



Lipo. Porcelain teeth. Tummy tucks, face-lifts, breast lifts. Meet five people who bought their way to beauty—and love the results

TOTAL MAKEOVER

"I'm going to be really poor for a couple of years, but it will be worth it," says Quiñones (before, in 2001, right; after, in Los Angeles, left; and in a presurgery examination with Dr. Brent Moelleken).

Even as more than 20,000 people applied for all-expenses-paid radical redos on the new season of ABC's *Extreme Makeover*, many Americans are revamping themselves on their own dime—despite potentially serious health consequences. When her plastic surgeon warned that the risks ranged from infection to death, Donna Timmons listened carefully. "They are literally cutting you apart and putting you back together," she says. So did the warning give her second thoughts? "I couldn't get there fast enough," she admits. Neither, it seems, could the other determined people whose stories follow.

Alicia Quiñones

The new Alicia Quiñones made her official debut on Sept. 6 at 2:35 in the afternoon in the Gap store at the Beverly Center in Los Angeles. "I've waited since I was 10 years old for this," she said as she checked out the fit of a pair of brown boot-cut cords. "I got into a size 8! Low cut! I can't believe it!" Given that she was a size 24 just 18 months ago, Quiñones, 24, has reason to celebrate. But her 130-lb. weight loss, much

of it achieved after gastric bypass surgery in April 2002, isn't the only thing contributing to her new confidence. After the 5'4" Quiñones shrank to a size 12 within a year, she wanted more. "I wanted to be fabulous," she says. "I wanted to wear my sister's cool, skinny jeans."

In August Quiñones, an office manager, checked into a Beverly Hills clinic for a tummy tuck and a thigh lift. A week later she was back for breast work that took her from a size 38B to 36C. Quiñones then bleached her teeth, lightened her hair and began working out to hold her weight at 140 lbs. While she pays off her debt, she has moved in with mom Coco, 54, and sister Claudia, 25. "Alicia," says Coco, "looks beautiful now, like she is on the inside." Adds Claudia: "We're so proud of her—though every time I see her she's wearing my clothes."



- > gastric bypass
- > breast lift and augmentation
- > tummy tuck
- > thigh lift
- > hair color and highlights
- > tooth bleaching
- > total cost: \$35,000