



# Ageing is for WIMPS

The phenomenal rise in cosmetic surgery for men over the last few years has signalled the end of a stigma that had long been associated with male, youth-enhancing procedures. Mark C O'Flaherty examines why this industry has exploded particularly among the thirtysomething male demographic.

Robin, a New York-based, British, 36-year-old hedge fund manager, hasn't had a holiday in four years. The last week he took off from work was at the end of 2006, when he underwent cosmetic surgery on his upper eyelids. 'I'd always been self conscious about my 'hound dog' droop, and the droop was getting gradually worse,' he says. 'I exercise four times a week, with a mixture of personal training, pilates and swimming, but every time I looked in the mirror, there was the droop.'

## Metrosexuality

The metrosexual male has long passed into a Sunday-supplement cliché. No one raises an immaculately-shaped eyebrow at the notion of nail manicuring at the Nickel spa or spending half a month's wages in the superbrands department of Selfridges.

The plastic surgeon's knife is no longer the final frontier either: the number of men now booking themselves in for cosmetic surgery has risen 140% in five years, according to the Harley Medical Group, one of the UK's most well-established cosmetic surgery practices. For the likes of Robin, the motivating factor goes beyond mere vanity. 'It's a confidence issue as much as anything,' he says. 'As well as working out, I spend a lot of money on the right clothes to look the part, but if there's something that's detracting from that, it's a confidence killer.'

## Good looks equal performance

Dr Maurizio Viel, London Centre for Aesthetic Surgery, believes that the pressures of business have driven the surge in popularity of cosmetic procedures among men. 'My patients never admit to me that it's a business concern,' he reveals, 'but they do say that the market is very competitive and looking better helps them perform better.'

The business community it seems, has followed the philosophy of the fashion world: youth = vibrancy + drive. While the number of

men over the age of 50 booking in for surgery has risen by 140% over the last five years, it's actually the thirtysomething man who represents the biggest-growing market for cosmetic procedures.

Much has been said about the premature mid-life crisis. Men are now far more likely to take stock of their lives, and their youth, in their mid-30s. It is when most men start to notice the first-marked signs of ageing and in the high-pressured business world, ageing can be accelerated. 'The ravages of life catch up,' says Mel Braham, chairman of the Harley Medical Group. 'People work late, travel long distances and entertain clients. It shows on the face.'

### Downtime averse

As well as representing a different demographic, men approach cosmetic surgery very differently from women. 'Men need it to be fast, convenient, easy and user-friendly,' confirms expert Wendy Lewis. 'They like to get it over in one go. They are averse to pain, risks and, of course, downtime. Because of that, the trend is to have more conservative and less obvious work done.'

By far the most popular cosmetic procedure for men is liposuction. It is popular among men who are fit and active, but who are striving for a perfection that has escaped them despite all their other efforts. Just as youth equates dynamism, a paunch suggests a slovenly attitude. 'Occasionally we get overweight patients coming to us,' says Dr Viel. 'We explain that they must exercise and diet before, and in tandem with, the surgery. Most of the men who come to us are already doing that. Similarly, we don't offer pectoral or calf implants. I don't believe in it. Men wanting that should go to the gym, it's much healthier.'

People over 30 want to look younger, with as little invasive procedure as possible, which is why operations, such as laser liposuction and Minimal Access Cranial Suspension (MACS) face lifts, are spurring the rise in popularity of cosmetic surgery for men. Both offer radical results with minimum downtime or discomfort.

### The Botox phenomenon

While face lifts are rising in popularity, thanks to less-invasive techniques, Botox continues to be nothing short of a phenomenon. Dr Jean-Louis Sebah, of the The French Cosmetic Company, is widely regarded as the most skilled and successful practitioner of line smoothing. A pioneer in the field of collagen and Botox, most of his clients swear by his injections, which contain a mixture of fat and gel that smooth away lines at £250 a session. 'It's like a facelift in ten minutes, it's amazing!' Sebah says.

Such is Dr Sebah's celebrity that he has his own range of hugely-successful, anti-ageing, over-the-counter products, including Pure Vitamin C Powder Crème, which sells for over £70 in department stores across the world. 'We push further and we use biotech ingredients,' explains Sebah. 'It's a choice. You go to a three-star Michelin restaurant or you go to McDonalds.'

In the \$3.8 billion anti-ageing skincare market, the client wants the promise of results and Dr Sebah's surgical reputation precedes him.

### Cosmetic confidence

There's no denying that looking younger boosts confidence, but does it really equate to success in the business arena? Donald Trump, who knows a thing or two about business, doesn't think so: 'Men who've had cosmetic treatments say that in the workplace any advantage helps,' says Trump. 'But I think they've got their priorities out of whack. They need to worry more about their brains than their wrinkles. If they're good at making deals, no one's going to notice the bags under their eyes.' ■

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## TAKE FIVE...

### MACS face lift

Undermining and dissection are far more limited than regular face lifts and the results are often better. Highly recommended for younger patients with a 'sagging' mid face, it redefines the jaw line and lower third of the face. Downtime is one week.

### Laser liposuction

Lasers rupture the fat cells in the abdomen, which are then reabsorbed by the body, or removed by a tube. Minimally invasive with little or no bruising. 48 hours downtime.

### Brow lift

A two-hour operation that removes fat from underneath the skin, pulls the skin down and stitches it into position. Thread lifts involve tiny, permanent stitches within the brow.

### Blepharoplasty

A procedure involving fat removal from the upper or lower eye, with each section performed separately. The upper eyelid operation involves an incision along the eyelid crease in the natural fold of skin and the lower involves the removal of fat from the bag under the eyes, either through an incision below the lower lashes or inside the eyelid.

### Penis enlargement

Two types exist: one increases length, one increases girth and both can be done in under an hour and may involve circumcision. Length is increased by cutting the ligament, which attaches the penis to the body, so it extends more. Fat transfer for girth only has temporary results. Downtime will involve no exercise for a month and no sex for six weeks.

## THE BEST OF THE BEST

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