

# The high maintenance women

## Their ages add up to 156 and they spent £29,000 on plastic surgery – was it worth it?

**NIKKI** Kingston found fame this week – not only for her friendship with married Lord Archer, but also for her amazing looks. But at 51, her youthful appearance may not be all down to nature. She is said to have had breast enhancement, liposuction, calf implants, collagen injections, botox injections, and tattooed eyeliner, and her first call on tiring home was the hairdresser.

**LOUISE HANCOCK** speaks to three housewives who have also spent thousands of pounds in pursuit of eternal youth. Just like Nikki, they are High Maintenance Women...



**JENNIFER** Age: 49  
**SURGERY:** Face lift, liposuction, nose reshaping  
**COST:** £12,000

**JENNIFER MITCHELL** (before and after) above) is an alternative therapist from Peterhead, Hampshire. She's been married to John, who runs his own technology company, for 27 years and has two children – Elliot, 11, and Charlotte, 17. She says:

“I INHERITED my mother's poor genes. In my family, all the women are cursed with round faces, heavy jowls and sagging necks as they get older. I used to look at my mother and think, 'God, is that what I've got to look forward to?'

And it doesn't help that my husband John is the Peter Pan of our family. At 40, six years younger than me, he can pass for a man in his early 30s.

Recently, I suggested I had a facelift ten years ago just before my 40th and said he would pay for me as my present.

My first reaction was excitement, and I really looked that way. But all the hundreds of hours spent choosing, researching, consulting, plucking my eyebrows and making up my face (not wasted).

Not surprisingly, I didn't speak to him for three days.

I forgave him eventually – he was only putting forward a practical solution to my constant complaints.

As for these, I decided I couldn't justify the cost. But after 40 I noticed my face gradually sagging more and more. Jowls appeared under my chin, as well as a deep crease of frown lines. It was turning into my mother.

So with my 50th birthday coming up in July, I felt it was time to give nature a helping hand. I've had a facelift, liposuction and a nose job, all within six to ten months.

I found the most incredible surgeon, Mr Alex Garcia, who explained everything to me in detail. I treated him instantly.

My husband offered to pay the operation as my 50th birthday present. As he says, it's a milestone in your life. I actually love the result and it's constantly complimenting me on how young I'm looking.

Other people say why I'm so jealous for having resorted to surgery, but

there is only so much you can do with make-up and exercise.

And I should know. I have spent hours, probably years, on the way I look. But the bottom line is, you can't fight age and stress without surgery.

I am obsessed by looking good, because people are judged by their appearance. I can't remember the last time I left the house without applying mascara and lipstick. From the age of 10, I've considered applying make-up as art. I used to love sitting in front of the mirror for hours, trying out lipsticks and scrubbing it out until my skin could apply another colour.

It's about making the most of your features and maintaining the anti-ageing genes that my family don't seem to use as much make-up. But I have to work to maintain my looks.

I've always had maintained my skin after a day since I was 13. I have very dry skin and use an expensive moisturiser which is about £10 for a 100ml tube. But I feel my skin's still sitting on the beach.

I use money by doing a lot of my beauty regime myself.

Instead of going to a beautician, I apply a face mask every few weeks. I pluck my own eyebrows and do my hair every couple of days. I like to wash the car and polish the outfit I'm wearing. I have at least 10 different bottles of nail varnish crammed into my makeup drawer.

I have a daily exercise regime which I've followed for 10 years. I used to do push ups and sit-ups, but with two children and a house to run, I don't have the time to go out to classes.

Instead, I use a Nordic track machine and light weights for 45 minutes every morning. I consider it my private time.



**EVA** Age: 51  
**SURGERY:** Face lift, eye- and brow lift, laser treatment  
**COST:** £5,000

**EVA** Love is a receptionist from Central London. She is divorced and has two daughters, Emma, 22, and Kate, 19. She says:

“IT'S like the scene in *When Harry Met Sally*. Meg Ryan's character is having an orgasm in a restaurant, and another customer says: 'I'll have whatever she's having.'

I've worked as a receptionist in a restaurant for three or four years. I've seen hundreds of women come in for consultations. They'll look through the glass and



Photos: ANDY MCCARTNEY

their first visit. But weeks later, when they come back for a final consultation after their surgery, they're so completely different. Younger, happier and prettier.

I've never considered myself vain but I wanted some of what they were having. But even before my facelift, I think I looked pretty good for someone who was nearly ready for their big day. I've been doing yoga for years – long before it became fashionable thanks to celebrities like Madonna.

I go religiously once a week, and I really believe that has helped to keep my figure slim. And I've always been fortunate that I don't have a loose appetite.

I never eat breakfast, lunch is a sandwich and I have some tea in the evening. My biggest weakness is curries – the hotter and spicier the better.

My biggest indulgence is probably my hair. It is my crowning glory.

Luckily I'm blonde, so the grey isn't too noticeable but I've had lowlights put in just to cover the odd hair for the last 20 years.

I've almost achieved to admit I go to the salon at least once a month. It's £30 for a cut, and all for the lightweight, a lot of money for one visit. My hairdresser isn't the worst every penny if only for the way you are treated.

As you walk in, you're greeted by smiling staff who tell you what you need after you've done some while you wait. I'm not sure I could ever go back to an ordinary salon!

But whatever you do, it's the skin on the face which shows your age first. Even though I've spent time and money and I put moisturising oils in my face every day, nothing can stop your skin from drooping as it ages.

Even though I wear those masks and moisturisers, they never stop over the lines on my face.

Finally, last July, I decided I wanted some of what these ladies were taking up and down Harley Street were having.

It was hard to justify spending that amount of money in one go, but it has been well worth it.

My daughters were sceptical. But they're friends, and they'll never let me go to a Mr Franks on Harley Street who was expert. He felt I needed a facelift, brow lift and eye-lift.

After the briefing had faded, which took just a few weeks, I was delighted with the results. I look younger and a little younger, which I feel is more to do with looking well than I am.

I don't consider myself vain, but I also hate the thought of looking like a grandmother-in-waiting.

So although I would be horrified to someone said I looked like someone dressed as Lamb, my favourite outfit is my black leather coat, treated with a milk-coloured jumper.

And I love the fact few people would ever guess that I'm nearly a pensioner. At the moment, I'm just planning to have another one done but it's a case of never say never.



**FIONA** Age: 49  
**SURGERY:** Liposuction, breast implant, botox injections  
**COST:** £11,000

**FIONA** Richmond, a housewife from Harlow, Essex, lives with her husband Bob, 45, and their three children, Amy, 19, Chloe, 15 and Charlie, 12. She says:

“AT 25, I would never have dreamed of paying money to have poison pumped into my body. But three times in the past year, I've handed over £300 for botox injections to remove wrinkles from my forehead.

And in the last two years, I've paid thousands on operations to improve my appearance. From 100lb, I managed to increase my bust size from an A to a C, and then to have a flat stomach. The first time I was 20 years.

I considered it money well spent, so I sent a hundred times letter. Staff sometimes say we should wear our wrinkle-free as a badge of honour. I don't want to look in the mirror and see a scary, lined old lady.

The operations weren't ideal, especially when you consider I'd enjoy the benefits for the next 20 years or more. I've worked and that it's not advised to penny a day.

At 45, and after three kids, my body was a wreck. I was fat-chested, my stomach looked as if I was wearing a bun bag and despite trips to the gym, I couldn't lose my stubborn thighs.

I found it particularly infuriating as I've always been a bit of a model. I've been getting highlights in my hair for years, regularly apply creams, hair packs and so on, as well as exercising a couple of times a week.

I believe it's a basic instinct to take pride in the way you look, so much so how old you are. My mother taught me that. She was 80 when she died, and she was asking me how collagen she had. She hated the lines around her mouth.

I sat a better person for taking care of myself. I'm certainly more confident and happy.

Before the liposuction on my thighs and tummy tuck I dreaded seeing people I had known for a couple of years.

I was convinced they were secretly thinking 'damn I see you are weighty.' When my husband complimented me on the camera, I had broken the Christmas Eve or silent number of the family.

My husband was wonderful when I told him what my plastic surgeon had thought but wonderful. He came out with all the right platitudes about how he loved me but when she was 70.

But I changed my diet a bit, and he said he'd pay if I really wanted it.

After the eye I was on top of the world. I took my first flight in my life and my husband knew my new sexy body. I think he's a genuine friend to show me he's in Britain.

I look at plastic surgery as putting my body in for a service at the garage. Nobody would drive a car with a broken mechanic, least of all regulars.