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# *The Snob's Guide to ...* Nose Jobs

Thinking about getting that schnoz slimmed, straightened, shrunk? Here's everything you need to know.

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What single cosmetic surgery procedure can most dramatically impact the way you look? No, it's not a deep plane face lift—though that's certainly nothing to be sniffed at. It is, in fact, a nose job. At its most radical, a rhinoplasty can transform the face's most prominent feature from beak to button; at its most subtle—a slight narrowing of the bridge, a lift of the tip—it can confer harmony or provide an illusion of restored youth.

People have been tweaking their noses for millennia—there are even descriptions of rhinoplasties in ancient Egyptian papyri—though, to be fair, techniques remained somewhat barbaric until the early 20th century. Now, however, the nose job is considered a safe and routine procedure, with roughly 300,000 rhinoplasties performed in the US every year. That's a lot of new noses. Still, that doesn't mean you should not proceed without due diligence.

It's crucial to seek out a board-certified surgeon who specializes in facial plastic surgery, and you should always ask to see extensive before and after photos. You may need multiple consultations before you land on a surgeon who is, so to speak, on the nose—one who shares your aesthetic sensibility and who you feel completely comfortable with. But there's a lot more to know. We quizzed five leading cosmetic surgeons about everything from what you should know before you move forward with a rhinoplasty, from what you should ask in the consultation, to what you can expect from recovery.

## WHAT TO CONSIDER AHEAD OF YOUR CONSULT

**Before anything else: Ask yourself why you want a rhinoplasty.**

The nose job has never been more photographed, discussed, mythologized, and misunderstood. On TikTok, “perfect” side profiles rack up hundreds of millions of views; on Instagram, before-and-afters trend toward the dramatic, algorithm-pleasing kind. But if you talk to the surgeons actually doing rhinoplasties every day, the story should be less about transformation — and more about refinement, realism, and readiness.

It's important, says [New York double board certified plastic surgeon Dr. Adam Kolker](#), to remember that rhinoplasty should be “refinement, not reinvention. It is not about giving you a new nose. It is about restoring balance so the nose finally matches the face it sits on. The most successful rhinoplasty looks so natural that no one knows it happened.”

All surgeons agree you should arrive prepared to ask a lot of questions. Key among them, says Kolker, are the following:

1. What specific changes do you recommend for my nose, and why?
2. What can I realistically expect?
3. How will surgery affect my breathing?
4. What is the true recovery timeline?
5. What rare but real complications should I know about?
6. Will my nose still look natural?

## WHAT HAPPENS POST-OP?

### What is rhinoplasty recovery like?

This is the area where social media may have done the most harm: the unrealistic idea that a rhinoplasty is healed at splint-off. In reality, Starkman outlines what to expect:

**Surgery Day:** You'll emerge from the procedure with a small splint. Cold compresses to the eyes, elevation of the head, and rest/relaxation are important the first evening post-surgery.

**One Day Later:** The areas around your nose may or may not have some swelling or bruising. Most patients describe minimal to no pain and control any soreness with Tylenol.

**One Week Later:** Your post-op check-up will take place, and the cast and the tiny stitches between your nostrils will be removed. At this point, most patients are healed to the point where they can resume normal social and work activities. It's normal for the mild congestion and swelling inside of the nose to simulate the feeling of a head cold.

**Two Weeks Later:** Much of your swelling or bruising is almost gone minus a small amount of overall swelling to the entire area of the nose. The incision under the nose has healed to the point where it is difficult to notice unless actively sought.

**One Month Later:** The post-surgical period is almost over, and the detailed post-operative results are starting to become more apparent. There is still residual swelling on the nose, and this will change from day to day. Some days, the will look better than others, as the swelling continues to go up and down.

**Six Months Later:** Your nose is now mostly healed. Typically, the tip of the nose is the final area to fully heal, and there is likely a small amount of residual swelling in this area.

**One Year Later:** Your nose is fully healed by now. The swelling has resolved, and you have the rhinoplasty result you discussed. The incision site is essentially unnoticeable.