

the bottom line

Blame it on J. Lo, big butts are in. And Patricia,* a 31-year-old saleswoman didnit think hers was up to par. The Palm Springs resident got breast implants in her 20s and was satisfied with the outcome, but she still hated the way she looked in pants, and she knew she would be complete with just a little boost in the caboose. About the same time, she'd heard that more and more women were getting buttocks implants and she realized she'd found the perfect fit.

"My mom was begging me not to get it," says Patricia. "But I thought, hey, if I don't like it, I can keep it for a few years and get it taken out."

Like a good saleswoman, Patricia did her homework. She researched doctors in her area and in LA, determined to find one that she could feel good about. One that was experienced enough with the new procedure to make her feel comfortable. "I didn't want to be someone's guinea pig," she says. "I needed to look at the implant and see what it felt like."

Patricia found Dr. Robert Rey, a plastic surgeon in Los Angles who is now the star of the E! television network's Doctor 90210. Rey is a pioneer of endoscopic butt implant surgery, which limits scarring by using a camera to insert the implants.

According to Rey, buttocks implants are becoming more and more popular thanks to women like Jennifer Lopez. He says in diet-crazed America, more women are lean and do not have large breasts or buttocks naturally, so they look to surgery to create the effect.

Using the endoscopic method, doctors make a small incision just above the



tailbone to insert the implant, which is firmer than a breast implant to prevent it from bursting. The surgery and healing process is very similar to breast augmentation, he says. According to Rey, whose show is in its second season, butt augmentation has grown by 670 percent in the past year.

After talking to Rey and researching the procedure, Patricia decided to give it a shot. "I was so scared, even up to the day of the appointment," she says.

For Patricia, a self-described worka-holic, the healing process was not as casy as she expected. Against the advice of her doctor, she returned to work and light exercise about a week after the procedure, causing her wound to open up and never heal. Finally, about five months after she cooled down her fast-paced life, her incision sealed and she got to fully enjoy the finished product. "Now, I love them and I notice a lot of people checking me out," she says. "And they feel real!"

*Name has been changed for privacy

The cutting edge

Overall, the number of cosmetic procedures in the United States is up. Non-surgical procedures are growing in popularity, but tradillonal procedures are also in demand, according to the American Society for Assthetic Plastic Surgery. Here's a look at some other fun facts from the ASAPS survey, released earlier this year.

Women had 90 percent of all cosmetic procedures, up 16 percent from 2002.

The procedures they wanted most? Liposuction and Botox.

- The number of surgical procedures on women jumped 21 percent, while
- non-surgical skyrocketed 57 percent.

 Women from ages 35 to 50 make up the bulk of plastic surgery patients.
- The top surgical procedure for people 18 and under is rhinoplasty. The top non-surgical procedure is laser hair removal.
- The number of women getting butt lifts has increased 670 percent in the last year alone.