

Dr Habib J. Khoury
PLASTIC AND RECONSTRUCTIVE SURGERY

Face Lift Facts

How long will it last?

The vast majority of facelifts are skin lifts. That is – using the same incisions that are common to all techniques. The skin is timidly elevated in front of the ear, and the cheek mass is pulled upward using the skin as a handle.

This limited technique is popular because it's simple and recovery is very fast. **There is only one problem.** Skin is like taffy. It stretches when pulled and you lose half of your fabulous result in as early as six months. That is where the concept of facelifts “falling down” came from. So what do you do? You go back to your surgeon in a year or two and have a “little tuck” or a “mini lift.” Redoing facelift procedures too often can give your face an over stretched look.

There is a better way.

Under the skin of the face there are deep supporting structures called fascia. Their job is to hold things in place so your face retains its general shape. By definition, these layers do not stretch like taffy or they couldn't do their job. The deep supporting structure of the face is called the “SMAS”. If the deep supporting structure is used as the handle to lift the cheek, two good things happen. First, the lift is much more solid and long lasting. The skin is not pulled under unnatural tension so you don't look stretched. That's the good news. The bad news is that it is a more extensive procedure so you swell longer. Instead of looking better than you started out at two weeks, it will take four to six weeks. You'll feel OK at the end of two weeks, and you won't scare anyone, but you won't fool anyone for four to six weeks post-op. Unfortunately, a facelift is like everything else in life. If you want more, you have to put more into it – meaning, you have to be patient with the postoperative period. Dr. Khoury's advice for looking your best longer is to do a facelift **LESS OFTEN** and **MORE THOROUGHLY**.

How do I keep from looking “operated” on?

To get through your operation safely is medical science; the way you look is pure art. Facelifts by different surgeons are very different. It's not like shopping for a fancy car because a car is the same product at each dealership. The difference with a car is merely price and service.

Not so with art. In any museum with fine paintings, the only elements the paintings have in common are canvass and paint. After all, they are different based on the style and skill of the artist. The same is true of facelifts. Every surgeon's artistic approach is different and each patient is a new canvass. The artistic goal is not to remove every line from a face. Many lines are caused by animation muscles, and to remove all the lines would mean releasing the attachments of all the muscles of expression. While a perfectly smooth face might look good in still photography, it looks like a mask in real life without passion or personality.

Dr. Khoury's goal is to make each patient look good without looking like a different person. He believes that each patient's treatment should be individualized based on their concerns, priorities, and expectations. Facial rejuvenation is usually a process involving a commitment lifestyle changes, skin care, injectables, and in some cases surgery.