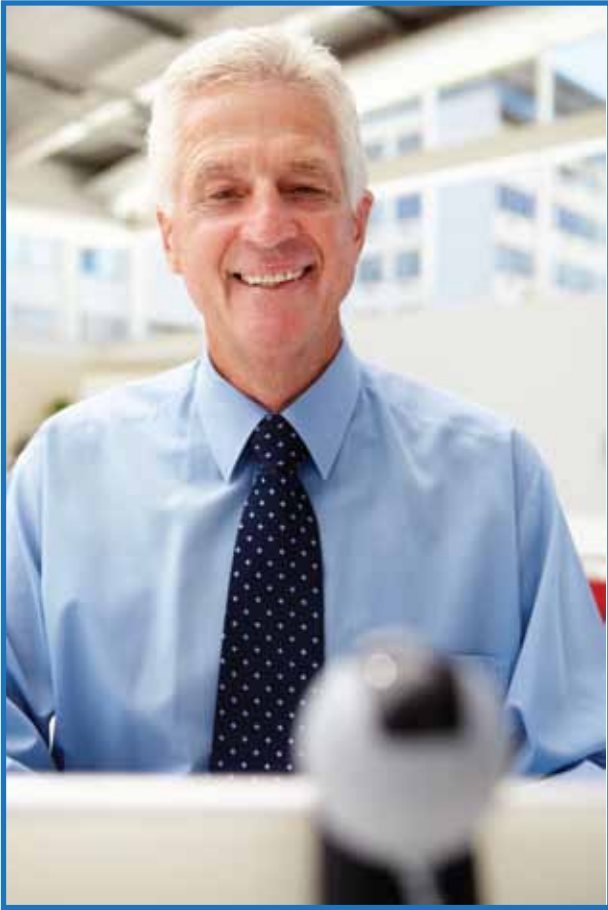


## Don't Let Skype Get Under Your Chin...



You are your own worst critic. True, but video chat technology is apparently not making it any easier. Recent research by The American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS) suggests an increase in the use of video communication such as Skype, presents users with an apparently unflattering reflection, and has caused an increase in jaw line/chin adjustments.

Chin augmentation surgery grew 71 percent, according to the study, surpassing breast, Botox and liposuction operations combined. Over 20,000 chin implants performed last year nationwide, and as age and sex were generally scattered, other motives have surfaced.

"The digital world has made a huge difference in how people see themselves," Dr. Darrick Antell, a New York-based plastic surgeon, told ABC News. "It used to be that you'd get in front of a camera and take a straight shot, but now it's different on these devices."

Viewing oneself at a much higher, more involuntary frequency indeed fosters a self-consciousness, not just because of personal criticism, but in light of audiences users suddenly realize they may not "look good" facing.

Social networking in particular, according to Denver-based Dr. John Grossman, inspires "more than just the casual or formal photo, and promote[s] ongoing updates of what you are doing and where you are going." Contexts of video chatting are, in other words, not always akin to the random real world encounters where any appearance suffices.

But age is still a tangential factor, in spite of Skype's usual demographic. People opt for chin augmentation to regain a youthful look, according to ASPS president Malcom Z. Roth. Large chins are often indications of power, athleticism and confidence.

Thanks to technology, it's no surprise the typical webcam is getting under people's chin. (Pun intended).

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