THE PINEWOODS CLINIC

PATIENT INFORMATION

Facelift & Necklift

Before & After Your Operation

Your guide to surgery & recovery

CONSULTANT-LED CARE · WATERLOO, LIVERPOOL

WELCOME

Thank you for choosing The Pinewoods Clinic

This guide explains how facelift and necklift surgery works, how to prepare, what to expect in the days and weeks after your operation, how to look after your wounds and hair at home, and when to contact us. Please read it before your operation and keep it somewhere handy during your recovery. Most people recover smoothly, and following this advice gives you the best chance of a comfortable recovery and a neat, well-healed scar.

Your care is consultant-led from your first consultation to your final review. If anything in this guide differs from the instructions your surgeon has given you personally, **follow your surgeon's advice.**

Your surgical team

Mr Rob Laycock

CONSULTANT MAXILLOFACIAL & FACIAL PLASTIC SURGEON · MEDICAL DIRECTOR

MBChB, BDS, PG Cert Ed, FHEA, MFDS, MRCS, FRCSEd · GMC 6145445 · GDC 76318

Mr Laycock has over 20 years' surgical experience and leads The Pinewoods Clinic. A University of Manchester graduate, he completed specialist training in cosmetic and reconstructive facial surgery in the UK and abroad, with fellowship expertise in facial rejuvenation, eyelid surgery and skin cancer reconstruction, and further training in rhinoplasty and orthognathic surgery in the USA and the Netherlands.

He holds NHS consultant posts at Aintree University Hospital and the Countess of Chester Hospital, is an examiner for the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh and is Training Programme Director for the North West.

Mr David Houghton

CONSULTANT ORAL & MAXILLOFACIAL SURGEON

MBBS, BChD, MFDS RCSEd, MRCSEd, FRCSEd (OMFS), PGCert (Ed), PGDip (Surg Sci), PGDip (OMFS) · GMC 7456960

Mr Houghton is dual qualified in dentistry (Leeds) and medicine (York). He ranked first in the UK national recruitment for Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery and trained at the Liverpool Head and Neck Centre (Aintree University Hospital) and Alder Hey Children's Hospital, developing interests in skin cancer, post-traumatic facial deformity and facial plastic surgery.

He has completed further training in rhinoplasty, orthognathic and facial plastic surgery in the UK and Europe, and was awarded his Fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons (OMFS) in 2021.

How to reach us

Telephone **0151 380 0055** · Email **treatment@pinewoodsclinic.com**

All voicemails and website contact forms are monitored. See Section 10 for urgent warning signs.

SECTION 01

About facelift and necklift surgery

As we age, the skin gradually loses its elasticity, the facial muscles slacken and the natural fat beneath the skin descends. Folds deepen between the nose and mouth, the corners of the mouth turn down, jowls form along the jawline and the skin of the neck becomes loose. Sun exposure, gravity, the stresses of daily life, genetics and significant weight loss all affect how quickly this happens, and many people feel the face they see in the mirror no longer matches how they feel.

A facelift lifts and tightens the skin and deeper tissues of the face below the eyes, particularly the jowls and jawline. A necklift tightens the muscle and skin of the neck. They are often performed together. The aim is a fresher, healthier and more rested appearance that looks natural — not "done".

Who is it suitable for?

- People whose face and neck have started to sag but whose skin still has some elasticity
- Most patients are in their 40s to 60s, but a facelift can be successful in people in their 70s and 80s
- Those who are in good general health, at a stable weight and ideally non-smokers

Combining procedures

A facelift improves the lower face. A brow lift can address the forehead and brows, and eyelid surgery the upper and lower lids. Fine wrinkles, pigmentation and rough skin respond better to laser resurfacing or a chemical peel, which can be combined with your lift.

Alternatives

A facelift does not remove wrinkles around the eyes, forehead or mouth, or change skin texture. Anti-wrinkle injections, dermal fillers, fat grafting, laser resurfacing and peels can help with these, either instead of or alongside surgery.

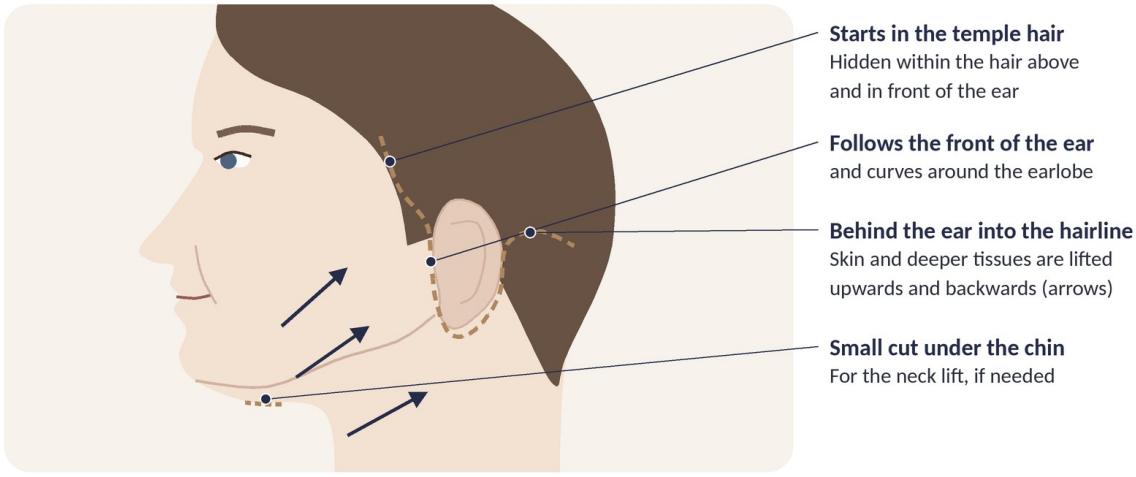
SECTION 02

About your operation

The operation is usually carried out under general anaesthetic, or sometimes under local anaesthetic with sedation, and takes between 2 and 5 hours. Incisions are made on each side of the face, beginning in the temple hair, running along the natural crease in front of the ear, around the earlobe and into the crease behind the ear and the lower hairline. A small incision under the chin may be used for the neck.

1 THE INCISIONS

Before surgery: incisions and direction of lift



2 YOUR SCARS

After healing: where the scars sit

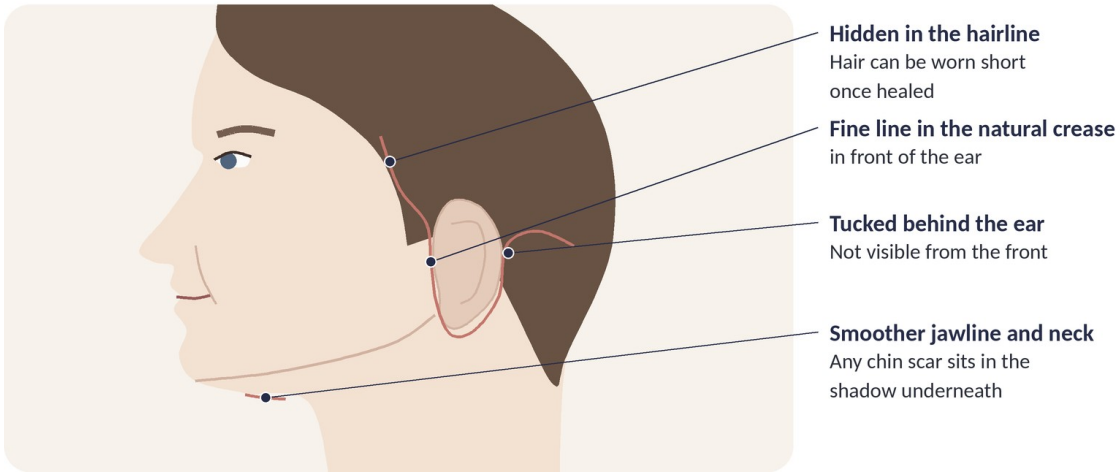


Illustration for guidance only. Incisions are tailored to your face, hairline and the procedure planned.

What is done during surgery

Facelift

The skin is raised and the deeper supporting layer of the face (the SMAS) is lifted and repositioned upwards and backwards. This improves the jowls, jawline and lower cheeks. Excess skin is removed and the skin is closed without tension.

Necklift

The neck muscle (platysma) is tightened, either through the incisions behind the ears or a small cut under the chin, and excess fat may be removed. This gives a smoother, more defined neck and jaw angle.

Facelift and necklift

The face and neck are lifted together and anchored to the firm tissues in front of and behind the ear, giving a balanced result from cheek to neck.

Fat and volume

Fat may be repositioned, reduced or added (fat grafting) to restore volume to the cheeks and soften hollows.

After the operation

- Small drainage tubes may be placed under the skin to remove fluid. These are usually removed before you go home.
- Most patients stay in overnight. If you go home the same day, a responsible adult must stay with you for the first night.
- Your face and neck will feel tight and sore. Simple painkillers are usually enough to keep you comfortable.

SECTION 03

Preparing for your operation

You will meet your surgeon to discuss what you would like to achieve. They will ask about your medical history and all medicines you take, including herbal remedies and supplements, examine your face and neck and take photographs for your medical records with your consent.

Weight

Keep your weight stable with a healthy diet and regular exercise. If you plan to lose weight, do so before surgery. Your surgeon may suggest delaying surgery if you are planning a pregnancy.

Smoking

Stop smoking and vaping for at least 6 weeks before and after surgery. Nicotine greatly increases the risk of skin loss behind the ears, healing problems and chest infection.

Medicines

Avoid aspirin and anti-inflammatory medicines such as ibuprofen, diclofenac (Voltarol) and indometacin for at least 2 weeks before surgery unless prescribed. Tell us about any blood thinners. Keep high blood pressure well controlled.

Hair

Have any colouring, bleaching or perms done before your operation — fresh scars are sensitive to these chemicals for several weeks. You don't need to cut your hair.

The day before and the day of surgery

- Bath or shower and wash your hair within the 24 hours before your operation.
- Follow the fasting instructions you are given.
- Wear a loose, button-up or zip-up top, and no make-up, jewellery or hair products.
- Arrange for someone to take you home and stay with you for the first night.

SECTION 04

Risks and possible complications

Facelift and necklift surgery is usually very successful, but as with any operation there are risks. Your surgeon will discuss these with you so that you can weigh them against the benefits.

COMMON

Expected in many patients and usually temporary

- **Swelling, bruising and tightness** — settle over several weeks; the face may look puffy and feel stiff at first.
- **Numbness of the cheeks, neck and ears** — improves over weeks to months; some reduced feeling in front of the ears can be long-term.
- **Scars** — red, then purple, then paler over 12 to 18 months; mostly hidden in the hairline and ear creases.
- **Minor asymmetry or unevenness** — common early on and usually settles.

LESS COMMON

Can occur and may need further treatment

- **Bleeding (haematoma)** — usually in the first 24 hours; may need a return to theatre. More common in men and with high blood pressure.
- **Wound healing problems or skin loss** — particularly behind the ears; much more likely in smokers.
- **Wide, thick or painful scars** — or a narrow bald strip in the hairline; may need scar revision.
- **Change to the earlobe or tragus** — usually adjustable under local anaesthetic.
- **Infection, stitch extrusion or skin colour change** — treated with antibiotics, stitch removal or camouflage make-up.

RARE

Uncommon but serious — see Section 10 for warning signs

- **Facial nerve injury** — weakness of the eyebrow or lip movement; usually temporary, rarely permanent.
- **Blood clots (DVT or PE), chest infection, heart attack or stroke** — risks of any major operation and anaesthetic; you will be assessed beforehand.
- **Allergic reactions** — to the anaesthetic, tapes, stitches or skin preparations.

REVISION SURGERY

A small number of patients need a further procedure — for example to adjust a scar, the earlobe or an area of unevenness, often under local anaesthetic. Your face will also continue to age naturally, and some people choose a further lift or other treatments years later to maintain their result. Any revision is usually considered only once healing is complete, after 6 to 12 months.

Revision surgery may involve additional costs, such as theatre, anaesthetic and surgical fees. Your surgeon will explain this at your consultation and the details are set out in your treatment terms. Please ask if anything is unclear before your operation.

SECTION 05

Your recovery at a glance

Everyone heals at a slightly different pace, but most people follow a pattern like this.

WHEN	WHAT TO EXPECT	WHAT TO DO
Day of surgery	Face and neck feel tight, sore and numb. You may have drains and a head bandage.	Get up and walk the same day. Rest with your head raised. Take regular pain relief.
Days 1 – 2	Drains and bandages are removed, usually before you go home.	Keep your head up. A responsible adult should stay with you the first night at home.
Days 2 – 7	Swelling and bruising peak and then begin to settle.	Start wound care and gentle hair washing (Section 07). Sleep propped up on extra pillows.
Days 7 – 8	Stitches are removed.	Attend your review appointment.
Week 2	Most bruising has faded. Many people feel ready to socialise and return to work.	Light activities. Camouflage make-up can cover remaining bruises.
Weeks 2 – 6	The face still feels tight and may look slightly swollen.	Gradually increase activity. Start scar massage 2 weeks after stitches are out.
6 weeks	Most of the tightness has settled.	Return to all normal activities, including strenuous exercise.
6 – 9 months	The final result can now be judged.	Continue protecting scars from the sun.
12 – 18 months	Scars mature and fade.	Enjoy your result — we are always happy to see you for a review.

SECTION 06

What is normal after surgery

These effects are an expected part of healing. They can look dramatic in the first week, but they settle with time.

Swelling & bruising

Swelling and bruising of the face and neck take several weeks to settle and may track down the neck. The face may look puffy and uneven at first.

Tightness & stiffness

Your face and neck may feel too tight and stiff, especially when turning your head or smiling. This usually eases within 6 weeks.

Numbness

The cheeks, neck and ears are usually numb. Feeling returns gradually over weeks to months. Take care with hot drinks, hairdryers and earrings.

Hair & beard changes

Hair may be trimmed near the wounds and there may be slight thinning at the temples. In men, beard growth will sit closer to the ear because the skin has been lifted.

Scars

Scars are red at first, then purple, before gradually fading over 12 to 18 months. Most are hidden by your hair and the natural creases of the ear.

Discomfort

Simple painkillers such as paracetamol are usually enough. Avoid aspirin and anti-inflammatories unless your surgeon advises otherwise.

Setting realistic expectations

It can take a few weeks to get used to your new appearance. You cannot judge the final result for 6 to 9 months. A facelift turns back the clock rather than stopping it: your face will continue to age, and weight change or pregnancy will affect the result.

SECTION 07

Caring for your wounds and hair

Bandages and swelling

A head bandage is usually worn for 1 to 2 days to reduce bruising and swelling. Keep your head raised on extra pillows for the first week, and avoid bending over. Cool compresses (not ice directly on the skin) can be applied to the cheeks and neck for comfort in the first 48 hours.

Daily wound care

Once the bandage is off, care for the incisions in front of and behind your ears **twice a day until your stitches are removed.**

1. Wash your hands thoroughly.
2. Gently clean along each wound using **lukewarm cooled boiled water** and a fresh cotton pad, removing any crusts without scrubbing.
3. Pat dry with a clean pad. **Never rub the wound.**
4. Apply a thin layer of **Vaseline Pure Petroleum Jelly** along the wound.
5. Always clean the area before each new application of Vaseline.

Washing your hair

Once the bandage has been removed, wash your hair gently with a mild shampoo and lukewarm water, letting it run over the incisions rather than scrubbing.

Styling your hair

Use a hairdryer on a cool setting only — numb skin can burn without you noticing. Avoid colouring, bleaching or perms for 6 weeks.

Clothing & jewellery

Wear button-up tops to avoid pulling clothes over your head. Avoid earrings until the wounds around the earlobes have healed.

Make-up

Camouflage make-up can cover bruising once the wounds have healed. Keep make-up off the incisions until then.

SECTION 08

Getting back to normal

Raising your blood pressure or straining in the first weeks can cause bleeding and more swelling. With all activities, start gently.

ACTIVITY	WHEN YOU CAN RESTART
Walking	The same day — gentle walking helps prevent blood clots
Showering	Once the bandage has been removed
Alcohol	Avoid for at least 48 hours, and while taking strong painkillers
Light activities	After 2 weeks
Returning to work & socialising	Usually after 2 weeks — your hair helps hide the scars
Bending, straining & sex	Avoid for at least 2 weeks
Strenuous exercise	Avoid for at least 2 weeks, building up gradually to 6 weeks
Heavy lifting	Avoid for several weeks — usually 6
Saunas, steam rooms & facial massage	Avoid for at least 2 weeks
Hair colouring, bleaching & perms	Wait 6 weeks
Driving	Only when you feel safe, can turn your head comfortably and wear a seatbelt without discomfort. Check your insurance if you are unsure.
Smoking & vaping	Avoid for at least 6 weeks before and after surgery

SECTION 09

Looking after your scars

Your scars are placed in the hairline and the natural creases around the ear so that they are as discreet as possible. Careful scar care in the first few months makes a real difference to the final result.

Sun protection

Once your wounds have healed, protect the scars in front of the ear with SPF 30 or above for at least 3 months, and wear a hat in strong sun.

Scar massage

Start **2 weeks after all stitches have been removed.**

- Massage along the scars firmly **twice a day for 5 minutes** each time, using small circular movements.
- Continue for at least 3 months. This helps soften and flatten the scars and eases tightness.
- Use a silicone scar gel, for example **Kelo-Cote**, on the scars in front of and behind the ear.

The more you massage, the better the result.

LITTLE AND OFTEN, EVERY DAY, FOR AT LEAST 3 MONTHS

SECTION 10

When to get help

Serious problems after a facelift are uncommon, but it is important to recognise them early.

URGENT — CALL 999 OR GO TO A&E NOW

Then let us know. These may be a medical emergency.

- Sudden or increasing swelling, pain or tightness, especially on one side of the face or neck — this may be bleeding
- Any difficulty breathing or swallowing
- Chest pain or breathlessness
- A painful, swollen calf

CONTACT THE CLINIC PROMPTLY IF YOU NOTICE

- Pain, redness, swelling or pus in a wound, or a temperature of 38°C or above
- A wound that is weeping, sore or opening up
- Skin behind the ear that looks dark, black or blistered
- New weakness of your eyebrow, eyelid or lip movement
- Pain that is not controlled by simple painkillers

Questions or concerns

Call the clinic on **0151 380 0055**. If the line is busy, please leave a message — all voicemails and website contact forms are monitored and the team will call you back. You can also email **treatment@pinewoodsclinic.com**. Outside clinic hours, call NHS 111 for urgent advice.

SECTION 11

My recovery notes

Your nurse or surgeon will complete these details with you.

Procedure (facelift / necklift / both)

Date of surgery

Surgeon

Bandage / drain removal

Stitches or clips (removal date)

Review appointment

Medication to take home

Questions for my review

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This leaflet provides general information and does not replace the individual advice of your surgeon. Document: PIL-FACE · Version 2.0 · Issued September 2026 · Review due September 2028.



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