

TULSA SURGICAL ARTS

7322 E 91st St, Tulsa, OK 74133 · 918-392-7900 · tulsasurgicalarts.com

Oklahoma Surgical Arts · 12400 Saint Andrew's Dr, Oklahoma City, OK 73120 · 405-751-0042

Body Contouring After Major Weight Loss

PLAIN-LANGUAGE PATIENT GUIDE

What this surgery is

After a large weight loss, skin often cannot shrink back. Hanging skin can cause rashes, hygiene problems, and clothing trouble. Body contouring is a family of surgeries that remove that extra skin.

Parts include a tummy tuck or lower body lift, arm lift, thigh lift, and breast reshaping. These surgeries are staged. That means two or more separate operations spaced months apart.

What happens during it

1. You get anesthesia (medicine that makes you sleep) for each stage.
2. The surgeon removes rolls of extra skin along planned lines.
3. The deeper tissue is lifted and anchored so the result holds.
4. The cuts are closed in layers. Drains are often used for a few days.
5. Each stage takes several hours. An overnight stay is common.

Main risks

Every surgery has risks. Here are the main ones for this surgery, in plain words. We will go over all of them with you in person.

- Wound healing problems are the most common issue. Long cuts and thinner tissue heal slower.
- Fluid buildup under the skin (a seroma) that may need draining.
- Long scars. They are the trade for removing the skin. They fade but never vanish.
- Blood clots. Early walking after each stage lowers the risk.

- Low protein or low vitamin levels slow healing. We check labs and fix them before surgery.
- Bleeding. Some bleeding can need another trip to the operating room.
- Infection. Signs are spreading redness, warmth, pus, or fever.
- Scars. Every cut leaves a scar. Most fade over a year. Some stay raised or wide.
- Numb skin near the cuts. Feeling usually returns over months. Small areas can stay numb.
- Blood clots in the legs. A clot can travel to the lungs. That is an emergency.
- Problems from anesthesia (the medicine that makes you sleep). These are rare in healthy people.
- Uneven results. The two sides of the body are never a perfect match.
- The need for another surgery to fix a problem or improve the result.

What recovery is like

Before surgery

Your weight should be stable for about a year. Good protein intake matters.

First week

Sore and slow. Walk a little every few hours. Help at home is a must.

Two weeks

Drains usually out. Many return to desk work.

Six weeks

Full activity for most people, until the next planned stage.

One year

Scars fade. Results from all stages come together.

When to call us right away

In any emergency, call 911 first.

Call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department now — do not drive yourself, do not wait:

- Chest pain or pressure, shortness of breath, or trouble breathing.
- Fainting, sudden confusion, or weakness on one side of the body.
- You have chest pain or trouble breathing.
- One leg swells, or one calf hurts more than the other.
- Blood soaks a bandage and does not slow down with gentle pressure.

Otherwise call us at 918-392-7900, day or night, if:

- A growing bulge of fluid under the skin, or a wound edge that turns dark.
- You have a fever of 101.5°F (38.6°C) or higher.
- Redness spreads out from a cut, or you see pus.
- Your pain gets much worse instead of better.
- A wound pulls open, or stitches come apart.

Reviewed and approved by Austin Kluis, MD — 2026-08-23.

This guide is for general learning only. It is not medical advice for you. Your plan may differ. Always follow the instructions your surgeon gives you.