



EXECUTIVE VOICE

# Being Different: An Interview With Hollywood's Go-To Plastic Surgeon



Whether it is something simple like botox or fillers, to things more like rhinoplasty, awake liposuction and breast augmentation, Hollywood's go-to plastic surgeon **Dr. Michael Hakimi** has dealt with it all. Being in the middle of Hollywood, Dr. Hakimi has seen the good and bad when it comes to fixing up his patients (which include countless stars), and during COVID-19 he has seen an increase in people wanting to go under his knife. From disrupting the **plastic surgery** industry, to educating us on why it is important to hire someone who is *Board Certified*, Dr. Hakimi chats with us about it all!

## 1. How did you decide you wanted to become a plastic surgeon?

My father is a surgeon and my mother is a nurse. I developed a strong interest in medicine early on, likely fueled by early exposure. It was during my surgical rotation in medical school when I decided to pursue plastic surgery. I found it fascinating to be able to restore form and function in individuals. One day you do a facelift, the next day liposuction, another day total mommy makeover. The knowledge of anatomy required from head to toe, attention to details, fitness in surgical detail all fed very well into my OCD.

## 2. **Why was it important to become Board Certified as well?**

These days we have more options than ever as far as the procedures available to people and also people performing them. It is very confusing and difficult for people to do a thorough research on different procedures let alone surgeons performing them. Some are plastic surgeons, some cosmetic surgeons, some double triple board certified and some are dermatological surgeons just to name a few. Board Certification in Plastic Surgery means that your surgeon has done specific training in plastic surgery for at least five years after medical school and is held by the highest standards in the industry. These plastic surgeons have gone through very rigorous training and in order to maintain their board certification have to perform surgeries in very regulated and safe environments and continue to provide that level of service. This is as opposed to other titles that would allow physicians trained in other specialties such as internal medicine or emergency medicine, for example, to perform cosmetic procedures after taking a brief course. Not to say board certification gives you any insight into the surgeon's artistic ability. But it is the minimum you can ask for to be assured of the safety, knowledge and technical ability of the plastic surgeon.

## 3. **What types of surgeries do you find the most enjoyment performing these days?**

Awake liposuction is truly a joy. We are able to take up to 5 L in a couple of hours with minimum downtime. Most of these patients have been shy and self-conscious about part of their bodies. They get the procedure done and in a few weeks they send me photos of them going out, showing off their jawline, getting ready for a date etc. It is amazing to watch the profound change this has on patients' lives and their attitude.

## 4. **During the pandemic, which types of surgeries are on the rise?**

It is the liposuction for the younger patients and facelift for the more mature patients. The gyms were closed for over a year. People were sitting at home, not working out, stress eating, and not even had to leave to go to work as most are still working from home. Now that things are looking better and people are getting some level of normalcy back they want to look their best. They want to travel, see their friends and family, take photos and share them on social media. And no diet works fast enough as one of my patients said recently. Of course, liposuction is not a weight loss method. It is meant for people that already are on a good diet and exercise regimen and it is meant to help remove fat from unwanted areas. But let's face it, in this day and age we want immediate gratification, most dramatic results in the shortest time with the least amount of work.

We notice “imperfections” much more easily in photos and videos. Now on top of this, you add odd camera angles and bad lighting we have when on Zoom or other online meetings, and you can see why people are increasingly asking for facial rejuvenation procedures such as facelift, or double chin removal. And it helps that wearing a mask pretty much covers the swelling and bruising after the surgery. So these patients can go out shopping the week after their surgery and people wouldn't notice the swelling.

#### **5. How do you feel or know that your practice has disrupted the cosmetic surgery industry?**

Being different has always been my driving force in life and I think that reflects in my practice also. In my surgical practice, I do the majority of my liposuctions and even fat transfers under local anesthesia or what they call “awake surgery.”

Not going under general anesthesia makes for a faster recovery, and no anesthesia complications. People that come to me are mostly type A personalities, people that like to have control over their environment and don't want to undergo general anesthesia. There are people that would have gone to freeze their fat only to avoid anesthesia knowing that the result is never as impressive as liposuction. They come in one day, have their liposuction done and they will be back to the gym without any restrictions in about two weeks.

The “Med Spa” portion of my practice probably is the most unconventional. It is an on demand botox and fillers service where you go online and book a nurse to come to your house, work or hotel to give you your botox, fillers or IV therapy. Why take a few hours off your day to go to an office for your Botox? Why not get it tonight when you are home after work? You had a fun weekend and need that IV therapy to get you ready for Monday? Now they are all available to you online ([www.WIVOHEALTH.com](http://www.WIVOHEALTH.com)) and you can get them 24/7 at your house, hotel or at work. All patients are interviewed by me via a HIPAA compliant video conferencing system and the treatments are rendered by nurses that I personally pick from the best in the industry.

#### **6. How is it working with top celebrities in Hollywood?**

It is a humbling privilege when anyone, celebrity or not, trusts you with their face or body. It is tedious work in the operating room but truly a joy to be able to make such a positive impact on someone's appearance which most often goes beyond just looks and improves their self esteem and a lot more. At the end of the day celebrities have the very same concerns and insecurities that we all do.

#### **7. What is your ultimate goal?**

My ultimate goal is not to have regrets when I am old. Every day, every decision I make is based on that. They say there are two types of regrets: having done something or not having done something. Early on in my life I learned that I would much rather regret having done something as opposed to the alternative. I don't like to think I should have, could have or what if... You will be surprised, if you live like that, you

won't have many regrets.

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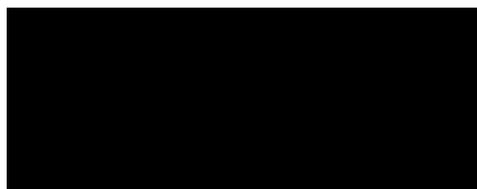
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