



PULLING YOUR STRINGS

How a 'Puppet Facelift' could deliver the rejuvenating results you desire

Have you tried dermal fillers but still have sagging skin? The 'Puppet Facelift', or as it is officially known, a thread lift, could be your next aesthetic move.

Using a thin needle or cannula (a tube that can be inserted into the body for the delivery or removal of fluid), a practitioner will insert fine and usually dissolvable surgical threads (sutures) into your face. These are then hoisted up tight in order to lift and sculpt sagging skin.

We chat to thread lift extraordinaires Dr Victoria Manning and Dr Charlotte Woodward for the details...

WHO IS A THREAD LIFT SUITABLE FOR?

Our ideal patient is someone with mild to moderate skin sagging and good tissue integrity – there needs to be enough fat there to actually hold the thread! A thread lift won't be suitable for those with advanced sagging; these patients will need to be referred for surgery. They can be used in men and women, and are suitable for all skin colours.



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WHERE CAN THREADS BE USED?

While threads are most commonly used to rejuvenate the mid-face, they can also help lift eyebrows and can even be used to lift breasts and sagging knees! Of course, ensuring you are being treated by a skilled practitioner with experience in treating these areas is essential.

HOW DO YOU PREPARE SKIN FOR TREATMENT?

If you're very slim with thin skin, we may prep your skin with a radiofrequency device such as Morpheus8; this works to boost collagen and tighten skin, improving its quality and helping to create a good canvas to work with. If you have some excess fat, we may freeze it away with something like cryolipolysis device CoolSculpting, which will help you get the best result. Making sure you're following a good skincare routine that includes the use of vitamin C, vitamin A and sunscreen is essential too.

WHAT TYPE OF THREADS ARE AVAILABLE?

There are different types of threads available in the UK that work in slightly different ways. Always ensure your practitioner explains what they're using, how it works, potential side effects, and why that product is most suitable for your concerns. There are three main types, which include:

- 1. Poly-L-lactic acid (PLLA):** made from a biocompatible polymer derived from lactic acid. They use cones to hook to tissue and anchor it into position. They are resorbable, and regenerate collagen over a longer period of time than PDO.
- 2. Polydioxanone (PDO):** made of a synthetic biodegradable polymer that has been used in surgery for many years. There are three types: mono are smooth without barbs that mainly tighten skin with a small amount of lift, cog have barbs which help provide more support and lift, and screw have one or two threads intertwined around the needle to help with volume restoration.
- 3. Polycaprolactone (PCA):** bioabsorbable, monofilament suspension threads of synthetic origin which regenerate collagen over a longer time than PDO and PLLA.



53-year-old patient before and three months after treatment with Silhouette Soft. Results show improved lifting effect and a reduction in fine lines.

WHAT HAPPENS DURING THE PROCEDURE?

Once we've decided what type of thread is most suitable for you, how many threads you need and where they should go, we'll map this out on your face using a special pencil. Starting from the bottom moving upwards, we'll insert each thread using a needle or cannula, following the map lines and ensuring they are placed in the superficial fat layer under the skin. Depending on the thread used, we'll use various techniques to ensure they are working to the best of their ability. In our clinic we use PLLA threads Silhouette Soft, MINT PDO Threads and APTOS, which are made of PLLA and PCA.

IS IT PAINFUL?

The anaesthetic injections given at the start of the procedure to numb the entry and exit points are probably the worst part. We'd say they're eight out of 10 horrible, but very short-lived. If you're feeling a bit anxious, your practitioner will use techniques to distract you – we play cheesy music!

WHAT ARE THE RESULTS LIKE?

You will see an immediate lifting, which will improve over time. The threads will also stimulate collagen production, which will help plump and tighten the skin. Results vary amongst patients but, on average, last 15 to 18 months. This is because the threads have done a great job boosting collagen that maintains the lifted result even after they have dissolved. For even better results, we advocate having a thread lift alongside other procedures such as botulinum toxin or dermal fillers.

CAN I GO BACK TO MY NORMAL ROUTINE STRAIGHT AFTER TREATMENT?

Not quite. We recommend avoiding exercise for two weeks, no dental appointments or eating food that means you have to open your mouth wide. We also advise that patients wait two weeks before sitting for long periods in the sun. After the two weeks are up, your normal routine can continue.

ARE THERE ANY SIDE EFFECTS?

Bruising is common, but taking arnica tablets beforehand can help. Swelling is also normal, but it's important you don't take ibuprofen or other anti-inflammatory medication to reduce this, as it can halt the valuable collagen production that is taking place. You can get dimpling around the entry points, but this can be easily fixed. Things you don't want to see include asymmetry, lumps, nerve damage or infection. All of these can be avoided if you seek treatment with an experienced and qualified practitioner.

WHAT'S YOUR ADVICE FOR CHOOSING A REPUTABLE THREAD LIFTING PRACTITIONER?

In England, all clinics that offer thread lift procedures must be registered with the Care Quality Commission which monitors health and safety. This may not be the same in other countries, however it's a good benchmark to look out for when choosing a clinic. You should also ensure your practitioner can demonstrate significant training in administering thread lifts – a one-day course where they may have only treated two patients isn't enough!