

RHINOPLASTY: THE ART AND PRECISION OF NASAL SURGERY

*Your Weekly Newsletter by
Dr. Nick Sieveking*



Experience Matters

Rhinoplasty, or nasal reshaping, remains one of the most commonly requested procedures performed by experienced plastic surgeons. The nose is the central, defining feature of the face — it affects balance, symmetry, and overall facial harmony. Because of this, rhinoplasty requires both artistry and precision to achieve natural, individualized results. It is difficult to be a truly skilled rhinoplasty surgeon if one performs only a few rhinoplasty procedures each year. Rhinoplasty requires a deep understanding of both aesthetic design and nasal anatomy, honed through repetition and years of surgical experience. Every patient's anatomy and goals are different, while consistent, natural results come only from a surgeon who performs rhinoplasties regularly and has learned to anticipate subtle variations in tissue behavior and healing. There are not many second chances for the perfect Rhinoplasty result...so choose your surgeon wisely and don't bargain shop for this surgery.

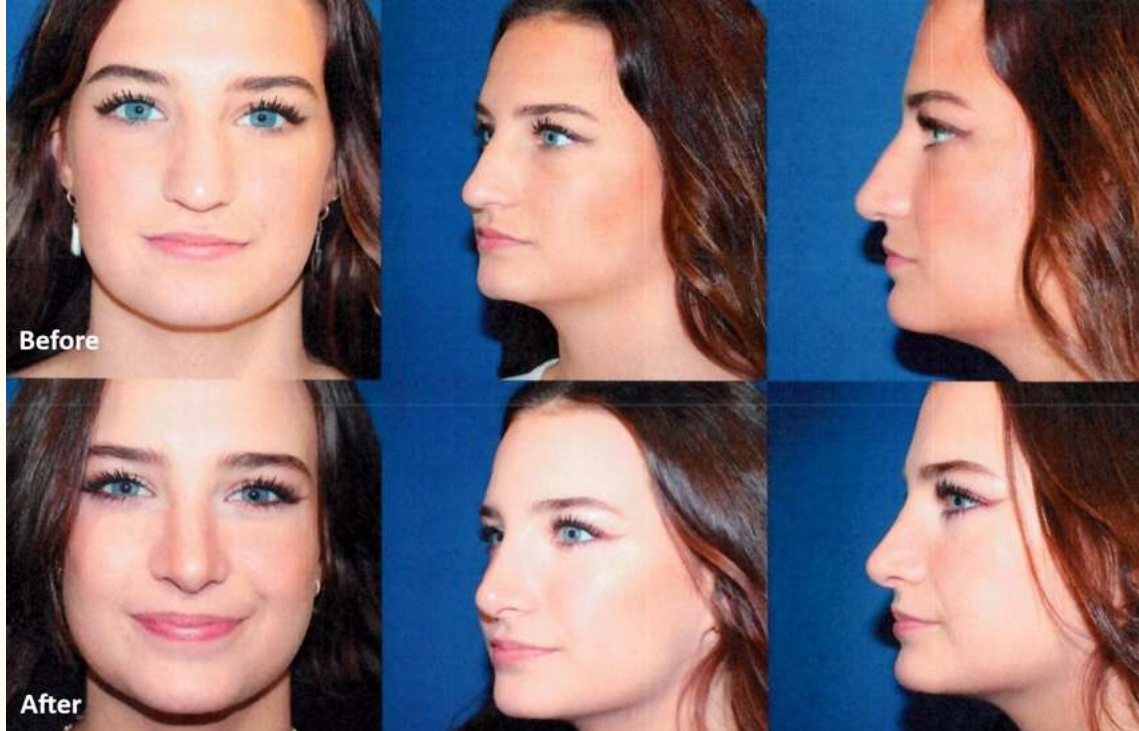
Two Types of Nasal Surgery

There are two broad categories of nasal procedures:

1. Cosmetic Rhinoplasty – Performed to improve the appearance of the nose and overall facial harmony.
2. Functional Rhinoplasty / Septoplasty – Focused on improving nasal airway flow and breathing.

In addition to a deviated septum, other mechanical factors can obstruct breathing, including:

- Enlarged turbinates (small internal bones that swell and block airflow)
- Internal nasal valve collapse, where the sidewall of the nose collapses inward during inspiration



When Function and Aesthetics Intersect

If a patient has difficulty breathing through the nose because of a deviated septum or enlarged turbinates, functional/breathing problems need to be addressed during the same operation creating cosmetic changes to restore both form and function and to not risk making breathing difficulties worse.

In addition to blocking airflow, a deviated septum often causes the external appearance of a crooked nose — and without performing a septoplasty, it is nearly impossible to fully straighten the external nasal appearance. For this reason, the most successful rhinoplasty procedures often combine both cosmetic refinement and functional correction for optimal results.



Listening Comes First

The most critical step in rhinoplasty planning is understanding what the patient actually wants to change. Before offering opinions or recommendations, the plastic surgeon must listen carefully to the patient's own concerns and goals. The surgeon's perception of what should be changed can be very different from the patient's — and ultimately, it is the patient's perception that matters most. A successful rhinoplasty begins with clear communication and a shared vision. My patients, in general, do not want to look like a different person. Subtle changes, in most situations, should be the goals of the patient and the surgeon.

The Most Intricate Procedure in Plastic Surgery

Of all aesthetic procedures performed by plastic surgeons, rhinoplasty is among the most intricate and technically demanding. The internal and external anatomy of the nose is delicate and complex, and even millimeter-level adjustments can dramatically affect both appearance and breathing. The margin for error is minimal, requiring meticulous surgical technique and deep anatomical understanding. This precision is what distinguishes a master surgeon in the field — one who can sculpt subtle, natural results while maintaining proper airway function.



Surgery, Recovery, and Healing

A rhinoplasty, with or without a septoplasty, can take anywhere from one to three and a half hours depending on the complexity of the case. Downtime is typically at least one week, and patients should expect up to three weeks of visible bruising and swelling during which it is obvious that nasal surgery has been performed.

If a functional procedure such as a septoplasty or turbinate resection is performed, one should expect breathing to get worse for several weeks before ease of inspiration through the nose consistently improves.

Most patients begin feeling comfortable with their appearance after three to four weeks, but the nose — more than any other part of the body — takes the longest to heal. Subtle changes continue to evolve for a full year or longer, as the tissues settle and refine.

At Sieveking Plastic Surgery (sievekingplasticsurgery.com), we schedule final postoperative photographs at approximately 12 months, once the results have fully matured and stabilized.

Week 1: visible bruising and swelling with likely “Raccoon Eyes” is present.

Sleeping with an elevated head and alternating between cool and warm soaks helps expedite the resolution of this phase. External and internal nasal splints are often used during the first week of healing.

Week 2: Splints have been removed. Bruising and swelling are still present and often require camouflage make-up. If internal nasal work was performed, nasal

airflow is still restricted from internal swelling. Continue to sleep with the head slightly elevated.

Week 3 and beyond: Obvious signs of surgery have subsided. Patients typically feel confident to resume face to face social contact. But swelling that hides the final result is still present and will slowly subside over a 6-to-8-month time frame.

After 8 months: Swelling is almost entirely gone and final nose features can be appreciated. Breathing should be optimal (if internal/functional work was performed). Now is the time to take “AFTER” pictures to see how far you have come!



The Goal: A Natural, Harmonious Result

A successful rhinoplasty does more than refine the nose — it enhances overall facial balance and brings out a patient’s natural beauty. The best results are those that look so natural, they don’t look 'done.' Whether correcting breathing issues, refining a dorsal hump, or reshaping the nasal tip, every step of the procedure must be carefully customized to the patient’s facial proportions, desires, and cultural and ethnic background.

Stay well,
Nick Sieveking, MD

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RSVP

Stay Tuned!

Be on the lookout for next week's newsletter: Are You Inflamed? Part II



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