The most extreme 'mummy makeover' money can buy

Dr Ryan Neinstein specialises in full-body lifts to reverse the physical effects of pregnancy and motherhood. It's becoming a must-have for wealthy mothers – despite the pain and year-long recovery



Dr Ryan Neinstein at his clinic, Neinstein Plastic Surgery & Spa. Cash deals are his 'bit' with Scientific

Ashley Baker
Friday November 08 2019, 5.00am GMT, The Times

Dr Ryan Neinstein's Instagram page is full of pictures of middle-aged women posing in thongs and small bikinis. And it's not "before-and-after" photos that he's showing off – these are "after" shots, "I talk the text layered over another image, a set of abdominals, a bottom, a boob job. The objective is to show that I can't have kids, I love having a mom. I love my work. But when I exercise, I can't be my strongest self. When I do a plank, everything looks like it's falling out."

- **I recorded farewell messages to my kids when 'mummy makeover' went wrong**

Neinstein's Mommy Makeover package costs at $40,000 (£30,600). Many of his wealthy mums come to him for his extreme tummy tuck – known as a circumferential tuck or a body lift. It involves cutting all the way around the torso to tighten the abdomen and lower back while also lifting the bottom.



Chloé left, Dr Stassel (sic) & Ryan Neinstein, Dr Anna Stone and Dr Chris Funkenbusch at Neinstein Plastic Surgery & Spa in New York

In our present era of optimisation, for the one per cent living with what was once called a "post-baby body" – a soft stomach, droopy breasts, stretch marks – the ideal is to look as though you've had no kids. Neinstein, "whether they're from the Upper East Side, London or Sydney, the mums are saying, 'Hey, you know, I'm a happy person. I love my kids. I love being a mom. I love my work. But when I go to exercise, I can't be my strongest self. When I do a plank, everything looks like it's falling out."

According to Neinstein's philosophy, the secret to natural-looking results is more surgery, not less. Those women may load pampered, ultra-privileged lives, but his procedures are not for the faint-hearted. They can involve pulling, securing and sculpting abdominal muscles, suctioning away fat, stripping off excess skin, lifting and volumising the breasts, reshaping the buttocks and tailoring the skin of the legs. His circumferential tuck is a procedure once reserved for patients who had had huge amounts of weight, often after bariatric surgery. But the women who come to Neinstein's clinic all consumed the same food and introduce no fat jabs. Even Fiesta-loving mom-icures tell themselves that they have extra skin they need to get rid of.

It's not just Neinstein who has conceived this market. These "post-baby touch-ups" are being performed at clinics all around the world. In London, the Cadogan Clinic on Sloane Street in Chelsea offers a "mummy makeover" package that can include a breast lift with or without implants from £7,000, a tummy tuck from £7,000, vaginoplasty from £4,000 or vaginoplasty with labiaplasty or vaginal rejuvenation treatments such as labiaplasty from £1,000.



Neinstein's old New York clinic, www.scene-in-ny.com/scene/

For those who cannot afford London and New York prices, or don't want to travel to get their tummy tuck, there are options closer to home. Istanbul's Clinic La Health Institute comprises four operating theatres and Europe, works with six doctors in a high-rise building in the Sisli neighbourhood. The €5,000 (£5,000) Mommy Makeover package includes a tummy tuck, liposuction and breast lift, along with four nights of accommodation at a hotel, personal drivers, a translator, insurance, a warranty certificate and — crucially — an interpreter at the clinic.

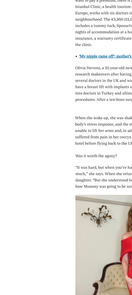
- **My nipple came off: mother's cosmetic surgery disaster in Turkey**

Olivia Stevens, a 32-year-old we-mom from Exeter, began to research makeovers after having her daughter in 2012. She consulted several doctors in the UK and was quoted fees of about £50,000 to have a breast lift with implants and rhinoplasty. She began looking into doctors in Turkey and ultimately spent £6,500 on the two procedures. After a ten-hour surgery, she spent one night in hospital.

When she woke up, she was shaking from a combination of cold, the body's stress response, and the effects of the anaesthesia. She was unable to lift her arms and, in addition to the soreness of her breasts, suffered from pain in her sacrum. She spent another five days in a hotel before flying back to the UK.

Was it worth the agony?

"It was hard, but when you've had a baby things don't love you as much," she says. When she returned home, she was unable to lift her daughter. "But she understood because we'd already spoken about how Mummy was going to be sore," she adds. "I was quite honest."



Olivia Stevens went to Turkey for her operation: "You're labelled as selfish" instead of as a new mother

Back in New York, Neinstein Plastic Surgery employs three other plastic surgeons and a staff of about 50 nurses, surgical coordinators and a "chief wrap officer" and "chief of smile" – Neinstein's young daughters, Aspen and Blair. The centre has views of Central Park, white-marbled floors and a framed portrait of Michelangelo's David in the lobby. Young women on reception are all smiles and heels – imagine Sam with fewer photoreports. The practice provides round-the-clock access to members of the surgical team and recovery at the nearby Plaza Hotel, complete with private nurse, lymphatic drainage massages, hyperbaric oxygen chamber sessions, red light therapy and IV vitamin drips. Each patient is given a Louis Vuitton Neverfull Monogram duffle bag, including pink bandana with "It will be Neinstein or nowhere" across the back.

"We are very selective of who we bring into our world," says Neinstein, who trained in Canada and New York and speaks in staccato flurry "stunt". Training for operations in terms of words like "empowerment" and "confidence-building". "It's a lifestyle relationship. I like to see people who are committed to the gym, committed to their health, committed to their families on the side and they're looking for that final redo." He claims business is booming: "As long as people keep having kids, I think we're going to be OK," he says without irony.

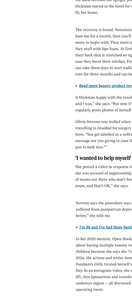
Many women have to make their clients look like a Kardashian. Not surprisingly, the Kardashian is equity owner in the Cadogan Palmera look. "These people are exercising, they eat right, they do all the things," he says. Those include what he calls "fish fat" – Pilates, paid-out peptides.

'Neinstein was reading my mind'

Neinstein's patients are women like Delia Hickman, a fashion influencer and 41-year-old mother of five who posts videos from the slopes of Courchevel and the fitness studios of New York. After three pregnancies, two of which were with twins, she had bone also around her stomach. She lived with it for years, but by the time her youngest twins were eight years old it was bothering her. She researched many surgeons, analysing their before-and-after photos on social media, until a friend's recommendation led her to Neinstein.

During Hickman's initial conversation, Neinstein told her, "I know what you Texas moms want. You love fashion and you want a long, lean Pilates body." "The guy was reading my mind," she says. "I loved his energy." He became one of 5,000 examples to go under the scalpel.

With her children in the care of her husband and nanny, she flew to New York, where in a single day Neinstein performed dramas-repair stitching separated abdominal muscles back together), full-abdo liposuction, and a breast lift and reduction that included a fat-transfer procedure to restore volume without the use of implants. (Today, he only operates for six hours at a time and generally handles the abdomen and breasts on different days.)



Delia Hickman at home in San Antonio, Texas. "The recovery is brutal. Neinstein has promised the pain, 'You're gonna take me for a month, then you'll love me for ever'"

Afterwards, Hickman was loaded into a hot pink wheelchair and rolled from the recovery room to Neinstein's private surgical centre into a suite at the Plaza next door. Nurses from a service called Elite Private Recovery took round-the-clock, manoeuvring pillows to find the ideal reclined but upright position known as "beach chair". Hickman stayed in the hotel for a week before her husband arrived to fly her home.

The recovery is brutal. Neinstein has joked in the past, "You're gonna hate me for a month, then you'll love me for ever." Patients can barely move to begin with. They must wear compression garments, which they stuff with lipo foam. At first they need to breathe into depths, but they back skin is stretched so tight they can't lean too far forward in case they burst their stitches. Patients can also itch incessantly, and it can take them days to start walking. They must avoid activating their core for three months and can be swollen for up to a year.

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Is Hickman happy with the results? "I thought I was confident before, and I was," she says. "But now it's like I can conquer the world." She regularly posts photos of herself in a bikini on her Instagram page.

Olivia Stevens was thrilled when she posted on TikTok about travelling to Istanbul for surgery two years after her daughter was born. "We got labelled as a selfish mum," she says. "What kind of message are you giving to your daughters?" You're risking everything just to look nice."

'I wanted to help myself get better'

She posted a video in response to the comments, but it irked her that she was accused of sugarcoating a medical procedure. "There are a lot of mums out there who don't feel like themselves after becoming a mum, and that's OK," she says.

Stevens says the procedure was a way to improve her self-esteem. She suffered from postpartum depression. "I wanted to help myself get better," she tells me.

- **I'm 38 and I've had three facelifts (and a brow lift and nose job)**

In her 2020 memoir, Dead Girls, the actress Jessica Simpson wrote about having multiple tummy tucks after giving birth to her three children because the scar she "couldn't bear" to look at herself. In 2016, the actress and writer Jenny Mollen, who once starred in Lena Dunham's Girls, treated herself to a mommy makeover on Mother's Day. In an Instagram video, she revealed that she was having a breast lift, chin liposuction and transferring fat from her knee to her undersee regions – all discussed while shaving topless in the operating room.

Some of Neinstein's clients are in their forties, fifties and beyond, grappling with the long-term effects of ageing as well as childbirth. Their children are grown, they have plenty of time to recover and, crucially, they have lots of disposable income to spend entirely on themselves.

It took ten days to stand up straight

Alexandra, a 62-year-old shipping executive from London, had a mummy makeover with Neinstein in 2016, even her child was two oldies. She had also had breast cancer and had uneven breasts after having a lumpectomy, and gained and then lost a substantial amount of menopause, resulting in loose skin. "I was approaching 60 and I really wanted to do something to feel good about myself once again," she says. She was pleased with her face lift, which was performed in the UK, but for a mummy makeover she wanted a highly experienced specialist in that field. "Doctors always put up their best pictures on social media," she says. "But I also wanted to know about their skill." Alexandra put me on a group chat with a bunch of ladies who had had surgery, which was really helpful.

Alexandra was so pleased with the results of her tummy tuck and breast augmentation that she returned the following year to undergone Neinstein's signature circumferential tuck with a bottom lift. After the surgery she was hunched over for more than a week, shuffling up straight around dog ten. "You're in this vest. That's why in the first few days it's a good idea to employ a nurse who looks after you, because she helps you get in and out and get showered," Everyday activities such as sitting down and standing up require a lot of effort. "I think she's always more work to them. "He turns the clock back," Alexandra says. "But the clock keeps ticking."

Even the acuteness of the recovery doesn't seem to deter some people. Kristen Gaffney, a social media creator, wife of the former New England Patriots football player Tyler Gaffney and mother of three, had a mummy makeover with Neinstein in September and showed her journey to subscribers from the Bentley and Mercedes dealerships to maximise their weight. And only you'll realise, Gaffney's recovery was not without its hiccups. "I think there's always more work to be done. "He turns the clock back," Alexandra says. "But the clock keeps ticking."

"Obviously, I have scars," she says. "But I feel that it's a small price to pay. I can wear what I like, and I don't really have to spend too much time thinking about covering things up any more."

'I could afford the best so I went to the best'

Despite the social media trolls, for many women plastic surgery has become a new norm of modern ordeal. Allison Ehrenth, a mum of three in Austin, Texas, celebrated the 42lbs sale of Poppi, the soda company she cofounded, with a mummy makeover including a tummy tuck and Brazilian butt lift from Neinstein.

"I could afford to go to the best, and I went to the best," she says.

She had her own 600-sq-ft GLP-1s and shared her surgical experience with her followers on TikTok, including posting a photo of her bottom in an adult nappy. The fan also been open about the recovery, saying that the bottom lift left her sitting on a special pillow for a month, and that she couldn't sit down on a toilet.

Given the rise of GLP-1s, Neinstein expects lunar skin on middle women to only boost the popularity of the mummy makeover. He estimates that 70 per cent of his patients take drugs like Ozempic and Mounjaro to maintain their weight. And once you've undergone a circumferential tuck, there's no going back. There's always more work to be done. "He turns the clock back," Alexandra says. "But the clock keeps ticking."

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The caption? "Twas the night before mommy makeover."

Some names have been changed