

Upper Arm Lift

Also known as brachioplasty

An upper arm lift, or brachioplasty, reshapes the upper arm to tighten loose skin and remove fat that often creates a “bat wing” appearance under the arm. Removing the excess skin caused by weight loss or natural aging can tighten loose skin that extends from the underarm area to the elbow; liposuction is sometimes used in combination to achieve the best results. Every year, thousands of people undergo successful upper-arm-lift surgery and are pleased with the results.

When to Consider an Upper Arm Lift

- If your weight is normal, but you feel your shape is marred by underarm laxity.
- If you have lost a massive amount of weight and are left with excess upper-arm skin and fat that may resemble bat wings.
- If you are willing to accept a scar in exchange for shapelier arms.

Considerations

Pros

- You will look much better in form-fitting clothes.
- You will have increased confidence and a better self-image.
- You will be able to wear short-sleeve or sleeveless clothing without feeling self-conscious.

Cons

- You will have visible scars along the insides of your arms, extending from the armpit to the elbow.
- If your sagging underarm skin is not excessive, an upper arm lift may not be worth the resulting scars (in this case, consider limited-incision brachioplasty or liposuction).
- Your surgeon will not be able to predict exactly how your scars will look.

These are the top three pros and cons to weigh when considering an upper arm 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 an upper arm lift?

After losing a significant amount of weight and embarking on a program of vigorous exercise, you may find that you still have loose, hanging underarm skin that resembles bat wings. Although you can improve your upper-arm appearance with exercise, this redundant underarm skin remains a

problem that does not improve with exercise. The following are some common reasons why you may want to consider an arm lift:

- You have lost the weight you desire, but are left with flabby or redundant underarm skin.
- You are an adult with significant upper arm skin laxity due to aging.
- Your weight is relatively stable and you are not significantly overweight.
- You are a healthy individual with no medical conditions that could impair healing or increase surgery risks.
- You are a nonsmoker.
- You are committed to a healthy diet and lifestyle.

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

Detailed Procedural Info

How is an upper arm lift procedure performed?

Generally, here is what to expect:

- Your surgeon will create markings on your elbows, arms and armpits. The location, length and direction of these incision lines will be dictated by the type of brachioplasty you will undergo.
- You will receive either intravenous sedation or general anesthesia, based on your surgeon's recommendation.
- Your surgeon will make the necessary incisions to remove excess skin and fat.
- The incisions may be completely concealed within the armpits or extended down the inside of the arms in the most inconspicuous locations possible.
- Your surgeon may use liposuction as an adjunct to remove excess fat.
- After the incisions have been made, your surgeon will remove the extra skin and fat and bring the incisions together to provide a firmer and smoother arm contour.
- Finally, the skin is smoothed over the new contour of your arm.
- Your surgeon will close the incisions carefully to minimize scarring. Your sutures may be placed beneath the skin, where they will be gradually absorbed by your body.
- A sterile dressing and a compression garment will be applied and drains may be placed.

The goal of your aesthetic plastic surgeon and the entire staff is to help you achieve the best result and make your surgical experience as easy and comfortable as possible.

What are my options?

Your options will be dictated by your skin quality and the extent of excess underarm fat and skin. Your surgeon will help you make the right choice based on your anatomy and preferences.

Liposuction: Arm liposuction is an option for you if your skin has enough elasticity to shrink around the remaining tissues after your fat is removed. If your skin has poor elasticity, tissue sagging will be

even more pronounced after fat is removed. Liposuction may also be used as an adjunct for fat removal in a standard brachioplasty procedure.

Limited-incision brachioplasty: If excess hanging skin is located close to the armpit, your surgeon may be able to pull up and tuck this excess skin into the armpit. This works best if you have loose, crepe-like skin in the lower inner arm area near the armpit and do not have too much excess fatty tissue.

Standard brachioplasty: If your excess skin extends like a bat wing from the armpit to the elbow, the only option is complete removal of the arm flab in a standard brachioplasty.

Extended brachioplasty: An extended arm lift is similar to a standard brachioplasty, except that the incision is extended along the arm down to the body to include loose skin and fatty tissue that might be just under the arm area along the side of the chest wall. Loose skin in that area is common in patients who have had massive weight loss.

What will my upper arm lift incisions and scars be like?

Upper arm lift scars vary depending on the amount of excess tissue you have and the elasticity of your skin. Even patients who undergo a standard brachioplasty, which results in larger scars, are usually quite satisfied with the results.

Liposuction

Because liposuction incisions are small, the scars are also small. Most liposuction scars fade and are barely perceptible over time.

Limited-incision brachioplasty

Your scars will most likely be limited to the underarm areas.

Standard brachioplasty

Incisions are generally placed on the inside of the arm and may extend from the underarm (axilla) to just above the elbow.

Extended brachioplasty

The standard brachioplasty incision is extended along the arm down to the body to correct loose skin and fatty tissue under the arm area.



The arm lift incision can extend from the elbow to the armpit and sometimes to the side of the chest.