

How Fitness Impacts Body Contouring Surgery

by Jeffrey S. Poulter, M.D., FACS

Many times I will see a patient in consultation for body contouring who isn't sure if he or she should lose weight before we operate. With any type of contouring surgery the patient will always get the best result if they are at their goal weight before surgery. This includes breast lifts reductions augmentations as well as liposuction and tummy tucks.

Goal weight is a weight the patient selects, not the surgeon or those impossible insurance numbers. ("I'm not overweight, I'm under-tall"). This goal weight needs to be a realistic number, not their high school graduation weight.

The true test of this requirement comes in the massive weight loss (MWL) patient who must be stable at their weight for 3-6 months before body-contouring surgery should be under taken.

If surgery is done and the patient loses significantly more weight, the skin will be loose again and leave wrinkled skin. This applies to MWL patients and non-weight loss patients equally. Imagine having your breasts reduced and then losing 40 pounds. The redundant skin can be removed but the insurance company will now consider the redo "cosmetic" even if it was covered by insurance the first time (as most are).

I am fortunate to have good relationships with three local businesses that specialize in personal health: **The Work Out Company in Normal, Fitness Quest in Bloomington and The Clubs at River City in Peoria.** *For those patients who desire to become more fit before their contouring surgery I refer them to these gyms for a complimentary consultation and trial membership.* They can assist in nutritional needs coupled with personal training or group classes. In my 18 years of practice I have "lost" three patients to the gym. I applaud their success.

There are many patients who are unable to

attain their desired goals without contouring surgery. These patients who have had limited success in weight loss can benefit greatly by surgery and at the same time use the information and training they received to keep their newfound contours intact.



Before you say "yes" to surgery, make sure your board-certified plastic surgeon addresses the possibility of improving your fitness before surgery. Having the support of your gym and trainer will not only ensure you are as near to your goal weight as possible, but also they can help you maintain your improvements whether through surgical or non surgical means.

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