

The Beverly Hills Guide to Lip Lifts | Sykes Plastic Surgery

The lip lift is a wonderfully simple and flattering procedure that is quickly increasing in popularity around the world due to its permanent and natural results. Read on below to learn more.

A lip lift will help maintain a subtle and elegant look as you age, whether you continue using fillers in addition or not. The goal of plastic surgery, and any cosmetic procedure in general, is to enhance the individual beauty of the client while making results look natural. Among the many advantages of a lip lift are that it can be performed in-office under local anesthesia, and the results are permanent.

What is a lip lift?

A lip lift is a simple procedure that improves the perioral appearance by enhancing the relationship of white or cutaneous lip and the red or vermillion of the lip. The procedure is performed by excising skin at the base of the nose through an incision that is hidden in the wrinkle line underneath the nose. The lip lift has the advantage of doing two things: 1) Shortening the white or cutaneous lip, and 2) Everting the vermillion or red portion of the lip.

In young and attractive individuals, the white lip is relatively short, and the red or pink portion of the lip is full and everted. As we age, the white portion of the lip lengthens, and the red lip often gets thinner and smaller. Although fullness can be created in the red lip through “off the shelf” filler injections or fat injections, this is only successful if the shape of the lip is relatively good. However, if the shape of the lip is extremely thin, and the white lip is very long, use of an injectable filler can make the red lip appear too full -- and the appearance of the lip becomes unnatural. The lip lift procedure creates a natural appearance by creating a shorter white lip, and fuller red lip. This procedure is excellent, because it does not preclude the use of a filler in the red lip if the patient desires more red lip augmentation.

What to expect before and after an expert lip lift procedure?

One of the many advantages of a lip lift is that it does not require general anesthesia, though clients are welcome to opt for IV sedation if this makes them more comfortable. This is a short procedure that can usually be done in-office with local anesthetic in under an hour, and patients heal relatively quickly. The total recovery time is usually about 5-7 days, but swelling and discomfort usually subside within 3 days, and can be alleviated with ice packs and pain medications.

You may not be a good candidate for lip lift surgery if the distance between your upper lip and the bottom of your nose is less than 1.5 cm, or if you are unable to refrain from smoking for a

designated period before and after surgery. Other than that, this is a simple procedure that is tolerated well by most people, and yields natural yet dramatic results.

TBD

A limitation of the subnasal lip lift procedure is that it only lifts the central two-thirds or three-quarters of the lip. Specifically, because the mouth is wider than the nasal base. Lifting a corner of the mouth cannot be achieved with these procedures. However, there are intraoral procedures, such as the V-2-Y mucosal advancement procedure, which create additional everted vermillion at the lateral aspect of the lip and lift the corners of the mouth.

How much does an expert lip lift procedure cost?

There are several different types of lip lifts, which are discussed in more detail below, and the cost will vary based on which type you get, as well as the location and experience level of your surgeon. In general, you can expect a lip lift to cost anywhere between \$2,000 and \$6,000, with a corner lip lift being the most expensive procedure. However, it is worth noting that if you regularly get injectable fillers, a lip lift may save you money in the long run, as the result may be full and shapely enough for you to forego continued injections, or at least not require as much of them as often to maintain your desired look.

Do I need both an upper lip lift and lower lip lift?

Usually not. In most cases, injectable fillers or an upper lip lift will draw the mouth upward enough to satisfy the client's aesthetic goals. But for those who have tried injectable fillers and an upper lip lift, and are still dissatisfied with the shape of the mouth or the exposure of bottom teeth, the lower lip may be lifted with fat transfer augmentation. Sometimes called "fat grafting," this is also a minimally-invasive procedure than can be done under local anesthesia, and involves harvesting fat from other areas of a patient's body and injecting them into the lower lip and surrounding areas, plumping up the lower third of the face and giving it a more lifted and youthful appearance. Lower lip incisional procedures are less common. It is easy to evert the lower lip vermillion (red lip) by injecting either filler or fat into the lip. For this reason, the lower lip does not require incisional surgical procedures.

What is a bullhorn lip lift?

A bullhorn lip lift, sometimes called a "subnasal lip lift," is the most common type of lip lift, and gets its name from the shape of the incision made on the philtrum, or the section of skin between your upper lip and nose. The term "bull horn" has been used in subnasal upper lip lifts, because the incision is curved around the base of the nose. By weaving the incision along the irregular base of the nose the incision becomes more hidden than it would be than if the incision

were an uninterrupted straight line. The natural shape of the base of the nose is like that of a bull horn, which is why this term is used.

Bullhorn lip lifts are very popular because they create a beautiful cupid's bow shape at the top of the lip while raising the outer sections as well, permanently heightening the lip line and exposing more pink tissue while concealing any scarring within the fold beneath the nose.

What is a corner lip lift?

Also called a "grin lift," a corner lip lift is often done in conjunction with another type of surgical lip lift. Corner lip lifts are usually when the natural aging process has caused the edges of the mouth to turn downward toward the chin, creating what are sometimes called "marionette lines" on the lower third of the face. In a corner lip lift, two incisions are made above the corners of the mouth, and a small section of skin is removed on each side and stitched back together so that the edges of the upper lip are turned ever-so-slightly upward when at rest. This is a truly age-defying procedure that gives clients a warm and inviting look.

The problem with corner of the lip lift procedures is that they place incisions near the corner of the mouth, where the slightest imperfection of an incision can be noticed. As opposed to a subnasal incision, the corner of the mouth incision, if not perfect, can be slightly noticeable.

What is a gullwing lip lift?

Also called a "direct lip lift," a gullwing lip lift raises only the center of the top lip, creating a more prominent and dramatic border. This type of lip lift may leave a small scar, as the incision is made just above the top lip, rather than under the nose, as in a bullhorn lift. Nevertheless, a gullwing lip lift may be a good option for clients who still retain volume toward the outside of their lips, as they may not need to raise the perimeter of the entire lip to achieve the desired effect.

What is a thread lip lift or non-surgical lip lift?

A thread lip lift is an alternative for those seeking more definition and height to the upper lip line, and who are intolerant of a subnasal scar. This procedure provides some lift to the lip, but is likely not as secure, and does not provide as much lift, as does the surgical procedure with cutaneous excision. In a thread lip lift, the upper lip is numbed with local anesthetic, and dissolvable sutures are threaded into the skin above the lip, drawing the lip's outline upward. This is another relatively quick and easy option that can be done in the space of an hour in-office. And though a thread lip lift is a bit more expensive than injectable fillers, the effect of the procedure usually lasts for a good year -- twice as long as fillers typically last.

What is a botox lip lift?

Unlike a traditional lip lift, a Botox lip lift (or “lip flip,” as it is sometimes called) does not involve any incisions or skin removal from above the lip. In the lip flip procedure, botulinum toxins are injected into the orbicularis oris muscle. This muscle is a sphincteric muscle, which when it contracts, squeezes the lips together, and makes the lips protrude. Weakening a small portion of the orbicularis oris muscle with botulinum toxin injections, lessens the squeeze of the muscle, and creates elevation of the vermilion cutaneous junction (lip flip.) This procedure works well to create subtle elevation of the V-C junction. However, over-injection of botulinum toxin in this area can cause a decrease in animation or the ability to suck through a straw.

Instead, specific points above the upper lip are injected with Botox, causing the facial muscles located there to relax, which in turn allows the upper lip to roll or “flip” very slightly upward, exposing more of the pink surface of the lip and giving it more plumpness and volume. A Botox lip lift is more subtle than lip fillers or a full lip lift, but it may be a suitable option for those wanting just a small enhancement that is more short-term.

Should I get a lip lift with filler?

Many clients do continue to get regular lip injections after having a lip lift procedure, but others find they don't need to. It truly is a matter of taste, and the individual client's results. If you find your mouth still generally turns downward after a lip lift, you may want to get injectable fillers in the corners below your lower lip to give the mouth a more youthful, upturned appearance. And if your bottom lip is noticeably thinner than your top one after a lip lift, you may want to get filler in the bottom to keep things in proportion. Still, most clients find that getting a lip lift cuts down significantly on their need for fillers. The primary advantage of a lip lift is that it produces permanent and natural-looking results, and often saves clients the extra hassle and expense of coming in every six months to get more injections.

Do I need a lip lift surgeon near me?

Though you may be able to find a qualified lip lift surgeon in your area, it is worth considering traveling for the procedure in order to ensure you have the best in the business working on you. At our offices in Beverly Hills and Sacramento, we are proud to say we have clients flying in from all over the world to get lip lifts and all manner of other cosmetic procedures. Wherever you are located, please feel free to call us with inquiries. We are always glad to speak with you.

**Have questions about
facial feminization surgery?**

[Schedule a consultation with Dr.Sykes]

About Dr. Jonathan Sykes

Dr. Jonathan Sykes is a world-famous expert plastic surgeon who performs all cosmetic and functional plastic surgery procedures on the face and neck. He is a past president of The American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery, and served on their Board of Directors for over 10 years. He is also a Professor Emeritus in Facial Plastic Surgery from UC Davis Medical Center, and the former Director of Facial Plastic Surgery at that institution.

He is known as the expert's expert, and is often called to consult and advise other plastic surgeons in both Northern California and Beverly Hills. He has a special interest in eyelid and browlift surgery, facial rejuvenation surgery including facelifts, and rhinoplasty. He also has a particular interest in facial feminization surgery. Have questions? Email Dr.Sykes at: hello@sykesplasticsurgery.com -- Or, to schedule a consultation with Dr.Sykes, [click here](#).