for menopausal women who have had dramatic changes. It can completely revitalise your sex life."

Alecia Hancock

Fillers have got a lot better and last longer.