

An about face about non-invasive plasma soft surgery

 By [Nicci Botha](#)

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I'm of an age now where my face is a little blurred around the edges. Not because I need new glasses, but because my jawline is not as sharp as it used to be, and years of running without proper sun protective have made my laugh lines just that much deeper.



But I've never really thought about doing anything about it, chalking my wrinkles and not-so-firm skin as badges of life experience. And I must admit I've always been a tad scornful of people who have "work" done on their faces, branding it vanity.

So, when Dr Johan Botha offered me a trial of the [Plexr](#) non-invasive eyelift, I raised an eyebrow (literally and figuratively). After all, how can you remove wrinkles without going under the knife?

How it works

The Plexr device uses plasma energy, where the difference in voltage generates a small electrical arc, or plasma discharge. The discharge results in the sublimation of fluids contained in superficial parts of the skin, without any unwanted heat transmission to adjacent tissue.

In other words, it can turn the superficial layers of the epidermis into vapour, without causing thermal damage to adjacent tissues, preserving the deeper layers; and drastically reducing any potential permanent skin damage.

Botha explains that because the therapy is non-invasive, the recovery time is much shorter and costs considerably less than conventional cosmetic surgery. He pegs the cost at around R15,000, but he says it varies according to the practitioner.



The procedure

After filling in a medical questionnaire and Botha examining my face, he decided to do an eye-lift and remove the folds in front of my ears. I didn't know this but as you age, you develop these ripples on the side of your face, which a dead giveaway of your true age to medical professionals. The problem is you can't often look at this area, so most of us don't even they are there.

First he applied some anaesthetic cream around my eyes and the side of my face. He put a dab on my lip as a test area. The effect was the same as an injection at the dentist. My lip felt numb and fat, so it was obviously working.

Botha then started the procedure. What does it feel like? Nothing more than a burning, stinging sensation, but it does get a bit irritating after a while. You can call time whenever you need a break, but the whole procedure only takes about half an hour so it hardly seemed worth stopping.

The results

Afterwards you look like one of the alien life forms, the crew of the Starship *Enterprise* would encounter. Tiny, brown freckles dot the skin that's been treated.

The post-procedure care regimen is critical. You need to protect the area with a UV block to stop scarring. For that, you'll receive a small pot of foundation and one of zinc cream, for day and night use respectively, with instructions to ice the sites every hour.

Botha also warned that even though this wasn't open surgery, it was still trauma to the body and there will be some swelling.

The next day, I looked like I'd been slugged by someone who had spent time in the boxing ring. But that was probably because I forgot to ice regularly.

But that faded quickly, and within a day or two, the scabs formed and just short of a week they had all fallen off.

What I was left with was a much fresher, younger looking eye area and no more folds on the sides, although Botha points out it takes three months for the collagen to plump up and the full benefits to be seen.

Would I do it again? Definitely.

ABOUT NICCI BOTHA

Nicci Botha has been wordsmithing for more than 20 years, covering just about every subject under the sun and then some. She's strung together words on sustainable development, maritime matters, mining, marketing, medical, lifestyle... and that elixir of life - chocolate. Nicci has worked for local and international media houses including Primedia, Caxton, Lloyd's and Reuters. Her new passion is digital media.

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