



BREAST

BREASTS ARE BIG BUSINESS. WITH A RANGE OF NON-INVASIVE, INVASIVE, LIFESTYLE AND NOW EVEN TOPICAL PRODUCTS AVAILABLE TO HELP SHAPE BREASTS, IT'S TIME TO KNOW WHAT REALLY WORKS. **YANAR ALKAYAT** TURNS TO THE EXPERTS

British boobs have been moving up the measurement tape for more than a decade. Just ask Marks and Spencer, who's recent survey said the average bra size in Britain has increased from 34 B to a 36 E - not necessarily due to surgery, but more likely because of our changing lifestyles. Despite this, breast augmentation continues to be the number one performed surgery in the UK. In 2010 the British Association of Aesthetic Plastic Surgeons (baaps.org.uk) identified a stratospheric 400 per cent rise in the number of procedures performed by its members since 2002.

'I want shapely breasts'

DO IT YOURSELF

AT-HOME BREAST-TONING EXERCISE

WHAT IS IT?

Three types of exercises chosen by Zana Morris, Head Trainer at Educogym in London Harley Street: 'These exercises tone the chest muscles running under the breast, which help to lift and shape the appearance of breasts.'

THE EXPERT BEAUTY TEST

Reader Claire, 31, cracked a sweat three times a week for four weeks on press-ups, peck-flys and body dips. 'The key is to keep shoulders down and really focus on using the pectoral muscles to lift the body,' says Morris. **The result:** 'Easy to do exercises as there was no complicated gym equipment. I could feel chest, arms and stomach muscles working.'

EXPERT COMMENT

'The pectoral muscles lie beneath the breasts so building or toning them will have little or no effect on the size and shape of the breast,' says plastic surgeon Jonathan Staiano. 'With very small breasts, building up the pecs may create the effect of enhancing the size of the breast, in the same way that a bodybuilder can appear to have a fuller chest. Unfortunately exercise cannot help lift a droopy breast.'

CLEAVAGE-ENHANCING BRA

WHAT IS IT?

A bra designed to elevate the breasts and boost the appearance of cleavage. 'The key to a "push-up" bra is quality fabrics, semi-rigid and adjustable straps and hidden supports,' says Jemma Barnes at Anita UK, a specialist bodywear supplier (anita.com).

THE EXPERT BEAUTY TEST

We tried a Rosa Faia Twin padded bra by Anita (£45, figleaves.co.uk). The result: 'No Eva Herzigova-style curves but definitely more uplift with boobs looking forwards, not down. Extremely comfortable fit too.'

EXPERT COMMENT

'80 per cent of women wear the wrong bra size,' says Jo Lee, spokesperson for Bravissimo (bravissimo.com), the lingerie and swimwear specialists for D-KK cup. 'Usually it's too big in the back and too small in the cup. Check you're wearing the right size in three easy steps: 1. Stand sideways to the mirror, the strap running around your body should be horizontal and not ride up. 2. Wires at the front should lie flat, not dig in or poke out. 3. Check for a smooth line where fabric meets breast cup with no bulges over the top, even if it's a balconette.'

COLOUR CONTOURING

WHAT IS IT?

Armed with an artistic hand and a good make-up brush and bronzer, you can create the illusion of a fuller cleavage. Can also be achieved with spray tanning.

THE EXPERT BEAUTY TEST

Turning to the expertise of renowned US make-up artist Eve Pearl we learnt how to give a not-so-busty bosom the appearance of a curvier contour. She explains all her tricks in her book *Plastic Surgery Without The Surgery* (Little, Brown & Company, £7.79, amazon.co.uk). If you follow her advice, cleverly applied bronzer and illuminator can give the illusion of a plumped-up cleavage.

EXPERT COMMENT

Alyson Hogg, founder of Vita Liberata (vitaliberata.co.uk) says: 'A spray tan therapist can lightly sweep the tanning gun in a curved motion from the shoulder blades down between the breasts to create the illusion of a deeper, more voluminous curve. Highlight the top of each breast with an illuminator and sweep extra colour under the breast to create an even fuller effect.' →

IN CLINIC OPTIONS

BREAST UPLIFT SURGERY (MASTOPEXY)

? WHAT IS IT?

'This procedure lifts and restores shape to the breast but leaves the cup size alone. The nipple is moved to a higher position as the breast is lifted (warning: this could lead to a decrease in nipple sensitivity).

✓ PROS

Suitable for improving the shape of a breast without an implant. A mastopexy will remove the extra skin, tighten the breast and re-adjust the nipple to the right place.

✗ CONS

'The main downsides are the scars involved,' says Birmingham-based consultant plastic surgeon Jonathan Staiano. 'There is always a scar around the nipple and usually one going down from the nipple to where the wire of a bra sits.' Although hidden in a bra these scars may be obvious when naked. To minimise chances of delayed wound healing, patients should avoid smoking and not be overweight (ideally BMI <30).

? IS THIS FOR ME?

If your breasts sag but have kept their volume (for instance, after having children), then this could be for you. 'It's for people unhappy with the shape of the breasts but happy with the cup size,' says Staiano.

BREAST UPLIFT AND ENLARGEMENT (AUGMENTATION MASTOPEXY)

? WHAT IS IT?

'This surgical procedure is designed to restore shape to droopy breasts with an increase in cup size. An implant adds volume to the upper part of the breast, to boost the cleavage,' says Kent-based plastic surgeon Martin Jones.

✓ PROS

'This is the best way to lift the breast *and* enlarge it. Usually the implant is positioned in a pocket above the muscles.'

✗ CONS

'There are additional risks, for example delayed wound healing as two operations are performed at once. If you're very slim and you have very little breast tissue you may be able to feel the implant.'

? IS THIS FOR ME?

'Women considering this have usually experienced the effects of multiple pregnancies or significant weight loss - when the breast tissues lose their ability to recover from being stretched. Patients ideally should be at a stable weight and non-smokers,' says Martin Jones.

HYALURONIC INJECTIONS

? WHAT IS IT?

Stabilised hyaluronic acid injected into the breast for a subtle increase in volume. A short treatment that's marketed as a lunch-time fix for non-surgical breast enhancement.

✓ PROS

Results are said to be immediate and natural.

✗ CONS

'The main concern is over product stability and issues regarding breast cancer - does the reaction between the product and breast tissue have a cancer risk? We're not sure. There's still not enough safety data from empirical studies,' says consultant plastic surgeon Paul Banwell.

? IS THIS FOR ME?

'This is not a short cut to breast augmentation surgery. Be very careful, look at the qualifications of the doctor. It's preferable to get an unbiased, balanced view from a plastic surgeon about the benefits and the potential complications of all options,' says Banwell. →

