

# ABSolute Spring

KICK-START YOUR  
BATHING SUIT BODY

It's that time of year again: spring! The time when flowers are budding, birds are chirping and women and men are realizing that they haven't made good on their New Year's resolution to keep the weight off.

These realizations always tend to focus on our abdomens. The word *abdomen* comes from the Latin word *abdo*, which means "to put away," and that's exactly what our abdomens do for us: store excess calories. The typical American will gain an average of two pounds per year throughout his or her life after the age of 40. That means an extra 60 pounds by age 70 if no steps are taken to prevent this weight gain.

The best way to combat this problem is by making healthy choices concerning diet and exercise. When this approach doesn't go as planned, surgical alternatives may be of help. Both men and women make their way into plastic surgery practices looking for solutions to a flabby belly. Here, in the Northeast, where enjoying the summer weather is a priority, springtime sees a surge in abdominal consultations.

## WHEN EXERCISE DOESN'T CUT IT

Deciding what the best surgical alternative is centers around assessing the quality and quantity of skin and fat. Liposuction is the procedure of choice when all that is in excess is fat under tight young skin. Here fluid is first infused into the fatty layer. Often energy, such as laser or ultrasound, is then employed to burst the fat cell membranes, and then suction is applied to remove the fat and oil. These patients wear a compressive garment afterward to help the skin shrink to the new size. Additional measures can be employed

during this procedure, such as etching around the abdominal muscles for added definition.

When the abdominal skin isn't tight anymore, either from age, childbirth or large weight fluctuations, it must be made snug surgically. This procedure is called an abdominoplasty. Here the excess skin is removed below the waistline and the abdominal muscles are brought back to midline. This results in a tighter, flatter abdomen. These abdominal procedures are often combined with other surgeries, such as breast lifting, augmentation or reductions, when medically safe.

## A BRAND NEW YOU

These combination surgeries are often referred to as "Mommy Makeovers," due to their targeting the areas that childbirth often affects most. Men frequently have "Male Makeovers," where the abdominal work is combined with neck lifting. Dual surgery leads to one recovery, which enables patients to miss less work and is significantly less costly than having two separate procedures.

When considering these procedures, do your research. Many gimmicks are presented as quick alternatives to these surgeries. Remember, if it sounds too good to be true, it usually is. And, as always, make sure your surgeon is certified by the American Board of Plastic Surgery.

—DONALD ROLAND, M.D.

*Board-certified plastic and reconstructive surgeon*

## SAVE FACE

As we leave winter behind and approach the beautiful spring weather, we should start to think of freshening up ourselves and making our faces gleam. Besides the benefits of Botox, Dysport and fillers to give a relaxed and refreshed appearance, your dermatologist can recommend a variety of peeling regimens to help repair weather-ravaged skin and turn back the aging effects of the environment. Alternately, there are many good over-the-counter products containing alpha hydroxyl acid or retinol, but be certain to use only high-quality brands. Always use

mild soaps containing gentle moisturizers and, when out in the sun, always apply a broad-spectrum sunscreen.

Most important, watch for any changes in a preexisting mole or any sore that does not heal in a week, and see your dermatologist for a complete skin surface exam yearly.

—ALBERT M. LEFKOVITS, M.D., P.C.

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Photographed by Lana De Doncker. Model, Lauren Ashley. Lace boyshort and camisole courtesy of Hanky Panky.