

FabDAILY

BEAUTY & CELEBRITY

By YASMIN HARISHA

WHEN Leah Jane woke up after going under the knife for the first time for a tummy tuck she was ecstatic.

The marketing consultant from West Sussex, had been left with excess skin after losing nine stone as a teenager and couldn't wait to fall in love with her new body.

But her thrill at having had the op was short-lived. She had expected to feel like a new woman, but the surgery had the opposite effect, leaving her fed up and craving more procedures.

Spending tens of thousands of pounds on surgery through a series of five invasive ops did not make her happy.

Sharing her body confidence struggles with 36,000 followers on TikTok, she wrote: "Not enough people talk about the work you have to do (mentally) to be happy with your body."

"I understand when people message me and say, 'I've had that surgery that you've had and I still hate my body.'"

Leah isn't alone. Plastic surgeon Dr Omar Tillo, CREO Clinic's Medical Director, says: "We've seen a trend in women returning for more cosmetic work if they find the need to tweak and contour what they have already had done. We see this a lot with fat transfer procedures."

"We don't offer surgery to vulnerable patients who are addicted to plastic surgery, instead we refer them to psychological treatment."

Leah, 39, says surgery might fix your body – for now – but it doesn't fix your life.

'Left with saggy skin'

She says: "Body shapes have changed so much over the years and beauty standards change all the time. If you are having surgery just for that reason, I think it can be quite dangerous. Why is it going to make you happier?"

"If you are doing it to be more attractive to men, that is quite a dangerous line to go down."

"If you are having surgery to make yourself feel good mentally, it's not going to work."

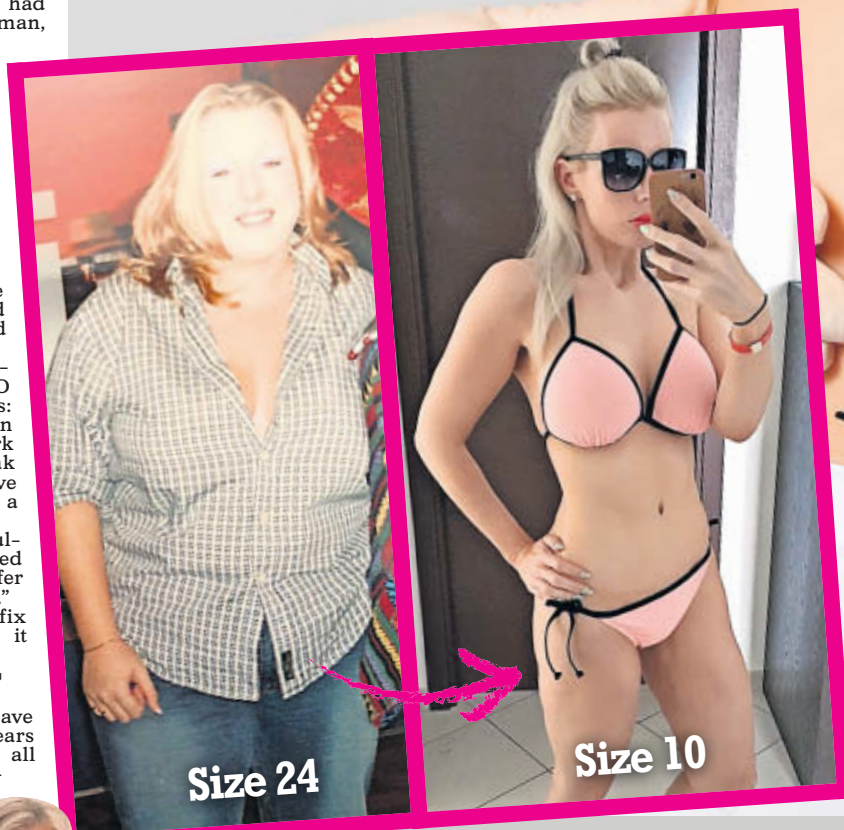
Leah's first foray into surgery started when she was 23, five years after she had lost 9st, going from size 24 to 10.

In her view, she was left with saggy skin, so she opted for a tummy tuck, which starts from £7,550, followed two years later by a breast lift – which can cost anything from £3,500 to £6,500.

But aged 31 Leah was still not happy, so she had a skin-tightening procedure on her thighs, which again did not come cheap. Prices start at £3,000 and Leah's parents helped her with the cost of procedures.

She says: "I was always a large girl growing up, but once I hit 18 I decided I wanted to lose weight, and I did, with diet and calorie counting. I was left

Would a few nip and tucks give the newly slimline Leah Jane the body confidence she craved?



Size 24

Size 10

NOW
Size 14

with an extreme amount of loose skin, which didn't help with my body confidence.

"A tummy tuck was the first surgery, then I had a breast uplift because my boobs were below my belly button."

Next was surgery on her thighs but complications meant she had to go under the knife twice more. Leah says: "It was a hard recovery. I had to get it stitched back up a second time because the skin sagged, and again because the scars were

dropping. I lost all that weight, I had different cosmetic surgeries to pull me in, but I still wasn't happy. I hated my body, and I hated how I looked, even though I was skinny."

"So even after spending all this money I still wanted to hide from everyone. I was paranoid, insecure and I didn't want people to see my body. I hated it."

Harley Street mental health specialist Zoe Clews believes stars such as the Kardashians have a lot to answer for when it comes to promoting unachievable body standards.

She says: "A quick flick through social media and you can see countless examples of Kardashian clones with 'Instagram face'."

"It gives individuals expectations beyond what's realistic."

Now, through TikTok, Leah is trying to help create a healthier body image for women. She is now a size 14 to 16 and over the past 18 months she has started to regain some confidence. She says: "I've had a lot of therapy for what I've gone through. I started following body confidence accounts

on social media, which helped. We can control our own thoughts and it's not an easy thing to change but it is possible and you can learn to not hate your body."

"That's why I'm an advocate for body acceptance. Being smaller doesn't automatically equal being happier."

"I'm sure many of us have said that to ourselves over the years, but if you haven't sorted out what's going on in your head, the problem won't be fixed. Just know if I can do it, you can too."



WHERE TO GET HELP

FOR advice or help with body image, ask your doctor if there are any support groups in your area, and head to the Body Dysmorphic Disorder

Foundation online at bddfoundation.org. You can also contact mental health service Mind at mind.org.uk or on its helpline, 0300 123 3393.

I SPENT THOUSANDS ON SURGERY AND LOOKED GREAT...BUT **STILL** WASN'T HAPPY

Shoppers rave about £3 heatless hair curlers. At fabulousmag.co.uk