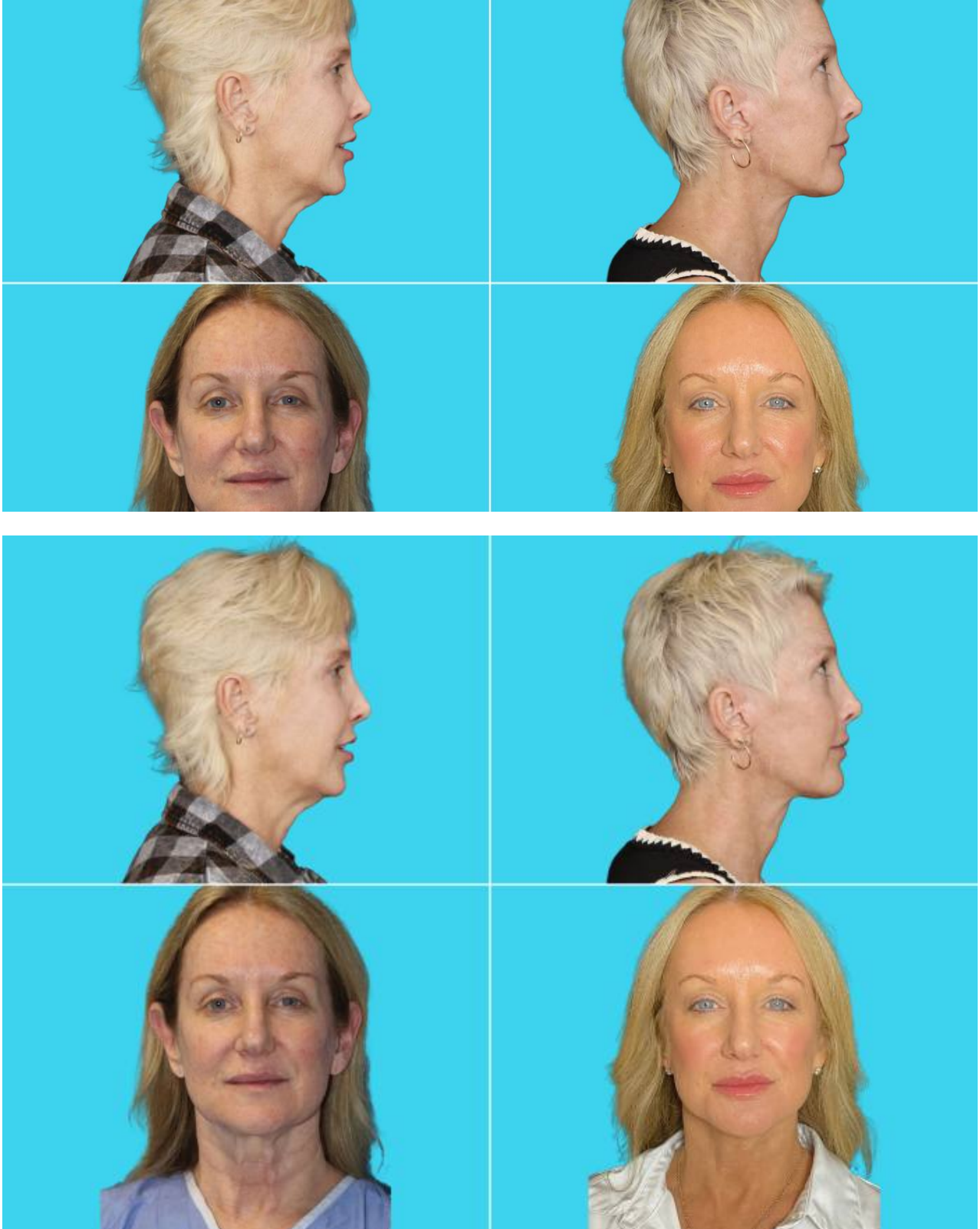


Parade

These Neck Lift Before and After Pictures Show the Reality of Plastic Surgery Over 50

parade.com/health/neck-lift-before-and-after

Beth Ann Mayer



PERK Plastic Surgery in Beverly Hills/Jennifer Hope

Seven real women share their before and after photos.

- [Beth Ann Mayer](#)
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Over the years, we've received mixed messages on what aging looks like. On one hand, tabloid headlines would declare women "ageless wonders." Weeks later, you'd see a headline shaming them for getting plastic surgery. No wonder people were hesitant to discuss any work they had done.

Rhinoplasties (nose jobs), breast augmentations (lifts, implants or reductions), and rhytidectomies (facelifts) are commonly discussed procedures—as are [botox and fillers](#). Sometimes overlooked but still sought-after, experts say, is the neck lift.

"As we age, skin laxity, excess fat and muscle banding can contribute to a less youthful appearance," explains [Dr. Michelle Lee, MD](#), a plastic surgeon and founder of PERK. "A neck lift restores smooth, firm contours to the neck, sharpens the jawline, and boosts patients' [confidence](#) by giving them a more refreshed look."

Dr. Lee says her patients often say they want to "look as young as they feel inside"—and more and more women are done hiding that feeling. *Parade* spoke with eight women who got neck lifts, including supermodel [Janice Dickinson](#), [Jennifer Fessler](#) of *Real Housewives of New Jersey*, a teacher and a woman whose neck lift led to [life-saving](#) cancer treatment. Their journeys vary, but their outcomes share a similar thread: They feel great.

These women shared before and after photos and the stories behind their neck lifts. Plastic surgeons also discussed the purpose, costs, recovery and risks of neck lifts.

Related: [These Ozempic Before and After Photos Give a Real-Life Glimpse of What Life](#)

Neck Lift Before and After Pictures

Model behavior



Photo provided by Dr. Mariano Busso, MD, PA

Janice Dickinson has never been one to hold back. The supermodel has written a pair of straight-shooting memoirs and was never shy about letting people know what she really thought as a judge on *America's Next Top Model* or her own reality TV show, *The Janice Dickinson Modeling Agency*.

Dickinson also has no issues opening up about her neck lift or what led her to choose the procedure she did. "I actually was researching doctors, and then I realized I didn't want to be put under," Dickinson recalls. Dickinson learned about **Dr. Mariano Busso, MD, PA**, who performs a "BussoLyft." It lifts sub-dermal facial structures that don't defy gravity as we age. Dickinson also knew he had performed the procedure on some other famous faces, "and they looked 15 years younger," she says.

As for her experience, Dickinson calls the procedure "easy." "I was awake the whole time, and it took about an hour," Dickinson says. "The other thing that was great was the downtime, [which] was not too bad—only three days. There was no swelling or bruising. I was so lucky."

The outward appearance has also helped Dickinson feel her best inside. "Mentally, I also feel great," Dickinson says. "This was one of the best things I've done for myself."

2. Keeping it real

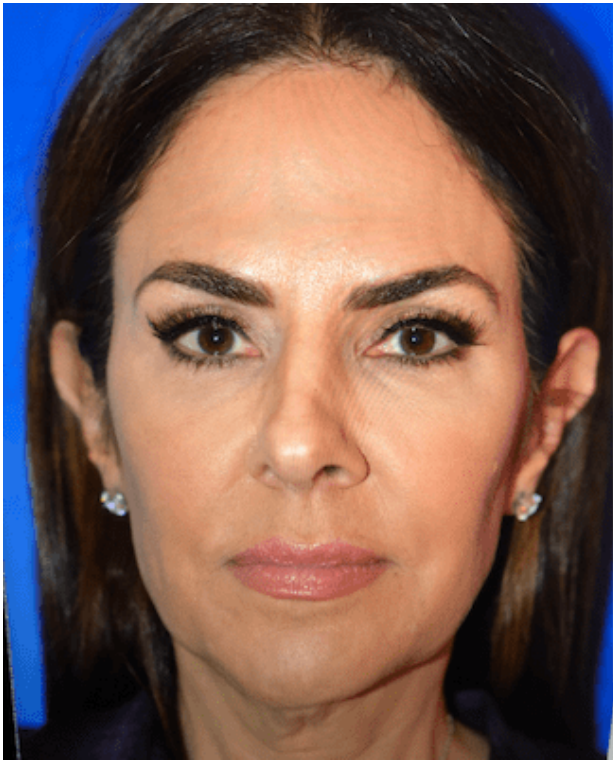


Photo provided by Dr. Sam Rizk, MD, Manhattan Facial Plastic Surgery

Jennifer Fessler is a Jersey girl—so, if you know, you know. The *Real Housewives of New Jersey* star is fine to keep it real, even on topics traditionally kept under wraps. Fessler recently underwent a deep plane face, neck lift and rhinoplasty at age 54 and wants to "shout it from the rooftops."

"I had been unhappy with my aging face and neck for years, but honestly, being on TV and watching myself was the real motivation," Fessler says. "I just felt like I didn't look like my best self."

Fessler went to **Dr. Sam Rizk, MD**, at Manhattan Facial Plastic Surgery and was immediately taken by the bedside manner he and his staff displayed, calling it "nurturing" and "reassuring." As for the procedure, Fessler says it was "virtually painless."

"There was discomfort afterward but no pain," she says. "I went to a Super Bowl party two weeks after the procedure. I was able to cover any remaining bruising with makeup, and my neck and jawline were totally sharp—or, as my daughter said, 'snatched.' I was amazed."

The big win? Fessler loves what she sees in the mirror and on TV now. "The general consensus is that I look 20 years younger, and I agree," she says. "I feel confident and sexy. I'm also proud that I put the work in to find the best possible doctor and eager to share my experience."

Fessler says finding the right doctor is the key to having a good experience with a neck lift. "Do your research, take the consultation seriously and then trust in the process and enjoy the ride," Fessler says.

3. Celebrating in style



Photo provided by PERK Plastic Surgery in Beverly Hills

As Judy approached her 60th birthday, she wanted to gift herself something special. She decided on a neck lift. "It felt like the perfect milestone to do something special just for me," Judy says.

Judy had done Botox, injectables and different skincare routines for years. While they always helped with skin texture and tone, she noticed other ways her face was starting to look heavier. "The sagging around my jawline and the loose skin on my neck made me feel older than I was," Judy says.

Non-surgical options like thread lifts and radiofrequency microneedling didn't produce the results she was wanted. "I felt like I was wasting money on treatments that weren't tackling the real issues," Judy says. "I wanted to look refreshed and youthful while still looking like myself—not a completely different person. After a lot of research and a consultation with Dr. [Michelle] Lee, I came to the conclusion that a surgical neck lift was the next logical step for me."

Judy felt comfortable with Dr. Michelle Lee, saying she and her team explained everything clearly and thoroughly. (Stitch incoming: Judy's daughter, Amanda, discussed her mom's neck lift on TikTok and said, "I feel like a woman plastic surgeon really knows how to cater to your needs.")

Judy also had a facelift, upper blepharoplasty and a fractionated CO2 laser skin on the day of her neck lift. While it sounds like a lot, she said the recovery was way easier than expected. "Surprisingly, I was up and working within five days of surgery," Judy says. "The overall initial recovery period took a couple of weeks, more or less, but it was very manageable. The first week or so, there was swelling and bruising, but I followed all of Dr.

Michelle Lee's post-op instructions carefully, which helped a lot. By the third week, most of the swelling had gone down, the bruising faded, and I could already see the difference."

Judy took it easy for a month before returning to her normal routine with a bonus: She loved her new look. "I feel fantastic," Judy says. "My neck and face are more lifted, and the results look so natural. I can finally wear my hair up without worrying about hiding my neck, and I feel years younger. Mentally, the change has been even more profound. I feel more confident and comfortable in my own skin—it's been such a boost to my self-esteem."

4. Teachable moment

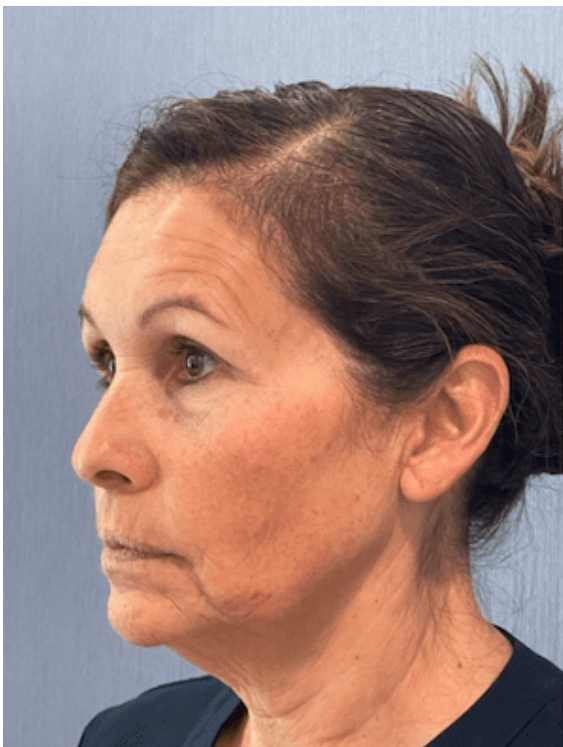


Photo provided by Dr. Mariano Busso, MD, PA

Lourdes Nitahara, a California-based teacher, got some feedback from her students regarding her neck. "Many of my students often mentioned how my neck and face looked wrinkled," Nitahara says.

It sounds harsh, but she wasn't a fan of how her neck looked, either and hesitated to let anyone take photos of her. She heard about Dr. Busso's minimally invasive procedure. "It was a perfect option for me," Nitahara says. "The actual procedure was not painful, and it only took about 45 minutes. It was like something was pulling my skin."

The three-day recovery also got class back in session pronto. "I feel great physically and mentally," Nitahara says. "My coworkers did notice a difference. They mentioned how my face looked so refreshed. I feel more confident and like being in pictures after the procedure. I am very honest about what I did to my face and neck."

Now, she has a lesson for others: "There is no shame in looking better if the technology is available," Nitahara says. "You just need to make sure and research the doctor's credentials and experience."

5. Lasting impacts



Photo provided by Dr. Patrick Davis, a facial plastic surgeon in Beverly Hills

At 52, Lori McBrayer, a California resident and long-time smoker, noticed a change in her appointment. A friend recommended **Dr. Patrick Davis, MD**, a facial plastic surgeon in Beverly Hills. McBrayer felt comfortable with him and decided to proceed.

"I went into the room and was surrounded by lovely people, fell asleep and woke up," McBrayer said of the procedure. "The recovery was quick. I spent the first night with a nurse who helped make sure everything was OK after surgery. When I went home, I slept for the first two days."

During that time, McBrayer noticed swelling. Her head was wrapped to provide pressure to the wounds, but she wasn't in severe pain or discomfort. "I kept a positive mindset, which helped in my healing," she says.

That positive mindset has stuck and led to lifestyle changes that are more than skin deep. "I feel great physically," McBrayer says. "I had smoked for 30 years, and at the urging of Dr. Davis and after having the surgery, I do not smoke anymore...I also meditate every day, which has helped me from the inside out...more than anything."

6. Slowing down



Jennifer Hope

Jennifer Hope of Studio City, Calif., was 51 when she felt like her skin aging faster than she was. "When I looked in the mirror, my face didn't match up with how I felt on the inside," Hope says. "After spending a lot of money on fillers, light therapy, and creams, I wasn't getting the desired results, leading to more frustration."

Hope researched different options and finally came in contact with Dr. Davis. His explanations of a neck lift put her at ease, and she decided to go for it.

The most significant side effect Hope noticed after the neck lift was swelling. "I remember feeling that my face felt like it was the size of a basketball from the swelling," Hope says. "It wasn't that bad, but I did have swelling."

The medication, supplements and ice helped reduce swelling, pain and a stinging sensation she noticed. The nurse she hired helped with bandages and other needs on the first night so she could take it easy.

"The recovery process takes patience," Hope says." In my opinion, the worst part of recovery was waking up and feeling that my face and neck had been pulled tightly to the back of my head. It reminded me of when I was a little girl, and my mother would pull my hair into a ponytail."

The patience paid off: Hope noticed that the swelling and redness went down after about two weeks.

"In the weeks following, I began to look more like myself," Hope says.

Well, with a (welcome) twist. "I have a more youthful appearance," Hope says. "The woman I see in the mirror now matches up more closely to the image in my head."

7. New outlook



Photo provided by Dr. Scott Green, MD of The Plastic Surgery Center

"Although I was only 55 years old, my neck had a lot of loose skin and two noticeable bands on each side that made [me] look like I was actually much older," recalls Christine Soto.

Soto made an appointment with **Dr. Scott Green, MD**, of The Plastic Surgery Center in Sacramento. He explained the procedure and what to expect afterward, allowing her to make an informed decision. That decision? Go with the neck lift.

Soto says the pain was minimal, but she's grateful for Dr. Green's honesty before the procedure. "I did have to remind myself of what Dr. Green said about the swelling and healing process vs. looking in the mirror several times a day in the first week after my surgery," Soto says. "This really helped as I healed."

Now, she loves the person reflected back to her in the mirror. "Before my surgery, I looked 10 years older," Soto says. "After the surgery and the healing process, I actually looked 10 years younger...and still do to this day. This is a 20-year difference in my overall appearance."

That outlook extends to her mental well-being and other aspects of her physical health. "This procedure has motivated me to start working out and staying in better health and shape," Soto says. "Plus, I felt very confident when I attended my recent high school reunion, too."

8. Life-saving lift



Photo provided by Dr. Kimberly Lee, board-certified facial plastic surgeon in Beverly Hills

Janine Avanti has worked as a professional house painting contractor, a world-champion high-speed water ski racer and a bodybuilder. Currently, she's acting in indie films. "Due to the nature of my lifestyle, I felt that it was important to look my best," Avanti says.

However, her "previous lives" required her to spend time weathering elements that she says "definitely took a toll on my skin."

Creams, lasers, peels, Botox and fillers didn't do the trick. Avanti explored a neck lift. She looked into several options before deciding on **Dr. Kimberly Lee, MD**, a board-certified facial plastic surgeon who only does procedures from the neck up. Dr. Kimberly Lee had also been a head and neck surgeon.

"It just so happened that I had been told by two other doctors in previous years that I had a fibroid tumor in my neck," Avanti says. "I figured that was a great opportunity to have it removed. This made Dr. [Kimberly] Lee the perfect surgeon for my procedure. Remove the fibroid and get a neck lift—perfect."

Avanti says the procedure took much longer in her case—more than three and a half hours "because of the nature of the tumor being attached to nearly everything in my neck, including the nerves that run along my jaw."

Recovery was also different.

"I happened to be in a tremendous amount of pain, which was not normal for a neck lift," Avanti says. "The left side of my neck and lower face had next to no pain or discomfort at all. [However], the right side, where the tumor was removed, felt like it was

on fire. I noticed that the lower right side of my face and lip were non-operable or what felt like paralyzed."

Avanti had a ton of questions, which Dr. Kimberly Lee answered at the standard next-day follow-up. "She mentioned that it is not normal to have this amount of pain and prescribed me some medication to ease my discomfort," Avanti says. "We also discussed the right side of my face not moving as well as before. This is when she let me know that the tumor was smashed deep into my neck and attached to the nerves that ran along the right side of my face."

The neck lift didn't bother her. However, Avanti received startling news less than a week later after receiving the results from a pathology report on the tumor. She had cancer, which had triggered the crooked smile and discomfort.

"Needless to say, this was not the recovery I was expecting," Avanti says. "It was at that moment that I began to pray for a healing and a miracle."

Dr. Kimberly Lee helped her find a local oncology team. Today, after 33 radiation treatments, Avanti is cancer-free. "I know without a doubt that Dr. Kimberly Lee and my neck lift saved my life," Avanti says. "This experience has changed my life in more ways than one. Being cancer-free and healthy is a great feeling. As for my neck lift, I love the results."

Related: 'I'm 73 and in the Best Shape of My Life—This Is the Exact Workout Routine I Swear By'

What Is a Neck Lift?

A neck lift is a surgical cosmetic procedure. "It involves removing excess fat deposits beneath the chin, tightening the neck muscles to improve underlying structures, and lifting or trimming away loose skin to create a smoother, firmer appearance," Dr. Michelle Lee says.

Surgeons may offer different procedures and options. However, generally: "Incisions are typically placed behind the ears and/or under the chin," Dr. Michelle Lee says.

Dr. Michelle Lee adds that a surgeon may implement liposuction or use additional techniques to improve the outcome, depending on a person's anatomy or goals. Sometimes, patients may stack procedures.

"This procedure can be done in conjunction with a deep plane facelift or lower facelift, but it is often an isolated procedure—especially for younger patients," Dr. Rizk adds.

What Are the Risks and Side Effects of a Neck Lift?

A neck lift is a surgical procedure, so it's not risk-free, and people may experience short-term side effects. "As with any other surgical procedure, a neck lift carries some risks and potential side effects," Dr. Kimberly Lee says. "It's important to be aware of the following, including scarring, temporary swelling, infection, asymmetry, numbness and risks of anesthesia."

Finding a provider who is certified and makes you feel comfortable is important. Additionally, following post-operative instructions can reduce the risks of long-term issues.

How Much Do Neck Lifts Cost?

It depends. "The cost varies depending on the underlying anatomy and how much lifting needs to be done and is related to the experience and skill of the surgeon along with costs of operating room, anesthesia, consumables and geographic location," Dr. Kimberly Lee says.

Still, Dr. Kimberly Lee can offer a ballpark (though it's a rather large one).

"Generally, with some exceptions, a neck lift alone can cost anywhere from \$15,000 to \$35,000 depending on [the aforementioned] factors," Dr. Kimberly Lee says.

Up Next:

Sources

- [Dr. Michelle Lee, MD](#), a plastic surgeon and founder of PERK
- Janice Dickinson, supermodel, author and reality TV star who underwent a neck lift with [Dr. Mariano Busso, MD, PA](#)
- [Jennifer Fessler](#), *Real Housewives of New Jersey* star and patient of [Dr. Sam Rizk, MD](#)
- Judy, woman who underwent a neck lift with Dr. Michelle Lee, MD, a plastic surgeon and founder of PERK
- [Dr. Kimberly Lee, MD](#), a board-certified facial plastic surgeon
- [Dr. Sam Rizk, MD](#), plastic surgeon
- Lori McBrayer, a California resident who underwent a neck lift with [Dr. Patrick Davis, MD](#), a facial plastic surgeon in Beverly Hills
- Jennifer Hope of Studio City, Calif, who underwent a neck lift with Dr. Patrick Davis
- Christine Soto, woman who underwent a neck lift with [Dr. Scott Green, MD](#) of The Plastic Surgery Center in Sacramento
- Janine Avanti, woman who underwent a neck lift with [Dr. Kimberly Lee, MD](#), a board-certified facial plastic surgeon