

7 Ways to Diminish the Double Chin

Written by Nichole Brophy

Whether it's due to aging or genetics, the double chin is a cosmetic concern that plagues many. "Patients usually dislike their side profile or feel they are too full from the front," says Dr. Lawrence Shaw, founder and principal at The SHAW Center in Scottsdale. "The concern is usually about fullness with or without sagging or laxity."



Of course, as with any cosmetic issue, weighing one's options is key. "Someone who is a board certified plastic surgeon or well trained in facial plastic surgery is best apt to diagnose the problem and suggest the best solution," Dr. Shaw says.

When it comes to transforming one's chins (plural) to a singular chin, there are a number of cosmetic procedures in a plastic surgeon's arsenal. Here, Dr. Shaw explains the procedures and practices that are most effective in the battle against the neck bulge.

1. Liposuction

Touted for its slimming and reshaping capabilities, liposuction has proved an effective option for persistent fat pockets in the neck—known to most as the dreaded double chin. "In liposuction, we are just going after the fat that causes fullness under the chin," Dr. Shaw says. Simple liposuction to the submental area (below the chin) is done through a very small incision and fat is removed from the submental and submandibular (lower jaw) regions creating a more defined jawline.

2. Laser Lipolysis (SmartLipo)

Different than traditional liposuction, SmartLipo (or Laser Lipolysis) does not involve suctioning of fat, but rather a laser to melt fat. Dr. Shaw utilizes an upgraded SmartLipo MPX device that has two laser wavelengths, one for melting fat and the other for tightening the skin. "Smart Lipo actually has the ability to tighten the skin by heating the dermis from the underside and causing contraction," Dr. Shaw says. A large perk of Smart Lipo is minimal scarring as the entire procedure is completed through a one-millimeter incision. SmartLipo is often combined with liposuction to enhance the result. Pictured below is an actual patient of The Shaw Center, who underwent only a single SmartLipo procedure.



3. Ulthera (Ultrasound)

An in-office option for patients who exhibit mild laxity of the skin is ultrasound therapy. One form of ultrasound therapy is Ulthera, a non-surgical, non-invasive procedure that tightens and enhances collagen build up over a two to three month time period. Though not a replacement for surgery, these types of transdermal therapies can prove beneficial for very mild cases.

4. ReFirme

Another non-invasive option for those seeing to firm up the neck region is ReFirme. Based on the concept that heat causes contractions and, in turn, tightening, ReFirme uses radio frequency and light energy to heat dermal tissue in specific treatment areas. The virtually painless procedure can help to achieve a more youthful and lifted jaw line. The SHAW Center often combines ReFirme with Photofacial (Intense Pulse Light) and a light Laser Peel, in a single treatment, for impressive results.

5. Surgical Options

"In those with moderate to severe laxity of the neck, cosmetic facial surgery may be indicated to get the tight, toned jaw lines exemplary of youth," Dr. Shaw says. Sometimes a poor neckline is due to separated platysma muscles, which create those bands running down from your chin. There is often fat beneath these muscles as well. A *Platysmaplasty* procedure involves the direct excision of this fat and sewing the muscles together like a corset with redistribution of the neck skin.

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A *Complete Facelift* can be performed when laxity of the neck is combined with facial laxity as well. "By doing a complete facelift, I am able to lift the skin and muscles of the face and neck at the same time," explains Dr. Shaw.

6. Chin Augmentation

According to the American Society of Plastic Surgeons, chin augmentations grew by 71 percent from 2010 to 2011, making them the fastest-growing procedure in cosmetic surgery. Through the use of chin implants, or prosthesis, plastic surgeons can create the contour and definition that come with a sharper jaw line. "[Chin implants] come in different shapes and sizes," Dr. Shaw says. "I use an extended anatomical implant that actually wraps around the mandible (jaw) that enhances the contour of the neck and the profile." Chin augmentations can be used in concert with other surgical neck procedures.

7. Fat-Dissolving Injectables

Fat-dissolving injectables could prove to be another method for reducing volume under the chin. Currently in development is ATX-101, an injectable that is being specifically tested for the dissolution of pockets of submental (under the chin) fat. "[The medical research industry] is not there yet, but hopefully there will be something in the near future that we can inject to reduce the fat in this area," Dr. Shaw says.

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