

AFTER

"I get more compliments now," says Selter (near her home in Roslyn, N.Y.), "and more attention from boys!"

Got a nose job

BEFORE



TEENAGE PLASTIC SURGERY

After these young people were harassed and bullied about their appearance, they decided to change their looks—and also ended up improving their lives

BY THAILAN PHAM

Jen Selter HAD SURGERY AT 15 SHE ENDURED INTERNET BULLYING ABOUT HER 'HUGE' NOSE

Jen Selter had always been self-conscious about her nose. For years she wouldn't leave the house without strategically applying bronzer "to make my nose look more narrow," she says, and at Roslyn High School in Roslyn Heights, N.Y., she had taken to wearing padded bras and stomach-baring tops to draw attention away from her face. But after her fellow teens began posting nasty comments on her Facebook page—"She's pretty, but her nose is huge" and "You look like a pelican"—Selter decided she was ready for a change. After visits with a therapist to determine "I was emotionally ready," says Selter, now 16, she had New York City surgeon Sam Rizk tweak her nose last summer. "I'm more comfortable with myself now, happier and confident," she says. "And I have so many more pictures of myself on Facebook!"

AFTER

"It makes me happy that I can be somebody walking down the street without people looking at me," says Escalante (in Los Angeles).

Had his ears pinned back

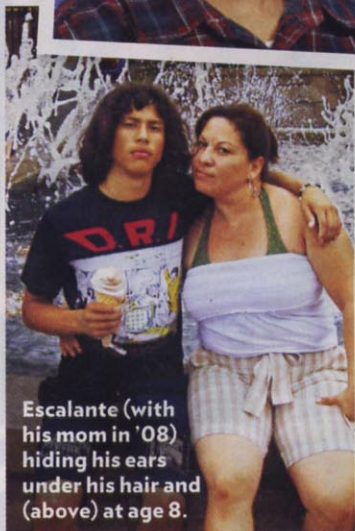
BEFORE

Jon Escalante HAD SURGERY AT 17

HE HID HIS 'DUMBO' EARS BEHIND HIS HAIR AND THEN LEARNED HE'D HAVE TO CUT IT TO PURSUE HIS DREAM CAREER

In elementary school Jon Escalante was uncomfortable hanging out in the hallways when kids called out, "What's up, Dumbo?" he says. "I'd just turn away because I didn't want to get into a fight." Then in sixth grade, Escalante came up with another way to avoid trouble: He grew out his hair until it was "curly and puffy," he says, and would have kept it that way forever if he didn't want to join a fire-service youth program, for which short hair was a prerequisite. "I was like, 'I

can't cut my hair,'" recalls the Sun Valley, Calif., native, who realized the way he felt about his ears was having a detrimental effect on his life. With the support of his mother, Escalante began looking into surgery, and in August 2008 he underwent an otoplasty with Beverly Hills surgeon Gabriel Chiu. Now 19 and a student at Los Angeles Valley College, where he is pursuing a fire-science degree, Escalante says, "I waited all my life to get surgery, and now I don't care if people see my ears!"



Escalante (with his mom in '08) hiding his ears under his hair and (above) at age 8.

HOW TO KNOW IF SURGERY IS THE RIGHT CHOICE

While many teens who undergo plastic surgery come out with "a better sense of themselves," says Beverly Hills plastic surgeon Robert Kotler, parents should follow certain guidelines before letting their children go under the knife. First, sign up your teen for at least four sessions with a therapist, advises family expert Mike Dow, host of the Disney Channel's *Imagineer That*, to determine if there are other issues, like depression, driving your child's

desire for surgery. "There's a difference between wanting to correct one thing versus wanting 10 surgeries," he notes. And be sure to find a board-certified cosmetic surgeon who is trained in pediatric surgery. "There are a lot of changes to the body and face that happen in adolescence," explains Dr. Richard Shaw, professor of psychiatry and pediatrics at Stanford University. "You want to make sure you're doing surgery at the right moment."