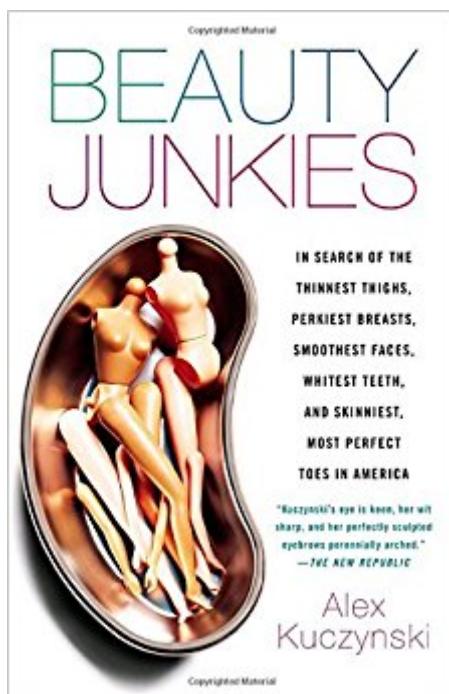


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# Beauty Junkies: In Search Of The Thinnest Thighs, Perkiest Breasts, Smoothest Faces, Whitest Teeth, And Skinniest, Most Perfect Toes In America



## Synopsis

A star writer for the New York Times Styles section captures the follies, frauds, and fanaticism that fuel the American pursuit of youth and beauty in a wickedly revealing excursion into the burgeoning business of cosmetic enhancement. Americans are aging faster and getting fatter than any other population on the planet. At the same time, our popular notions of perfect beauty have become so strict it seems even Barbie wouldn't have a chance of making it into the local beauty pageant. Aging may be a natural fact of life, but for a growing number of Americans its hallmarks—wrinkles, love handles, jiggling flesh—are seen as obstacles to be conquered on the path to lasting, flawless beauty. In *Beauty Junkies* Alex Kuczynski, whose sly wit and fearless reporting in the Times has won her fans across the country, delivers a fresh and irresistible look at America's increasingly desperate pursuit of ultimate beauty by any means necessary. From a group of high-maintenance New York City women who devote themselves to preserving their looks twenty-four hours a day, to a "surgery safari" in South Africa complete with "after" photographs of magically rejuvenated patients posing with wild animals, to a podiatrist's office in Manhattan where a "foot face-lift" provides women with the right fit for their \$700 Jimmy Choos, Kuczynski portrays the all-American quest for self-transformation in all its extremes. In New York, lawyers become Botox junkies in an effort to remain poker-faced. In Los Angeles, women of an uncertain age nip and tuck their most private areas, so that every inch of their bodies is as taut as their lifted faces. Across the country, young women graduating from high school receive gifts of breast implants "from their parents. As medicine and technology stretch the boundaries of biology, Kuczynski asks whether cosmetic surgery might even be part of human evolution, a kind of cosmetic survival of the fittest "or firmest? With incomparable portraits of obsessive patients and the equally obsessed doctors who cater to their dreams, *Beauty Junkies* examines the hype, the hope, and the questionable ethics surrounding the advent of each new miraculous technique. Lively and entertaining, thought-provoking and disturbing, *Beauty Junkies* is destined to be one of the most talked-about books of the season.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

A podiatrist shortens toes so her clients can fit into Jimmy Choos, and a lawyer who's argued before the Supreme Court routinely lies to a succession of doctors to feed his Botox habit. As this depressing survey of a global beauty business rooted in self-hatred and a fear of aging demonstrates, an unfortunate few are literally dying to be pretty: the Nigerian first lady expired after liposuction and a tummy tuck, and Olivia Goldsmith, whose novels lampooned middle-aged women afraid to look their age, succumbed during a chin tuck. New York Times reporter Kuczynski has attitude to spare as she outs Sarah Jessica Parker and Nicole Kidman as probable Botox users, and assesses the "traumatized" naked body of a litigator who's showing off the results of a total body lift after gastric-bypass surgery: "to be honest and brutal and bitchy, she doesn't look that great." A canny and witty guide to the excesses of a conformist society with more money than sense, Kuczynski discloses her own beauty addiction in the form of Botox, collagen derived from cadavers and fetal foreskin cells, liposuction, eyelid lifts and eventually a botched Restylane treatment that left her housebound for days with a disfigured lip. (Oct. 17) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

New York Times reporter Kuczynski's -docu-mentary-like narrative on the U.S. cosmetic industry is at once an exposé, a gripping series of related articles, and an autobiography. The author has produced harrowing tales of our denial of aging--for men and for women. She has done her homework many times over, interviewing patients and doctors, talking to company executives who support the industry (for instance, imaging systems and pharmaceuticals), attending trade shows, and researching past news. What emerges is information about every surgery under the knife, including gastric bypass, breast augmentation, and liposuction; all are painstakingly detailed in the author's engaging, hard-to-put down fashion. When she herself confesses to an abnormal need for

Botox and other dermatological enhancements, and when her own lip replumping goes awry, it is a clear cry for Americans of all sizes and shapes and ages to seriously and continuously reexamine their sense of selves--via a process that's much more than skin deep. Barbara JacobsCopyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I purchased this book when I was having a difficult time in regards to my body image. Prior to this book, I underwent cosmetic surgery on my breasts with implants. Since day one, I was unhappy - not with the results - but with myself and my choice. I did not feel like myself anymore. I was looking for a book in which I could relate to why this culture emphasizes body image so strongly. This book helped me see that many women and men go through the same things, some fall pray to surgery, while some cannot afford it, or choose not to. Alex Kuczynski has an empowered writing style. I read this book in all of three days and loved every page of it. It was hard to put down. She discovers her own decision to undergo plastic surgery and walks you through her journey. I found this book helpful for me and I have since decided to reverse my decision and get to a more comfortable place in my life by reducing my implants for now... then eventually removing them all together. To put yourself through something equivalent to chinese foot binding all for vanity is beyond my scope of happiness. Since my own surgery, I have decided what really is important in my life, and surgery did not make me happy.I found humor, strength, answer to my questions, and more important, guidance with this book. If you are thinking about surgery, read this book first. It may help you really think about your decision and offer you more insight before entering into a irreversible journey of cosmetic surgery. Although implantable procedures are technically reversible, the damage done to your body, as well as the stretching of your skin, is not reversible. She discusses the realities of surgery, pains, mistakes, malpractice and quite literally, the poisons of surgery - mentally and physically. Don't be fooled, she is quite unbiased in this subject entirely because she herself has received more than one procedures herself.

I read the paperback version of Alex Kuczynski's book, so I'll stick my review here. I don't understand why the publisher decided to muddle things up by re-launching the paperback as a new-ish piece of work with a brand new subtitle of "In Search of the Thinnest Thighs, Perkiest Breasts, Smoothest Faces, Whitest Teeth, and Skinniest, Most Perfect Toes in America." Not only is that a sales-flopping mouthful, it's also off-base. First, she hardly talks about toes. There's just a fleeting reference to them, no longer than a paragraph. Second, the book does a 360 degree look at

the cosmetic surgery industry, not just the 'search' which sounds like it's purely a consumer-centric look. The subtitle of the hardcover was more spot-on: "Inside Our \$15 Billion Obsession With Cosmetic Surgery." That's a better indication of what's inside. On page 215 of the paperback, the author notes that "(t)he multiple eyes on the cover of this book are mine..." Well, not on my paperback, with its lame 'Barbie doll pieces in a surgery pan' photo that probably got scooped off of iStockPhoto. That text should have got changed for the paperback version. Plus, the cover concept of the hardcover version - 16 marked-up instances of the author's very attractive eye - is brilliant: it completely captures the spirit of the book, in which not only does Ms. Kuczynski report on the cosmetic industry, she participates in it. In fact, as her reporting unfolds, so too does her immersion as a patient...or, at least, her level of revelations. We're told of her eyelid surgery, botox treatments, regular dermabrasion sessions, liposuction and Restylane lip injections. Some of these are successful (the eyelid surgery is cast that way), others have innocuous and humorous endings (she's satisfied with the liposuction until getting busted at the pool by an eight-year-old). But the Restylane treatment goes horribly wrong, and it's that event that brings with it talk of addiction and a reconsideration of the amount of risk she's taking on. Back to the paperback/hardcover thing: Even I am confused here: none of the hardcover reviews make it here to the paperback (that alone should give any publisher pause); and 's "Better Together" pairing agent gets fooled into recommending that I buy the hardcover together with the paperback.

This was a personalized psychological study into the history of cosmetic surgery through its earliest beginnings with plastic and corrective surgery beginning back in the 1400's to today, or at least the today of 2006. The historical parts were quite interesting without getting as technical and boring as a medical book would. The author speaks from first hand experience of the mental and physical anguish that women [and it IS primarily women] go through to maintain an aura of youth and beauty, which are for all of us [males and females] a diminishing commodity whether we want to admit it or not. The photos of the author on the jacket and website show her to be a very attractive woman herself, so it is somewhat heart-wrenching to think she didn't see herself as such. I found the book to be easily readable, funny at times, poignant in places, somewhat sarcastic in others, and also a little long winded as some other reviewers have noted. But all in all it was enjoyable to find the honesty and pathos in book written for an audience I assume somewhat different from my own. Try it, I think you'll like it.

great read

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