

A BRIEF HISTORY OF PLASTIC SURGERY

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Historically, plastic surgery have been practiced for thousands of years, going back to more primitive methods that were seen in India since around 800 B.C. At that time, plastic surgery procedures consisted of skin grafts that were performed on those that suffered from skin damaging injures. Ancient doctors developed methods to help suture the skin to the body, to help prevent scarring. They performed reconstructive operations on ears and noses that were lost in war or through punishment for a crime. The Romans were also practicing plastic surgery by the first century B.C. Their culture greatly admired the beauty of naked body thus promoting them to improve or eliminate the appearance of any bodily defect or deformity. Their procedures included breast reduction and scar removal.

While many more methods of surgery were developed over the next few thousands of years that could be considered plastic surgery procedures, the field did not see any real major developments until the late 18th century and early 19th century. During that time American surgeons started to develop methods to help repair anomalies like cleft palates.

At the beginning of the 20th century during World War I major advances were made. Because of so many extensive, unprecedented injuries caused by modern weaponry, it was necessary for surgeons to find innovative surgical procedures to reconstruct faces and heads of the wounded soldiers. It was during that time that doctors started to specialize in the plastic surgery field, and real start of the industry was born.

As medical technology advanced and doctors became more specialized in the field, the methods used for plastic surgery procedures became more developed and complex. New devices and techniques are always being invented or discovered. The development of microsurgical techniques has made it possible to replant several body parts, ranging from whole limbs to fingertips, anastomising the divided blood vessels along with nerves and other injured structures. Another advance is immediate breast reconstruction. All patients with breast cancer should have opportunity for consultation with a plastic surgeon to consider the option for both wide focal excision and mastectomy. Many breast departments have plastic surgeons as members of their team, which allows rapid assessment, counseling, and surgery on women requiring mastectomy. Further development of plastic surgery procedures was also caused by the realization that one's personal appearance has the potential to influence (to some degree) one's success.

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