

# Plastic Surgery

## Circumferential Body Lift

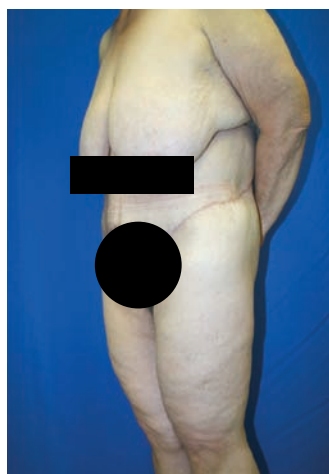
by J. Timothy Katzen, MD

The circumferential body lift is an ideal surgery for a person who is seeking to lose extra skin and fat from the abdomen, lateral thighs, and buttocks. After weight loss there is often severe skin redundancy and residual fat around the lower torso. The body lift can eliminate these areas of excess.

*Dr. J. Timothy Katzen has personally performed over 100 body lifts in Beverly Hills in the past seven years. His entire practice is focused on plastic surgery after weight loss and has helped hundreds of weight loss patients complete their weight loss journey. He is the Chief of Reconstructive Plastic Surgery at Century City Doctor's Hospital. Please call (888)KATZEN-0 or visit his web site, [www.bodybykatzen.com](http://www.bodybykatzen.com) to see what patients have said about his circumferential body lifts*



42-year-old female after 160 pound weight loss with gastric bypass. She underwent a seven hour circumferential body lift with resection of 48 pounds. She is shown on the right 18 months after her body lift.



Often, patients feel “incomplete” after significant weight loss following gastric bypass or banding. Patients often feel “unfinished” due to significant areas of redundant skin. Having a body lift not only makes you look much better, but makes you feel better about yourself. The circumferential body lift can help you complete part of your journey by removing skin and fat from your lower torso.

If you can imagine, I remove skin and fat in the shape of an inner tube around your lower torso. In the front, I tighten the six-pack muscles with permanent sutures; this leads to a longstanding flat abdomen. In women, I raise and often resect a portion of the mons or pubic region. In men, I eliminate the excess skin and fat around the base of the penis. On the lateral thigh, I lift the entire outside portion of the leg like a pair of loose fitting pajamas and remove that excess skin and fat. On the backside, I raise the buttocks and also eliminate skin and fat.

I perform the circumferential body lift once a patient's weight has stabilized. Typically, gastric bypass patients reach a plateau in their weight loss approximately 8 to 12 months after gastric bypass. On average, lap-band patients lose their weight over the course of 20 to 22 months after surgery. Whichever weight loss surgery has been performed, before I schedule a body lift, I wait until my patients have been a constant weight for three months.

The circumferential body lift procedure itself begins with general anesthesia provided by my anesthesiologist. Then, I flip the patient over and start on the lower back and buttock. First, I lift the buttock and lateral thighs. Then, I anchor the body lift to the pelvic bone with permanent suture. Then, I remove skin and fat and close the multiple anatomic layers. The skin is then sealed with medical grade glue. I use glue to keep microbacteria from entering my incisions. The patient is turned over and the front portion of the body lift is performed. This entails tightening the

six pack muscles or rectus abdominus muscles and tightening the waist line. In women, I try to achieve an hourglass shape by tightening certain muscles, while in men, I create a vertical waist. After the muscles are tightened, the skin flap is loosened and removed. Typically, I remove 15 to 30 pounds, but on occasion I have removed 85 pounds! It should be emphasized that the body lift is a shape surgery not a weight surgery. This means a body lift is done to improve one's body shape; a body lift should not be performed to reach an “ideal” or goal weight.

After the resection, drains and a pain pump are placed. I spend a significant portion of the surgery elevating the pubic region in men and women. This involves both the removal of skin and fat in this area. Then anatomic layers are closed and the bellybutton is repositioned. All skin incisions are covered with glue, dressings are positioned, and an abdominal binder is loosely placed. The patient is then extubated and brought to the recovery room. The surgery takes me about six to seven hours to create a completely new body for my patients. My patients spend several days either at the hospital or in a recovery center. The morning after a body lift I encourage walking and eating at least 100 grams of protein. Two days after a body lift I remove the bladder catheter. Once my patients can urinate, walk with a walker, and their pain is controlled with pain pills, I let them go home.

Dietary intake is essential to healing from such a big surgery as the body lift. One month before your body lift is scheduled, you will receive a nutrition consult with my full-time registered dietician where a dietary evaluation is performed. She will make sure your diet is optimized for surgery and post-operative healing. The two most important elements for healing are the daily intake of 100 grams of protein and taking iron. Other essential ingredients for healing include daily intake of multi-vitamins, vitamin B12, arginine, and glutamine.

Depending on the patient, the recovery period for a circumferential body lift ranges from three to four weeks. Usually, I instruct my patients to take two to three weeks off work. Two weeks after surgery, upper body exercises can resume. Four weeks after surgery, lower body exercises can start. Elliptical trainers and stair masters can recommence six weeks after surgery.

Scars take approximately two years to fully mature. Thus, as a plastic surgeon, I have a significant amount of time to influence the final outcome of a scar. Methods to maximize scar appearance include application of silicone and pressure therapy. Silicone can be applied to scars either in a gel form or can be applied as silicone sheets. Pressure therapy is achieved with garments. My body lift patients will wear a pressure garment from ankles to lower rib cage for six weeks. After six weeks, a silicone pressure garment is worn for four weeks.

Insurance companies are becoming more resistant to approving body lift surgeries. Approvals are more likely if you have chronic documented rashes in skin folds. Many insurance companies require physician's notes and medical chart notes validating the presence of intractable skin rashes for at least eight months. In addition, if an insurance company is going to approve a surgery, they are more likely to approve just the abdominoplasty and not the lateral thighs and buttocks. ■

### TIP

When searching for a plastic surgeon that performs body lift, you should choose a plastic surgeon that is certified by the American Board of Plastic Surgery. In addition, choose a plastic surgeon that has performed at least 50 body lifts in weight loss patients. There is a steep learning curve and catastrophic results can occur if the body lift is not performed correctly. Do not choose your plastic surgeon because of low cost and do not sign up to become an inexperienced surgeon's first or second “experiment”!

You've lost the weight...  
What's next?  
Change your life!

You've changed your body.  
Is it time to change your life?  
Are you eager to make professional or personal changes to go with the new you?

Life coach Carol Story will help you master your new life challenges!

For a complimentary session call or e-mail Carol at 212.873.6190 or [storyca1@aol.com](mailto:storyca1@aol.com)