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Why Men Are Risking Their Vision for 'Hunter Eyes'

Charlie Sosnick | October 14, 2026



Kelsey Niziolek; Getty Images

In August, a 15-year-old Looksmax.org user named Tesarossa posted a video of himself slicing the corner of his eye with a razor.

In the seven-second clip, he gingerly nicks the skin on the inner corner, the medial canthus, in an attempt to change the angle and shape of his eye. He shared the video in a post called "TESAROSSAS MEDIAL CANTHUS CUTTING GUIDE :)" which included diagrams of the eyeball and layers of the skin, before and after photos, and a slowed-and-reverb mash-up of "Partition" by Beyoncé and "Streets" by Doja Cat. "It hurt about a 7/10 even though I have a strong will and high pain tolerance," Tesarossa told me via Discord. (Tesarossa asked to be identified by his username. Like many looksmaxxers, he's cagey with identifying information and would tell me only his age and that he lives in the US.)

Tesarossa was trying to achieve "hunter eyes," a narrow, angled eye shape (think Robert Pattinson or Chris Hemsworth) that is the gold standard in looksmaxxing. In fact, he already believed himself to have hunter eyes. But in his view, they could be better. So he decided to perform a risky DIY surgery at home in the name of looking good. "One of my eyes was a bit more asymmetrical or 'lazy,' so I took the liberty to fix it," he says. "Learning how to do it was pretty self-explanatory. All I really had to do was cut a bit of skin."

"Hunter eyes" were codified on the same incel forums where looksmaxxing was developed, namely PUAHate, SlutHate, and Lookism. An archived forum post from 2015 calls them "vertically narrow eyes, usually covered by a big brow ridge and tilted eyebrows" and attributes them to high cheekbones. An archived post from 2016 notes that "normies are clueless" for saying they prefer big round "beta" eyes. Early looksmaxxers fixated on hunter eyes as what they saw as a key to facial attractiveness. In scientific literature about attractiveness, forum users identified measurable targets for canthal tilt (the angle of the eyes on the face) and palpebral fissures (the height of the eye opening). One Looksmax.org guide adds minimal upper-eyelid exposure and scleral show (the amount of white visible in the eye) to the criteria. Looksmaxxers also studied the eyes of male models like Sean O'Pry and David Gandy who hold near-mythic status within the community.

By 2018, a meme emerged comparing hunter eyes to their seeming opposite, "prey eyes." Prey eyes are round, have a lot of scleral show, negative canthal tilt, and extreme upper-eyelid exposure. (Translation: They are big and wide.) Continuing the animal metaphor, hunter eyes are compared to those of a jaguar and prey eyes are compared to those of an owl. In looksmaxxing, taking extreme measures to change your appearance is the norm. Other Looksmax.org users have posted videos of themselves installing PCL threads, dissolvable barbed sutures, in their faces at home to achieve positive canthal tilt. Over time, the concept of hunter eyes proliferated out of insular looksmaxxing communities and into broader social media parlance. Today, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube host numerous guides to getting hunter eyes.

It should not surprise anyone to learn that doctors explicitly warn against using a razor blade to change the shape of your eye. Dr. Steven Williams, a California-based plastic surgeon and past president of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons, says doing so is "very dangerous," even beyond the most obvious risks. "It can affect your vision permanently, because the lids are very delicate structures and they have a really big job to protect your eye," he says. "Even small changes can really make people have chronic dryness, which can be a threat to your vision."

The desire for hunter eyes has grown to the point that surgeons are offering specialized procedures to meet the demand. Dr. Deepak Ramesh, a New Jersey–based plastic surgeon, offers a dedicated "hunter eyes" package, which costs $30,000 to $40,000. His method combines globe recession, a technique adopted from treating thyroid eye disease to push the eyeball deeper in the socket, implant or filler to augment the cheek, and canthoplasty, to reshape the eyelid. He believes he is one of three or four surgeons in America offering hunter eye surgery, but he says his exact combination of techniques is proprietary.

Dr. Ramesh says he performs 40 to 50 hunter eye procedures per year lately, up from five or so in 2019 and 2020. Patients often find him through looksmaxxing communities online, including many who fly in from South Asia and Africa. "The nice thing about the world of social media and these forums is that you can attract the kind of patient who's right for you," says Dr. Ramesh. "If you get really good at one thing, and there's 7 billion people in the world…the ones who want this particular thing will come and find you."

Dr. Ramesh says his patients are 70% male and usually in their 20s and 30s. He has had a few teenagers reach out and once performed the surgery on a minor, who had a referral from a psychiatrist saying they were being bullied for their appearance and suffering psychiatric issues as a result. "They just don't like how they look, and they've never liked how they look. Even from a young age, they can remember saying that," says Dr. Ramesh.

Dr. Ramesh says his looksmaxxer patients are “often quite fixated on numbers,” including specific millimeter amounts for the changes they want. “Sometimes they try to bargain with you and try to get you to do more,” he says. “I really just tell them what we’re trying to do is balance your face with the surrounding structures, your eyebrow bone, and your cheekbone. I will do what’s safe for you and will look nice, but I’m not going to do more.”

According to Dr. Williams, practitioners must respect the autonomy of patients while also setting clear expectations for what surgery can do. “With looksmaxxing, I think it’s a little bit more important to have some of those conversations with people who are a little bit younger, especially with the rise of social media,” he says.

From a medical standpoint, Dr. Williams fears that patients getting these procedures may experience vision problems over time. “If you’re making those functional changes, by the time you’re 30 or 40, you may have real vision issues,” he says. “And depending on the techniques that are used to achieve it, it may be hard to reverse.” From an aesthetic standpoint, he adds that lowering the brow and hiding the eyelid crease may make patients look older.

In his role as ASPS president, Dr. Williams heard from surgeons who were trying to manage expectations for patients coming to them via looksmaxxing. “Whenever we as plastic surgeons see these trends come through, we just hope they expire before we get too many people in the lobby asking for them,” he says. Dr. Williams specifically recalled two cases of college-aged men who got hunter eyes surgery, then wanted it reversed. “Other plastic surgeons shared with me about what a disaster it was,” he says.

Dr. Ramesh says he has never gotten a request to undo the procedure. In roughly a quarter of cases, patients ask for the cheek implant to be made smaller, so he uses a type of silicone implant that he says allows him to shave it down safely. Still, Dr. Ramesh acknowledges that few doctors are willing to cater to younger patients whose aesthetic preferences have been informed by the internet. “Not that many people like to do the surgery because it’s a very different patient population from the general plastic surgery crowd,” he says. “Usually what we’re doing is aging faces. Like, we’re doing old people who have eyelid bags and they want to go back to how they were before. These are young people who are dissatisfied with how they look from birth, and it’s a transformational surgery. It’s a totally different kind of procedure.”

As for Tesarossa, he is happy with the results he achieved at home. He is not currently planning on pursuing any more procedures to further alter his eyes. “I haven’t considered invasive things within my eye region,” he says. “I’d honestly trust myself around my eyes [more] than someone else.”

https://www.gq.com/story/hunter-eyes-why-men-are-risking-their-vision-for-procedure