

# Advanced techniques

THE COMPOSITE FACELIFT CAN GIVE PATIENTS A NATURAL-LOOKING, LONG-LASTING RESULT, SAYS CANBERRA PLASTIC SURGEON DR VLAD MILOVIC. JENNI GILBERT REPORTS.

‘The composite facelift counters the natural descent of the face with a vertical lift’

Traditional or conventional facelifting techniques don't necessarily take into account the fact the face ages as a single, dynamic unit, rather than as a series of static, independent parts. Over time, traditional facelifts can therefore lead to a tight, unnatural-looking appearance. Recent advances in facelifting techniques have helped surgeons achieve more natural-looking results for their patients.

Based in Canberra, experienced plastic surgeon Dr Vladimir Milovic has adapted his approach to facelifting to achieve results that stand the test of time. According to him, the composite facelift technique, when combined with adjunct procedures such as necklifting and advanced upper blepharoplasty where required, can achieve the most natural-looking, long-lasting results.

‘The composite facelift is a next-generation alternative to standard procedures,’ says Dr Milovic. ‘It is a sophisticated technique that requires experience to perform, but it can successfully restore a youthful appearance.’

While other procedures only reposition facial tissue horizontally, the composite lift counters the natural descent of the face with a vertical lift.

The composite facelift is similar to a deep plane lift, with the addition of an extra step to include the muscle around the eyelid. A deep plane lift is designed to reshape the entire face, including the upper and lower eyelids, the brow and the neck, by lifting facial tissues, fat, muscle and skin in one continuous section. The dissection is deep, and goes below the superficial musculoaponeurotic system (SMAS), releasing strategic face and neck muscles and reattaching them at higher anchor points. The fat remains attached to the overlying tissues.

The deep plane facelift was developed as a modification to standard facelifting techniques in order to better address characteristics of ageing in the mid-face. As well as restoring volume to the mid-face, with the deep plane lift, improvements to deep nasolabial folds can also be achieved.

Like the deep plane lift, the composite lift involves the elevation and resection of the SMAS layer, as well as the orbicularis muscle and cheek fat pad. During the lift, the orbicularis oculi muscle (around the eye) is separated from its attachment to the cheekbone through an incision in the lower eyelid and then lifted and sutured into place.

‘The whole face can be lifted to achieve more youthful contours without that telltale “pulled” appearance that people might experience with conventional procedures,’ says Dr Milovic.

Dr Milovic explains that, as well as creating a smoother neck and more defined jawline, the composite lift can recreate the full, plump cheeks of youth – something that can't be achieved with other facelifting techniques alone. An added advantage is that the composite lift also helps blend the dividing line between the lower eyelid and cheek, which can appear with age.

In traditional facelifting techniques, the surgeon pulls the skin outward to gain access to the underlying muscle and connective tissue. The tissue is then repositioned and tightened. Some fat may also be removed or repositioned at this point.

Composite facelifting provides balance between vertical and horizontal lifting thus providing a more holistic result. Dr Milovic believes that patients between the ages of 45 and 65 are typically the most suitable candidates for the procedure.

Depending on the patient, Dr Milovic will therefore commonly perform a neck lift in conjunction with the composite lift in order to achieve an overall, rejuvenated and youthful appearance. ‘You can't separate the face from the neck – there must be unity for balance,’ he explains.



In some patients, Dr Milovic may also perform an endoscopic brow lift, although, in most cases the desired effect can be achieved with injections of botulinum toxin.

In order to achieve the most natural-looking results for his patients, Dr Milovic has embraced a more advanced upper blepharoplasty (eye lift) technique, pioneered by Melbourne plastic surgeon Dr Bryan Mendelson. Using the technique, he has experienced some outstanding results.

Whereas many people believe the problem with drooping upper eyelids is excess skin, Dr Milovic explains this is often not the case. 'What has actually occurred is that the skin has detached from its former position deep within the eyelid, where it used to appear as a neat fold of skin,' he explains. 'When detachment occurs, the neat, clean contour above the eye can be obscured by the drooping skin.'

The only way to restore the eye's appearance is to re-attach that skin: what Dr Mendelson calls 'the tarsal fixation technique'.

'This procedure requires only a short incision in the eye fold, which heals so that it is undetectable within four months, even with the eyes closed.'

Dr Milovic believes this technique avoids the risks associated with traditional blepharoplasty. When 'excess skin' is cut away from the upper eyelids, there is always the risk of taking too much, giving the patient a taut, 'surprised' look, leaving them unable to close their eyes properly.

'By combining the composite facelift with more advanced blepharoplasty techniques, and other adjunct procedures where necessary, patients can look younger for longer, with very little change even 10 years after surgery,' Dr Milovic concludes.

## THE AGEING FACE

### IN YOUR 20s

The first symptom of intrinsic (natural) ageing is reduction in hydration. Accumulated sun damage can begin to show on the face. There is a mild drop in dermal repair, the immune system and collagen synthesis. These changes can appear as fine lines and an increase in pore size. Muscles also start to lose fullness and firmness due to shrinkage of muscle fibres.

### IN YOUR 30s

The production of collagen, cell renewal and tissue repair processes are slowing, resulting in some loss of elasticity. Most people will have some lines around their eyes, the beginnings of expression lines and laxity under the jaw. Some will have dry skin. Repeated muscular actions form wrinkles and creases and existing creases such as the nasolabial folds deepen. There is also a significant drop in hydration and the skin's natural exfoliation process begins to slow.

### IN YOUR 40s

At least some of the seven signs of ageing (fine lines and wrinkles; dryness; rough skin texture; uneven skin tone; skin dullness; visible pores; blotches and pigmentation) signs will be apparent by now. The bond between facial muscles and skin tissue weakens, causing sagging in combination with the accumulation of fat below the eyes and around the jaw. The boundary between the epidermis and the dermis is flattened. As the sebaceous glands in the skin cut back production and supportive fibres grow less elastic, skin becomes drier, thinner and more inclined to wrinkle. Signs of photo damage are more visible.

### IN YOUR 50s

Collagen breakdown becomes more noticeable as wrinkles start to appear at the corners of the mouth, skin loosens and sags in the cheeks, jowls and neck. Skin also becomes much thinner and drier and its tone more irregular. It starts to lose its natural protective barrier and becomes more susceptible to environmental factors, exacerbated by the decline in oestrogen and progesterone around menopause.

### IN YOUR 60s+

The bony structures in the face shrink, causing flesh to sag. The adhesion between facial muscles and skin tissue, and between the dermal layers within the skin itself continue to weaken, causing the brows, cheeks, neck or even the tip of the nose to droop, with more pronounced sagging in the lower cheeks and jowls. As the cell renewal process slows, wound healing takes longer and skin function is far less efficient. In people over 70 the cycle from basal cell to corneum stratum takes approximately 60 days, double the time of renewal at 30.





## DR MILOVIC & INTEGRITY PLASTIC SURGERY

Dr Vladimir Milovic has more than 17 years experience in plastic, reconstructive and cosmetic surgery. From his clinic in Canberra, he performs a wide range of procedures to help his patients not only look better, but to feel better, too. Dr Milovic has considerable experience having studied both in Australia and overseas, and prides himself on personally guiding patients through every step of the procedure, whether its breast augmentation, reconstruction, facelift surgery, body contouring or non-surgical facial rejuvenation. 'Dr Vlad' has a well-earned reputation for being one of the premier plastic surgery specialists in the region.

### FROM DR VLAD

'At Integrity Plastic Surgery we help people of all ages look better, feel better and enjoy life to the fullest.

From the moment you enter our practice, our caring, supportive staff are dedicated to making you feel comfortable and welcome.

We are committed to specialised cosmetic and reconstructive procedures while promising to care for you like a member of our family.

From your initial visit through treatment, post-surgical monitoring and follow-up care we will be your partner in your personal cosmetic enhancement and wellbeing.

I will guide you through each step of your procedure and ensure that you are fully advised of all your medical treatment options, risk factors, anticipated results, as well as costs prior to your surgery or procedure. It is only through such open and honest interaction can complete trust be established.

I will personally conduct all pre-operative consultations in a series of meetings. During these sessions I will ask questions about your medical history, perform a thorough examination and gather all relevant information necessary to determine the exact treatment options for your needs.

Importantly, I will take into consideration your desired outcome from surgery and explain the realistic expectation you can hope to achieve.

During this time, we will discuss all of the advantages and possible disadvantages of having the surgery.

Together, we will plan a course of action to best fulfil your desired goal and only when you feel completely at ease with your decision will we proceed.

After your procedure, I will be at your side, providing thorough post-operative treatment and care for all your recuperative needs. Your complete satisfaction in the way you look and feel is my ultimate goal.

I will be there for you, every step of the way.'

*Dr Vladimir Milovic, FRACS, Plastic Reconstructive and Cosmetic Surgeon.*



## Dr Vladimir Milovic, MD

Personal Care. From a Specialist Who Cares About You.

Dr Vlad offers a full range of plastic and cosmetic surgery treatments to achieve the results you desire.

Discover the difference we can make in your life. Make an appointment for your personal consultation today.



*Experience  
Training  
Honesty  
Compassion*



**Call 02 6260 4882**

Suite 1, Building 1, Equinox  
70 Kent Street  
Deakin, ACT 2600

[www.integrityplasticsurgery.com.au](http://www.integrityplasticsurgery.com.au)

*Integrity*   
*plastic surgery*