

Would you have a FOOT LIFT?

The latest trend in cosmetic surgery wants you to put your best foot forward, writes Kelsey Ferencak

Not feeling brave enough to don your summer sandals just yet? Perhaps you're ashamed of what you believe to be less-than-perfect feet? Don't stress – it can be fixed.

'Cinderella surgery' is the latest cosmetic-surgery trend to hit our shores. Essentially a facelift for your feet, it covers everything from common procedures (bunion and lump removal) to not-so-normal surgeries (foot-slimming, toe-shortening and foot-fillers), to give you smoother, younger-looking and even smaller feet.

Sydney Foot Surgery surgeon Dr Haydar Ozcan says Cinderella surgery isn't just for the rich and famous, explaining he gets requests from people from all walks of life.

"It's not just aesthetics that drive people to seek help. They are physically, psychologically and socially under stress. They often have large feet with related painful conditions such as bunions, clawed toes, long or short toes, flat feet or bumps," he says.

Pro Feet Podiatry director Dr Craig Hankridge adds: "Bunion removal and toe-shortening are already very popular procedures here, but the split between pain and cosmetic reasons as the primary driver is much closer than you think."

"Often, what has been a cosmetic issue for some time becomes increasingly painful, leading to a rapid decision to have the procedure to improve both appearance and function."

Despite its name, Cinderella surgery is far from a fairytale and requires some serious foot work. As all surgeries carry a risk, it's advisable to seek out a second opinion before agreeing to what could be a painful procedure.

Read on to find out what you can expect...

SURGERY UPDATE

These days, common surgeries no longer require heavy-duty operations. "Minimally invasive surgery such as keyhole surgery is a technique involving realigning of deformities through small entry points using cleverly designed small tools under live imaging," explains Dr Ozcan. "It uses the biomechanical advantage of natural structures, such as tendons and ligaments, to work as stabilising forces rather than using pins and screws... The results are remarkably good. It's also safer, quicker and results are [more] aesthetically pleasing."

BUNION CORRECTION

Bunions form when your big-toe joint starts to move outwards, which makes your toe lean inwards. They can be caused by narrow shoes, daily pressure on joints or even genetics.

Correction involves removing the bump on the side of your joint and straightening your toe by using a combination of techniques.

pain than ever before.

"Bunion correction is probably the only surgery where I use a small metal or absorbable pin to hold the toe joint in place," says Dr Ozcan. "It sits safely inside the bone, not inside the joint, and allows early mobilisation of the joint. Due to the small nature of the incision and single-pin fixation, patients can walk out of hospital on the same day, wearing surgical sandals."

Technological advancements and less-invasive procedures means getting slimmer feet requires less downtime and post-operative

downtime depends on the technique used and the patient, but usually involves wearing specialised sandals for a few weeks, followed by sports shoes for a further three weeks, and may include physiotherapy and podiatry management.

VEIN REMOVAL

Removing bulging or unsightly varicose and spider veins leaves feet smooth and clear.

There's a range of treatments carried out by vein specialists, from laser and radio frequency to sclerotherapy – where a chemical solution is injected into the blood vessels to make them

shrink and disappear. All correction options are non-surgical and walk-in-walk-out, with very little downtime.

BONE SHAVING

Bumps on the insteps and tops of your feet are often caused by an overgrowth of bone, usually at joints in people with high-arched feet, or may be indicative of osteoarthritis.

"These can be removed via a minimally invasive technique using small incisions and small surgical tools to shave away the build-up causing the bump," explains Dr Hankridge. Using this technique means the risk of



infection and recovery time is reduced in comparison to previous surgical techniques.

TOE TUCKS

"Toe-shortening is a common procedure due to pain and discomfort, less so for purely cosmetic reasons," says Dr Hankridge.

"It's similar to a bunion-removal procedure and involves cutting through the respective bones to reduce the length or angle of the toe. One approach utilises a surgical wire to 'pin' the toe into a desirable position, which is removed two to three weeks later once the bones are set."

Recovery time is less than a bunion correction due to the reduced load on your toe when walking. Wearing post-operative-friendly shoes for about a month will speed up your recovery.

Not only will the procedure help you fit into your shoes better, your toes will also be aligned and appear more aesthetically pleasing.

CORN REMOVAL

Corn removal is probably the least daunting procedure as it's done under local anaesthetic in a consulting room. "It reduces pain and improves appearance," says Dr Hankridge.

"The corn is removed right down to the root, with any residual scar tissue or tissue abnormalities cleaned up at the same time. Recovery periods are short, depending on the location of the corn, and typically focus on keeping the area clear of infection and allowing the skin to heal."

FOOT FILLERS

As you get older, your feet will naturally get bonier, especially if you have low body fat.

To plump and even-out lumps and bumps, dermal filler containing hyaluronic acid may be injected into hollows to fill and smooth your foot. This type of procedure is usually simple and quick, and is usually carried out by a cosmetic surgeon at their office.

QUICK FIXES

Give your feet a little at-home TLC with these products



LANOLIPS ALL-OVER EVERYWHERE MULTI-CREAM (\$18.95, available from Mecca) Put this heavy-duty hydrator on the backs of your heels, bottom of your feet and over your toes to keep cracks at bay.



EVA PEPPERMINT FOOT TREATMENT (\$22, enproducts.com.au) This luxe cream fights fungus and odour thanks to the deodorising, antiseptic and anti-inflammatory power of peppermint essential oil.



ESSIE NAIL COLOUR IN TART DEVO (\$14.95, available from Adore Beauty) A pop of coloured polish will cover up any nail discolouration and draw attention away from unsightly foot lumps.



MAVALA WHITE OPTICAL NAIL WHITENER (\$21.95, mavala.com.au) Colour-perfecting pigments hide stained pigments, lighten white tips and correct any discolouration.



MANICARE FASHION NAIL SHAPERS (\$5.95 for 2, manicare.com.au) This limited-edition range will keep your nails in tip-top shape.

ANKLE LIPOSCULPTURE

Dr Meaghan Heckenberg, of Be Sculptured in Sydney, specialises in liposculpture, a modern-day version of liposuction that uses a special technique to contour and sculpt the body.

A trend she has begun to see is 'cankle' liposculpture. "No amount of diet and exercise can reduce fat in this area unfortunately, but liposculpture of the calves and ankles can change this," she explains.

"Ankle liposculpture may make the ankle slimmer and

more shapely. But because it's the most dependent area of the body, it takes the longest time to heal."

Downtime includes dealing with swelling, which takes longer to go down. "Compression stockings are worn 24 hours a day for a month," says Dr Heckenberg.