

Enhance

Gently does it

Top plastic surgeons in Germany have developed a safe and subtle technique to lift a face, tighten an eyelid, or even augment breasts leaving a scar visible only to a microscopic eye! Liz Smalles talks to the professionals behind the surgical mask...

The latest plastic surgery offers limited-incision operations. Leading the way are three plastic surgeons at the Freiburg University Surgical Clinic: Professor Dr. G. Björn Stark, M.D., Professor Dr. Jörg Borges, M.D., and Dr. Holger Bannasch. They founded the private Erich-Lexer-Klinik in 2006. The team of doctors dedicated three years of research to perfect this technique performing endoscopic and other subtle cosmetic surgery.

"Aesthetic surgery can be gentle when you choose a very small and well-hidden access. Resulting scars are almost invisible," says Dr. Holger Bannasch. "But it depends on skin quality. For older patients with an over-plus of skin that has lost its elasticity, endoscopic procedures may not bring the desired effect. The endoscope doesn't address all three components of the face: muscle, fat, and skin. It only addresses muscle. That's why we cannot tighten skin with an endoscopic technique," explains Bannasch.

WHEN YOUR FACE SAGS...

For younger women whose skin has retained its elasticity but may suffer from descending facial structures, Bannasch recommends the endoscopic midface lift.

With this procedure, descended tissues are lifted and fixed through small incisions in the oral mucosa and at the temples. General anaesthesia is required for the operation that takes about three hours. The patient can return home after a maximum of two days attentive care in the Freiburg-based private clinic.

WHEN YOUR GAZE LOOKS TIRED...

Droopy eyelids and eyelid bags can also be treated with micro-incisions. The goal is to remove an exhausted look and revamp a natural and fresh glance. Apart from mid-face lift, the endoscopic technique is appropriate for younger patients with sufficient skin elasticity. Bannasch explains, "We tighten the connective tissue from the inside of the eyelid, so that there

are no visible scars left behind. Sometimes we also remove fatty deposits. More frequently we perform the modern technique, where we reallocate the tissue to avoid a "hollow eye"-effect."

Only local anaesthesia with sedation is required for this one and a half-hour long operation. Afterwards, the eyelids should be cooled and patients may experience temporary dry eye symptoms or discomfort when blinking. The patient can expect to return to work within one week with the perfect post-break glint in their eye and colleagues will not detect even a scratch.

A further attraction to the gentle eyelid surgery is that it may be performed in combination with other procedures. "It is possible to use the same incision on the inner eyelid to perform a lifting of the cheeks' tissue", Bannasch explains.

WHEN YOU'RE CONTRA TO YOUR BODY CONTOUR...

A breast augmentation results in a marked

increase in self-esteem for women who want to change their body outline or are unhappy with small breasts. In the past, the resulting scars under the breasts or around the areola held some of these women back, but today, breast implants can be inserted through tiny incisions that may be placed at multiple sites. "Most patients want them to be hidden in the armpit", Bannasch clarified.

The implant is placed either behind or above the chest muscle during a procedure that could take up to one and a half hours under general anaesthesia. Due to the mildness of this method patients can leave the clinic after just one night supervised stay, but some discomfort may persist for several days. Drains are removed one to two days after the operation. However, complete resolution of swelling may require several weeks. Surgeons at the Erich-Lexer-Klinik advise patients to wear a support bra for four weeks and also avoid physical activities during this time. **sab**

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from left - right: Professor Dr. Jörg Borges, M.D.; Professor Dr. G. Björn Stark, M.D. and Dr. Holger Bannasch.