

Thigh Lift

Also known as thighplasty

A thigh lift is a procedure that involves the removal of excess skin and fat from either the inner or outer thighs. This body contouring procedure is often desirable after substantial or bariatric weight loss or in individuals for whom dieting and exercise have failed to reduce excess tissue in their upper thighs.

Liposuction may be used as an adjunct to the recontouring of the inner thigh. If you are committed to maintaining a healthy lifestyle and a moderate weight, a thigh lift can help you regain the youthful thigh contours you desire. A thigh lift is often part of a mommy makeover procedure.

When to Consider a Thigh Lift

- If you want your thighs to have a better, more proportional contour and a firmer look and feel.
- If you have undergone bariatric surgery or massive weight loss.
- If you are distressed about loose, flabby skin on your thighs.
- If you have difficulty fitting into clothing because of heavy thighs.

Considerations

Pros

- Clothing and swimwear will fit better.
- Your body will appear more shapely and proportional.
- Your thighs will be firmer and more youthful, with a curvaceous appearance.

Cons

- There may be visible scarring.
- The skin may appear deflated where fat has been removed by liposuction, the skin may appear deflated.
- A secondary procedure may be required to correct any unevenness or bumps.

These are the top three pros and cons to weigh when considering a thigh lift. If you want to focus on what is unique to you, please consult with your aesthetic plastic surgeon.

Are you a good candidate for a thigh lift?

The following are some common reasons why you may want to consider a thigh lift:

- The effects of aging have led to sagging, cellulite and loose skin on your thighs.

- You have succeeded in a weight reduction program and you now desire shapely thighs and legs that reflect your more proportional, toned figure.
- Clothes do not fit properly because of your heavy thighs.
- Your thighs make you feel self-conscious and you want to restore your self-assurance regarding your body.

If you are in good general health, have a positive attitude and realistic expectations, you are most likely a good candidate for this procedure.

Detailed Procedural Info

How is a thigh lift procedure performed?

Medial (inner) thigh lift: An incision is made in the groin area, and any excess fat and skin are excised along the inner aspect of the thigh. Liposuction may be but is not always included with an inner thigh lift, depending on your individual requirements. The area from the groin to the knee is recontoured and the procedure is repeated for the other thigh. If a more substantial wedge of tissue is removed, the procedure is called a thighplasty.

Lateral (outer) thigh lift: This is a more complex procedure, usually involving recontouring of the buttocks as well as the outer thighs and removal of more tissue. Scarring is more extensive, and the skin will be less elastic after the surgery, so weight should be maintained.



Thigh lift addresses sagging skin and extra fat deposits.

What are my options?

A physical examination, a thorough medical history and a discussion with your surgeon will help determine whether a medial or lateral thigh lift is most appropriate, or whether you will benefit from a combined lower body lift.

What will my thigh lift incisions and scars be like?

Medial thigh lift: The incisions are made in the groin area for an inner thigh lift. For patients requiring more substantial removal of excess skin, a longitudinal incision may be made along the inner thigh.

Lateral thigh lift: Depending on the requirements of a lateral thigh lift, the incisions will extend from the groin, around the hip, and possibly a buttock fold incision will be included. The surgeon will attempt to place the incisions where the scars can be hidden by clothing, but the incisions will be more extensive than for a medial thigh lift.

Preparing for Your Procedure

How do I prepare for a thigh lift procedure?

Your surgeon will provide thorough preoperative instructions, answer any questions you may have, take a detailed medical history and perform a physical exam to determine your fitness for surgery.

In advance of your procedure, your surgeon will ask you to:

- Stop smoking before undergoing surgery to promote better healing.
- Avoid taking aspirin, certain anti-inflammatory drugs and some herbal medications that can cause increased bleeding.
- Regardless of the type of surgery to be performed, hydration is very important before and after surgery for safe recovery.
- Your surgeon will ascertain that you have maintained a stable weight for a significant period of time, since regaining weight can jeopardize the effects of the thigh lift.

What can I expect on the day of thigh-lift surgery?

Your surgery may be performed in an accredited hospital, free-standing ambulatory facility or office-based surgical suite. Most thigh lift procedures take at least two to three hours to complete but may take longer.

- Medications are administered for your comfort during the surgical procedure.
- General anesthesia is commonly used during your procedure, although local anesthesia or intravenous sedation may be desirable in some instances.

- For your safety during the surgery, various monitors will be used to check your heart, blood pressure, pulse and the amount of oxygen circulating in your blood.
- Your surgeon will follow the surgical plan discussed with you before surgery.
- After your procedure is completed, you will be taken into a recovery area where you will continue to be closely monitored. You will have drainage tubes in place. You will have a compression garment over liposuctioned areas of your thighs. A surgical dressing will be placed over the surgical site.
- If a general anesthetic is used, you will stay overnight in the facility for observation and your surgeon will discharge you when you have recovered sufficiently. If your procedure was performed under local anesthesia, you may be permitted to go home after a short observation period unless you and your plastic surgeon have made other plans for your immediate post-operative recovery.

Aftercare and Recovery

Your surgeon will discuss how long it will be before you can return to your normal level of activity and work. After surgery, you and your caregiver will receive detailed instructions about your post-surgical care, including information about:

- Drains, if they have been placed
- Normal symptoms you will experience
- Potential signs of complications

Immediately after your thigh lift

Although your new smooth contours will be visible immediately after surgery, there will be a period of bruising, swelling and soreness. If your pain is extreme or long-lasting, contact your plastic surgeon to find out if your pain, bruising and swelling is normal or a sign of a problem.

Recovery time frame after a thigh lift

It is vitally important that you follow all patient care instructions provided by your surgeon. This will include information about wearing compression garments, care of your drains, taking an antibiotic if prescribed, and the level and type of activity that is safe. Your surgeon will also provide detailed instructions about the normal symptoms you will experience and any potential signs of complications. It is important to realize that the amount of time it takes for recovery varies greatly among individuals.

The first two weeks

- During the first ten to 14 days you should only engage in light activities.
- This is a critical period for healing and you should be watchful for any signs of infection or nonhealing and report these to your doctor immediately.
- The pull of gravity and the actions of walking, sitting, and bending put stress on the sutured areas, so you should make careful and deliberate movements.
- It will be helpful if you have someone staying with you for the first few days of your recovery.

Weeks two to eight

- You may need to wear a compression garment for the first month to optimize contouring of the thighs.
- Swelling should subside in three to five weeks.
- You may resume driving and walking for exercise after the first two to three weeks, when these activities do not cause pain.
- Avoid heavy lifting and jogging for six to eight weeks.

How Long Will the Results Last?

If you maintain a stable weight, healthy lifestyle, and fitness program, your results will be long-lasting.

Maintain a relationship with your aesthetic plastic surgeon

For safety, as well as the most beautiful and healthy outcome, it's important to return to your plastic surgeon's office for follow-up evaluation at prescribed times and whenever you notice any changes in your thighs. Do not hesitate to contact your surgeon when you have any questions or concerns.

Limitations and Risks

Fortunately, significant complications from thigh lifts are infrequent. Your specific risks for thigh-lift surgery will be discussed during your consultation.

All surgical procedures have some degree of risk. Some of the potential complications of all surgeries are:

- Adverse reaction to anesthesia
- Hematoma or seroma (an accumulation of blood or fluid under the skin that may require removal)
- Infection and bleeding
- Changes in sensation
- Scarring
- Allergic reactions
- Damage to underlying structures
- Unsatisfactory results that may necessitate additional procedures

You can help minimize certain risks by following the advice and instructions of your board-certified plastic surgeon, both before and after your thigh-lift surgery.