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Confessions of a Plastic Surgeon

An Interview With Steven Teitelbaum

Teitelbaum is a Santa Monica-based plastic surgeon.

I specialize in breast augmentation. Most of my patients have done a lot of research and know what they want. About half are in their 20s, have always had small breasts, and finally want to “look like a woman,” as I’ve heard a few say. The other half used to have large breasts, but pregnancy and nursing deflated them; they want a refill. It is an unfortunate misperception that the typical augmentation patient looks like she has coconuts in her bra. When I meet a patient, I try to make her feel comfortable, so we talk for a while before the exam. Women who have had children aren’t usually embarrassed. Sometimes a younger patient will shyly pull the gown to just below her shoulders, only exposing the very tops of her breasts. In that case, I might make a joke, talk some more, and make it clear that I understand how she’s feeling. That usually ameliorates most of the embarrassment. We discuss her goals, expectations, lifestyle, and whether what she wants is possible. Occasionally I will say no to doing surgery. When a patient says she wants larger breasts for her acting career or to satisfy a boyfriend—without clearly demonstrating that she wants them for herself—I won’t do it. There are times when small-breasted patients ask for double-Ds, but such a change always looks fake and, worse still, stretches the skin. I won’t do that, either. There is no one right size breast implant—it depends on each patient’s body. Breasts should look full and blend gradually into the chest, but they should never be spherical, because a real breast doesn’t look like a ball. —INTERVIEW BY DANIELLE PERGAMENT

If a patient wants larger breasts to satisfy a boyfriend, I won’t do it.

Om So Clean

Yoga requires resting your face on the same mat where your bare feet have been. Enough said. Loren Bassett, an instructor at Pure Yoga in New York City and creator of Bassett’s Boot Camp, shares how to keep a yoga mat clean.

Cover up.

If you’re practicing hot yoga or just sweat a lot, lay a towel over your mat (Bassett likes the Skidless Yoga Towels by Yogitoes). It will absorb extra moisture, prevent slipping, and can easily be thrown in the washer.

Disinfect.

Every few weeks, mix a teaspoon of tea tree oil, a natural antibacterial, into a spray bottle full of water and spritz your mat. Wipe it down and then leave it unrolled until it’s completely dry.

Wash.

About once a month (or once a week if your mat sees a lot of action), throw the mat in the washing machine on a cool, delicate cycle with a gentle detergent, like Woolite. Just don’t put it in the dryer—the material will melt.

Move on.

Mats can last a long time if cared for properly. One sign you need a new one: “You stand up and bits of the mat are all over you,” Bassett says.

—ALEXANDRA OWENS

Ask Allure

No matter what the label says, deodorants always leave white streaks on my clothes. Am I doing something wrong?

—Jean, Brooklyn

All these products work by depositing a film on the underarms, and marks can happen—especially if you overapply them, which many people do. You only need one swipe under each arm. You could also try a clear solid or gel or a clear aerosol spray. If you do get streaks, they can usually be removed with a mixture of equal parts water and rubbing alcohol; those deodorant sponges work, too. —Jim Hammer



Hammer is a cosmetic chemist in Easton, Massachusetts.