



# Personally, I'm quite happy to droop the way nature intended...

Gone are the days when a makeover meant lippy and a bit of hair gel, says Sandi Toksvig. Now, it's an industrial rebuild

There was a time when having a change of wardrobe was enough to pep up the spirits of the woman whose body was succumbing to the meanness of gravity. People went to 'colour consultants' in the hope that pink might provide, as it were, a brighter fuchsia. These days, however, no rethink of the sagging soul seems complete without some surgeon taking his pound of flesh, a dentist rewiring your jaw and, heaven forbid, someone taking a vacuum cleaner to the stubborn fat on your nether parts.

Personally, I'm quite content to droop the way nature intended. I begin my prejudice against procedure with a dislike of the very title 'plastic surgery'. I can't bear plastic and am shallow enough to include on my long list of Why I Dislike Terrorists the fact that, because of them, we now all have to eat with fake cutlery on planes. Of course, plastic can have its place. I have no problem with the fact

that there are more plastic lawn flamingos in the United States than real ones. The movie *Chicken Run* used about four tons of Plasticine to make its all-puppet cast, which is entirely proper, but after that I draw the line.

The fact is, I don't want some polymer holding up my nose. I don't trust the stuff. I've seen the way the plastic grip on my tennis racket can begin to drip on a summer's day. I also happen to know that plastic can resist decomposition for as long as 50,000 years. The thought that archaeologists might dig me up in generations to come and find that some sections had quite properly disintegrated leaving behind an area of dripping that resolutely refused to go away is too much.

Even the names of some of the procedures are off-putting – rhinoplasty (nose job), blepharoplasty (lifting your eyelids), or rhytidectomy (neck/face lift). Now, of course, I think these operations are excellent

if we are talking about correcting some actual disfigurement or something psychologically scarring, but vanity is another matter. Years ago I worked with an actress who had had one of the first boob jobs (sorry, breast augmentations). I have no idea what happens now, but 25 years ago it seemed to me that the doctor just cut a slit and shoved in a loose bag of silicone. Anyway, we worked together one hot summer and I remember the company used her as a walking barometer as her chest seemed to rise and fall according to the isobars. Years later I heard that she had stopped going on aeroplanes through fear of one of her implants exploding. I'm sure it wouldn't have happened, but even I might think twice about long-haul if I thought one of my breasts might end up in the cockpit.

Despite all this, I retain a natural curiosity about what certain dramatic changes might do for my less-than-swan-like looks – and I've found the answer. There is a website (of course there is) called [mybodypart.com](http://mybodypart.com), which provides all the fun of the makeover without any of the actual bandaging. You download a programme that allows you to import a photograph of yourself. Then, using the mouse on your computer, you decide which of the procedures you'd like to try – you simply point and click to see how your new body would look.

I have to say, the results were probably not entirely as intended by the authors of the software.

First of all, I only had a picture taken on an Alpine holiday, when I already had the sort of skiing tan that makes a genetic link to a panda look likely. I also think my IT skills are poor, as I couldn't seem to get any of the new parts in exactly the right location. The result was a rather pleasing Picasso painting with a hint of homage to Magritte.

I don't know that I'll have it done, but if you see me walking down the street with an aquiline nose coming out of my ear and a single augmented breast resting on my shoulder like a rather useful handbag hook, do tell me how good I look.

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