

Robb Report

Plastic Surgeon Steven Williams on Laser Treatments, Getting a Full Facelift, and GLP-1s

The first African American president of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons shares in-depth reconstruction insights.

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Sometimes, no matter how smart, connected, and well-resourced you are, you simply need an expert—and not just any expert, but the insider whom other specialists call when they need help.

Luckily *Robb Report* has our own highly curated directory of heavy hitters across categories: the Masters of Luxury.

This month, it's **Steven Williams**, the Yale-trained doctor and first African American president of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons. He started his career as a reconstructive surgeon before moving to the West Coast. He's now a Silicon Valley favorite for elective interventions combining surgical skill with know-how in aesthetics and longevity, too. For *Robb Report*, he explains how men can make the most of going under the knife (or not). And, of course, though Williams is a board-certified expert, always consult your own doctor before proceeding per his advice.

Have a conundrum you'd like to see solved?

The Expert

Name: Steven Williams

Occupation: Knife-wielding virtuoso

HQ: Bay Area, Calif.

Specialty: Cosmetic surgery of all kinds, especially for men

The Big Question

I'm considering going under the knife for the first time, but I'm worried about the recovery. What can I expect after my first cosmetic procedure?

Aftercare is as important, perhaps even more so, than any surgical procedure itself, Williams notes. Before agreeing to any operation, always ask the practitioner whether they have privileges at a local hospital for plastic surgery. If they do, it means they are board certified, rather than competent in cosmetics—a vital distinction. If something is wrong, you should be able to come in within a day or two and see that doctor.

Ignore those advertisements touting the benefits of supplements claiming to address the need for extra protein or vitamins presurgery. “None of that is really true,” Williams says, as long as your nutrition and health is reasonably good. “But there should be some sort of overall recovery plan,” he adds. “Here’s what to expect: how long to stay out of the gym, for example, or how long to stay off your Gulfstream... you have to have the capacity to manage altering your lifestyle.” In general, budget around four to six weeks maximum of disruption, even with the most major procedures like body lifts. “It’s ignoring the whole healing phase when scars become prominent,” he says. Patients of color, with skin more prone to scarring, should ask about treatments primed to minimize that side effect, in particular silicone sheeting and potentially steroid injections. By six months, everyone’s scarring should start to ease—if it doesn’t, follow up with the surgeon. The full results from surgical intervention can take up to a year to manifest, but don’t assume it’s one and done: Even successful procedures may need follow-ups.

Speed Round

Can you permanently dye your hair yet? There has been stem-cell and direct genetic-manipulation therapy shown to successfully change the color from gray back to pigmented. There will be a solution for it in maybe five years.

How do you approach laser treatments for hairy men? It’s not about complete removal, but a reduction—to take away a little bit of furriness. Hair grows in different cycles, and the laser only affects hairs in a particular phase of their growth.

What do all men considering a full facelift need to consider? Are you going to be OK with some of the scars on show, especially behind the ears and along the hairline?

Have you ever seen a successful surgical intervention on penis size? It’s a very specialized structure that’s hard to just make bigger, especially with filler. Be very careful about injections.

Look at patients who've had large volumes in their face: filler migration, filler permanence, the scar tissue that forms.

A tummy-tuck giveaway is that wandering belly button—is there any way to offset that? Your belly button is attached to your core, and most people's umbilical stalks are about 2 cm long, so it can't move that much.

Rapid, significant weight loss is a new phenomenon: How has that affected what you do? Sixty percent of my patients are on GLP-1s, and if you come to us having lost 100 pounds, you feel great, you're healthier, but have all this excess skin. Focus on the abdomen first, then gynecomastia reduction and sometimes a body lift at the same time, and finally the extremities like arms and thighs.

I'm vain but lazy: What is the single worthwhile thing to do for a drastic difference? Beyond standard advice—healthy diet and exercise, don't smoke, get enough sleep—the best advice is some laser resurfacing along with sunscreen.

Either | Or

Hair system / Hair transplant

They tend to look more natural—and less like those doll head types of hair patterns from the '90s

Eye refresh / Full face- and neck lift

It's a very easy operation to do, and the scars are almost invisible.

Chest first / Waistline first

Gynecomastia is much harder to exercise off.

**Operate at goal weight /
Operate while losing**

When you're getting close to your goal, it helps target weight loss more

CoolSculpting / Liposuction

For most people, it takes eight to 10 cycles of CoolSculpting to get total abdominal contour, so liposuction is usually cheaper, faster, and more effective.

LED masks / Microneedling

The more invasive the technique, the more powerful it is.

Under-eye P.R.P. / Under-eye filler

P.R.P. tends to be less lumpy and uneven.

Tretinoin Rx / Over-the-counter retinol

Start early—it can prevent a lot of the damage. Once there are wrinkles and brown spots, you need something stronger.

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