

Is Social Media Leading to More Plastic Surgery?

Simple tips to put your best "face" forward without taking drastic measures

By *Jene Luciani*



That profile picture—these days, it's every new "friend's" first impression of you. With more than 400 million people utilizing social media, it's become the primary way to meet and connect with people. But when you put that picture up on Facebook for the entire world to see, are you prepared for their response?

"Social media sites center around photos," says New York-based plastic surgeon Dr. Matthew Schulman. "Everyone wants to see how their high school girlfriend or boyfriend looks now and no one wants to be perceived as ugly or old."

Some say this insecurity is prompting some people to go under the knife, simply so they can project a better image in cyberspace. "I have seen a significant increase in plastic surgery requests specifically because of how people perceive how they appear online," Dr. Schulman says.

Others, like the American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery (AAFPRS), have found an increase in people *using* social sites as a resource when considering plastic surgery. According to the AAFPRS, in 2011 42 percent of people sought out social networking sites for advice and information before choosing a procedure.

So how can you put your best 'face' forward, without taking the drastic measure of permanently altering your appearance? Certain angles, poses, and even just tilting your head a certain way can create a more attractive profile pic. Use these tips and tricks from facial plastic surgeon and Boston University professor Dr. Jeffrey Spiegel to spruce up your online persona, without hiring a professional.

It's All in the Angles

"Women should look slightly up towards the camera, as it will make your eyes larger and raise your eyebrows, creating a more attractive look," Dr. Spiegel says.

Stick Out Your Neck

"Slightly protrude your chin. This creates a strong face and eliminates a double chin. For both men and women, lean your neck slightly towards the camera."

Lip Service

"For women, about a minute before your photo, tap on your lips a few times, using pressure somewhat harder than you'd think! This will send blood to your lips, making them redder and fuller—both considered very attractive. Similarly, you can pinch your cheeks a few times to get a little bit of a rosy glow."

Standing Room Only

You know how celebs on the red carpet always seem to either cross their legs or stand at an angle to the camera? "This creates a slimmer body profile and adds some interest to the photograph. Also, try slightly lowering your shoulder towards the camera. This will relatively elongate your neck and slim it out," Dr. Spiegel says. A well-placed hand on the hip can also create the appearance of slimmer arms.

In the Blink of an Eye

"Blink just before the camera goes off. That is, if they are counting to three to shoot, blink deliberately on two. This will help guarantee that your eyes are not closed during the picture, and more importantly, will get you with the most open and bright eyes—and remember, bright eyes are critical to looking good!"

As Tyra Banks Says, Smize!

Smile with your eyes! "A fake smile is when you just smile using your mouth. A true smile is when your whole face is laughing," Dr. Spiegel says. "Think about sending energy to your eyes or smiling with your eyes and your beauty will shine into the photograph."

Just Relax

Dr. Spiegel advises being as relaxed as possible. "Think about relaxing your face and trying to convey that to the camera. That emotional change will show in your photos."