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Far from being only a fleeting New Year's resolution, keeping fit and healthy is as much a part of everyday life in California as the sunshine. But eventually, the glow from a good workout is no match for the effects of gravity, and it becomes the right moment to call in the experts for a little fine-tuning. ¶ C sought out California's most exceptionally skilled plastic surgeons, specialists whose work is so subtle that patients consistently look well-rested, refreshed and—above all—natural. While this list of top doctors is much too short to be a definitive guide, it is a solid place to begin for those considering any kind of plastic surgery consultation. All of the doctors are board certified, almost all are clinical professors at top medical schools (UC San Francisco, UCLA and UC San Diego), and all are well-seasoned with at least 10 years in practice. Not to dismiss surgeons fresh from their residencies, but the judgment that comes with experience and thousands of operations weighs heavily on selections. As one source advised, "If you want to look younger, go to a doctor with a touch of gray."

[LOS ANGELES]

GARTH FISHER, M.D.

Breasts

Don't let his appearances on "Extreme Makeover" put you off; this is the No. 1 guy in town for bigger, more beautiful breasts. (It's your decision if you want the Playmate size.) His surgical skills and aesthetic judgment are unquestioned by his peers. 120 S. Spalding Dr., Suite 222, Beverly Hills, 310-273-5995; breastaugmentation.com.

PETER B. FODOR, M.D.

Liposuction

A global authority who wrote the book on liposuction (literally—as in medical school textbook), Fodor uses ultrasonic energy to emulsify fat before vacuuming it out, resulting in less pain and bruising. He's also a fixer: 50 percent of his patients seek correction from lipo performed elsewhere. Fodor pioneered the minimally invasive endoscopic face lift and published a textbook on that, too. 2080 Century Park East, Suite 710, Los Angeles, 310-203-9818; theplasticurgeon.net.

ROBERT GOLDBERG, M.D.

Eyes

A superspecialist of the eye area, this chief of orbital and ophthalmic plastic surgery at Jules Stein Eye Institute takes on cases that facial plastic surgeons find too challenging, whether it be upper or lower eyelid lifts or someone with overactive tear ducts. Jules Stein Eye Institute, 100 Stein Plaza, UCLA, Los Angeles, 310-794-9342; jsei.org.

RAJ KANODIA, M.D.

Noses and Noninvasive Face Lifts

He made his reputation performing scarless nose jobs

using the "closed approach" (resculpting cartilage and bone from inside the nostrils), but Kanodia also offers noninvasive lifts that recontour the face with Botox and hyaluronic acid, a gel-like filler that lasts longer than collagen. The tiny 32-gauge needles he imports from Italy lessen pain and the chance of bruising. Many A-list celebrities exclaim they trust Kanodia for "everything." 414 N. Camden Dr., Suite 801, Beverly Hills, 310-276-3106; drkanodia.com.

BRIAN H. NOVACK, M.D.

Face Lifts

Maverick and meticulous, Novack generally performs only one face lift a week (on Tuesdays), and it's a six- to eight-hour procedure. His work is described by doctors, in voices dripping with envy, as "beyond natural." Patients look refreshed and younger but not different. His lifts, however, come at a price—about double what other surgeons charge. 414 N. Camden Dr., Suite 1010, Beverly Hills, 310-888-8818.

LESLIE H. STEVENS, M.D.

Full Body

At a very youthful-looking 53, Sharon Osbourne is a walking advertisement for Stevens' way with a scalpel: He lifted her face, breasts, legs and bottom; lipo'd her hips and arms; and flattened her stomach with a tummy tuck. The Lasky Clinic, 201 S. Lasky Dr., Beverly Hills, 310-556-8155; drlesliestevens.com.

[NEWPORT BEACH]

ROLLIN K. DANIEL, M.D.

Noses

Nose jobs are among the most artistically challenging operations, and rhinoplasty

corrections are even more difficult to perform. A superspecialist with two published textbooks on the subject, Daniel receives referrals from all over the world. He uses the scarless closed technique and does not pack the nose postoperatively (so that patients may breathe freely right away). Those with botched nose jobs later fixed by Daniel have only one regret: that they didn't see him first. 1441 Avocado, Suite 308, Newport Beach, 949-721-0494; drollindaniel.com.

[SAN DIEGO]

ROBERT SINGER, M.D.

Face Lifts

Colleagues call him the "face lift guru of San Diego," and with good reason. Having headed the Emerging Trends/Hot Topics task force for ASAPS (the elite American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery), Singer has evaluated every form of new facial technology and procedure, including thread lifts, short-scar incisions and endoscopic lifts. 9834 Genesee Ave., Suite 100, La Jolla, 858-455-0290; rsingermd.com.

[SAN FRANCISCO]

BERNARD S. ALPERT, M.D.

Face Lifts

Known for his elegant work on both faces and bodies, Alpert has earned a reputation for natural-looking face lifts, as opposed to the high fashion kind offering a stark before-and-after contrast. With his subtle touch, recovery is quick, making that three-week vacation story quite believable. California Pacific Medical Center, Davies Campus, 45 Castro St., Suite 150, San Francisco, 415-626-6644.

ROBERT A. HARVEY, M.D.

Face, Eyelid and Forehead Lifts

For that "unoperated" look, Harvey specializes in face and eyelid lifts that make patients appear like the best version of themselves. And his endoscopic forehead lifts that relax the scowl muscles mean never having to book another Botox appointment. 1199 Bush St., Suite 690, San Francisco, 415-292-2940; drobertharvey.com.

JOHN Q. OWSLEY, M.D.

Noses

While one of the originators of the SMAS face lift (Superficial Musculo-Aponeurotic System), a procedure which goes deeper than the surface of the skin and delivers a more natural, less wind-tunneled look, Owsley is particularly sought after for his aesthetically artful nose jobs. California Pacific Medical Center, Davies Campus, 45 Castro St., Suite 111, San Francisco, 415-861-8040; drjohnowsley.com.

[SANTA BARBARA]

NEAL HANDEL, M.D.

Breasts

As one of the chief investigators of silicone breast implants and their safety, Handel has years of experience with all kinds of breast augmentations. He can insert breast implants through a hidden scar in the belly button—a technique that won't interfere with nipple sensation—and he can also restore cleavage to a sagging bosom with a new procedure called "limited scar uplift." In addition, he's a world authority on dealing with complications from breast jobs gone terribly wrong. Aesthetic Surgical Partners, 427 W. Pueblo St., Suite C, Santa Barbara, 805-682-7222; aestheticsurgicalpartners.com.