

# more or less?

Forget the full-on facelift. These days excellent results can be achieved with a combination of less invasive treatments explains Gold Coast cosmetic doctor **Dr John Flynn**. Lauren Alexander reports.

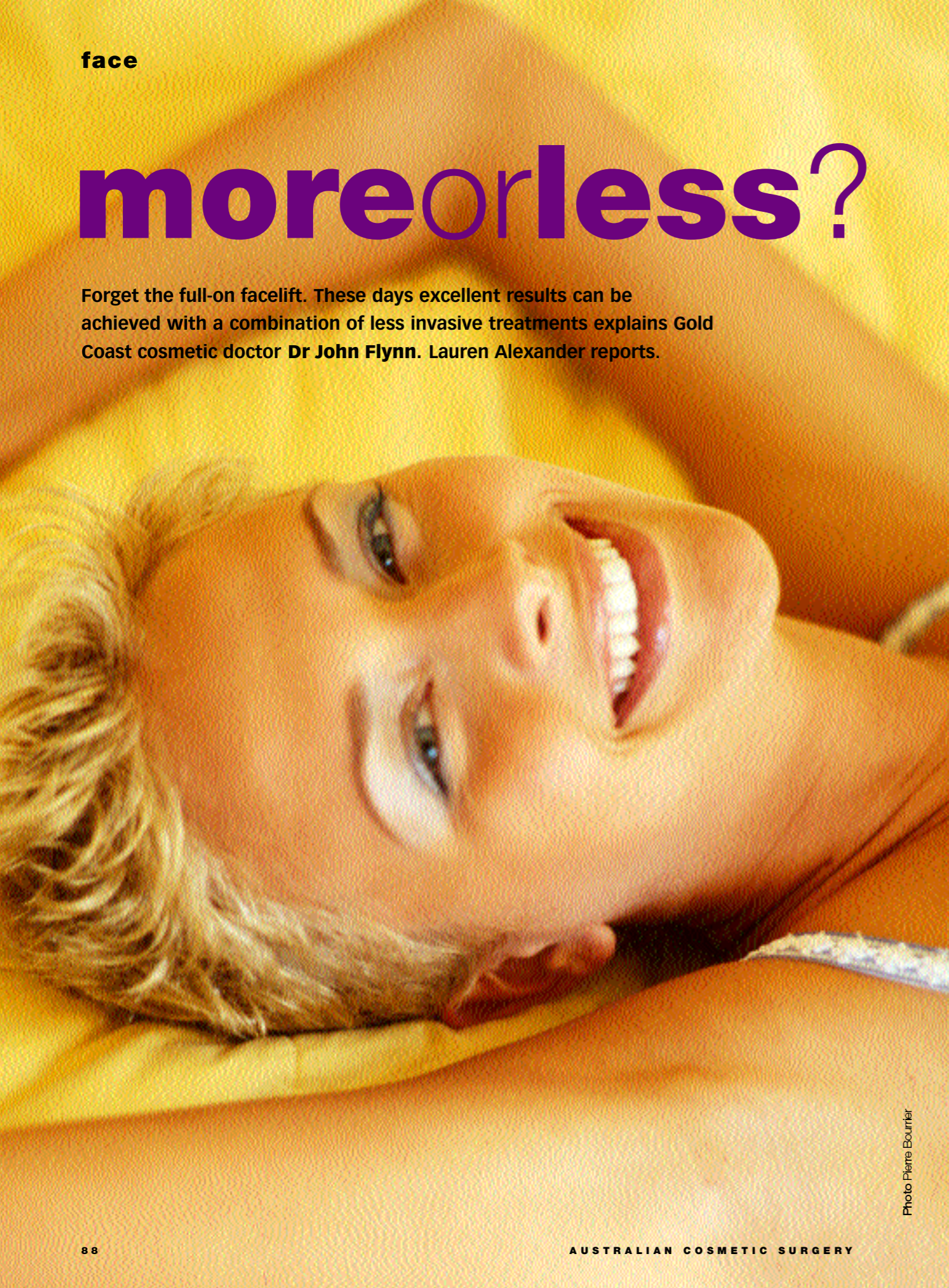


Photo Pierre Bourrier

With advances in both technology and techniques, it seems the current thinking of cosmetic surgery practitioners is towards the philosophy of 'less is more'. In fact, more and more patients are asking for advice on how to achieve the best cosmetic outcomes with the least amount of surgery.

Facelift surgery is still the best option for sagging features, too much skin or reversing gravity. But now choosing to have 'softer' non-surgical procedures earlier is taking precedence over this 'harder' option. In fact, patients are now showing a clear preference for having smaller procedures earlier in order to postpone the need for more radical surgery later in life.

There is a lot that can be done before we need to go as far as a facelift. Cosmetic doctors are now using a combination of the most appropriate procedures and treatments to achieve some excellent results. There is rarely a single process to fix a range of problems. Options include small facelifts (such as the mini-lift or s-lift), neck lifts, brow lifts, eyelid surgery, laser resurfacing, cheek implants, facial fat transfers and facial liposculpture, all of which are becoming less invasive with quicker recovery times and can be combined with nonsurgical options.

The best combination for each patient is there to be found but it requires a thorough assessment of the patient's individual issues. A consultation with your doctor is the best step to finding this combination. There is a greater onus on the doctor to have the skills to be able to create the best outcome for the patient. We are all unique and the doctor's skill lies in retaining the elements that make us who we are. The important thing to remember is that good cosmetic facial surgery should rejuvenate – it should not make the patient look like somebody else.

It is also helpful if the patient has done some prior research. They need to understand their options and their doctor needs to encourage them to take their time when deciding on a cosmetic procedure. Often it is better to have a series of smaller procedures. By taking cosmetic surgery gradually – over a period of months or even years – a patient is more likely to be satisfied with the outcomes.

For instance, a patient may have a combination of eyelid surgery and a peel. Some time later, when she is accustomed to her rejuvenated 'look', she might decide to have something further and perhaps a laser resurfacing or photo rejuvenation may be in order.

Popular cosmetic treatments, many of which are nonsurgical, such as Collagen and Restylane, to fill facial lines and create fuller lips, and Botox injections to relax muscles and help prevent lines from forming, also need

to be included in this programme of smaller procedures.

When it comes to facelifts, a series of mini or small lifts spaced over a number of years is usually preferable to a single, more dramatic and intensive lift. Not only is it less obvious that someone has 'had surgery' but the results are more natural looking.

The concept of maintenance rather than rescue is also worth considering when it comes to cosmetic surgery. It makes a lot of sense to take care of our skin. Tone, complexion and skin quality are essential elements for a fresher, clearer look and surgery doesn't address these issues very well.

It is not good enough to just lift and tighten. The skin must also be in top condition. This will aid the healing process with any surgery and in many cases, improving skin tone and quality may avoid or at least reduce the need for or extent of surgery.

Skin tone and quality need to be addressed by a good skincare programme such as the Soft Skin Programme. Sometimes there may be many wrinkles and lines but the problem is more one of skin texture and quality so

injectables or implants alone are just not the answer. In such circumstances skin rejuvenation is required to help replace the 'glow' in the complexion.

Used correctly, microdermabrasions and peels can help rescue tone and quality, and improve minor pigment blemishes and unevenness. Patients often think of medical strength peels as causing discolouration and crusting that obliges hiding

away for a week to heal. In the Soft Skin Programme, peel formulations are altered to find an efficient blend and applied as part of a weekly course.

The Soft Skin Programme, a combination of effective at-home skincare products and a specially designed microdermabrasion and skin peels programme, will improve many skin quality issues.

Photorejuvenation (non-burning light therapy) is also a good option for vascular blemishes such as 'broken' capillaries or dilated and prominent veins plus pigmentation and some skin conditions like rosacea. Of course for more severe cases, laser resurfacing could be the process of choice.

The Photofacial and Soft Skin Programmes are often used together to achieve the best results and these programmes are flexible enough to cope with most facial skin problems.

The bottom line is the more patients do to prevent their skin from ageing the better the results will be – no matter what the procedure. By looking to the right procedures, targeted to the patient's specific concern, 'less is more' could very well be the best option. **acsm**

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