

## Inside the Rise of Misleading Plastic Surgery Before-and-After Photos

### A Rise in Misleading Before and Afters

The 2022 procedure playbook, however, looks very different than it did 10 or even 5 years ago. And that's making already complex cosmetic treatments more complicated for everyone involved, increasing the likelihood of disappointing results. "People used to come in with pictures of themselves when they were younger or a movie star's [face]," says **Melissa Doft**, M.D., a plastic surgeon in New York City. Now, says Dr. Doft, they're bringing in photos that have clearly been Facetuned, filtered, or otherwise edited. "But you can never really match that. Surgery is not Photoshop."

This can also exacerbate the appearance concerns the patient was trying to resolve in the first place: "You already have a patient who's hyperfocused on this one part of their body," explains Dr. Doft. "Now, all of a sudden, instead of it being improved, it's [somehow worsened]. So now they're even more focused on that area." If the patient has body dysmorphic disorder, which Dr. Phillips says affects upward of 15 percent of cosmetic procedure patients, even a flawless surgery is unlikely to alleviate their concerns.

When choosing a provider, board certifications specific to the procedure — i.e., a tummy tuck from someone board-certified in plastic surgery, not emergency medicine — matter. So does bedside manner, says Dr. Doft. All of the patients interviewed for this piece say they had a bad feeling at some point before the surgery, but went ahead anyway because they didn't trust their instincts, wanted to get it over with, were afraid to speak up, or all of the above.

In the end, Kerri had three additional liposuction procedures to remove a total of 1,800 cubic centimeters of fat and deflate the Brazilian Butt Lift she never asked for. "Nobody really wants to hear that something could go wrong. I tell patients there's [always] the possibility of a complication," says Dr. Doft. "Who's going to be there with you, standing by your side, if that happens?"

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