

face

custom finish

Sydney plastic surgeon **Dr Warwick Nettle** says lower face and neck lifts go beyond skin tightening to restore lost volume and facial harmony. Jessica Rule reports.

Facial rejuvenation surgery, such as a facelift or neck lift, can't be approached as a routine task, believes Sydney plastic surgeon Dr Warwick Nettle. 'These procedures should be modified to suit the individual patient's needs,' he says. 'It's really about having an eye for creating harmony and beauty.'

'Whereas in the past these procedures often resulted in telltale sharp angles and hollowness, there has been a paradigm shift from just stretching and tightening the skin to creating soft curves and beautiful angles as well,' he continues. 'By repositioning volume in the mid and lower face, a more youthful roundness can be restored.'

Facelift and neck lift surgery can achieve a significantly more refreshed and younger looking appearance. The procedures have evolved into safer and more effective methods to rejuvenate the face without the windswept look often seen in the past.

'In the hands of a skilled surgeon, static telltale signs such as "pixie ears", hairline scars and over-stretched skin, as well as dynamic tip-offs such as lines and hollows, can be avoided,' says Dr Nettle.

Facelift surgery

A facelift, or rhytidectomy, is a surgical procedure designed to correct loose and sagging skin and deep facial wrinkles. During a lower facelift, the underlying connective and muscle tissues known as the SMAS are lifted, facial skin is tightened, fat can be repositioned to restore volume and excess skin is removed.

The incision is commonly made within the hairline or within natural lines and creases in front of and behind the ear to minimise visible scarring.

Neck lift surgery

A neck lift is designed to improve the appearance of loose skin on the neck, sometimes referred to as 'turkey neck', to achieve a more youthful-looking jaw line and aesthetically pleasing neck and profile.

'A neck lift can also address the common problem of platysma bands, the vertical muscle bands in the neck that become increasingly visible throughout the ageing process,' says Dr Nettle.

Incisions for a neck lift procedure are usually made in the crease under the chin and behind the ear, explains Dr Nettle. The skin is lifted away from the underlying muscles and excess skin is removed. If necessary, any extra fat can be removed using liposuction.

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The platysma muscles are tightened during a neck lift procedure to correct neck banding and improve the neck contour. When tightened in the midline below the chin, lateral traction on the platysma then creates a 'sling' which elevates the soft tissues below the jaw line.

Dr Nettle says he also assesses the angle between the jaw and neck, the positioning of the hyoid bone, fat excision and prominence of the saliva glands and the digastric muscle to achieve maximised results.



Case study 1



BEFORE



AFTER facelift by Dr Nettle

Case study 2



BEFORE



AFTER neck lift by Dr Nettle

Combining procedures

Dr Nettle says a lower facelift performed in conjunction with a neck lift can achieve excellent results. 'Performing a facelift alone may be suitable for a younger patient who does not present with sagging jowls, however above the age of 45 I normally recommend having the procedures performed in tandem,' Dr Nettle says.

'In my opinion, the 40s and 50s can be an ideal age for facial rejuvenation surgery. This is because the facial tissues still have reasonable elasticity, and the extent of the surgery may be limited.'

'I believe facelift and neck lift surgery performed slightly earlier rather than later can produce a more natural-looking and longer lasting result,' he concludes. **acsm**