



Body contouring does not end when the appointment does. The treatment itself may take an hour or two, sometimes less, but the visible result depends heavily on what happens over the next few days and weeks. That is the part many patients underestimate.

Whether you have had a noninvasive body contouring session such as radiofrequency, cryolipolysis, ultrasound, or muscle stimulation, or a more intensive surgical contouring procedure, your aftercare shapes comfort, recovery, and, to a surprising degree, your final outcome. Clothing can either support healing or irritate treated tissue. Activity can either improve circulation or increase swelling. Even simple choices, such as how you sleep or what kind of waistband you wear, matter more than most people expect.

I have seen the same pattern repeatedly. Patients prepare carefully for the treatment itself, then go home in tight jeans, a rough sports bra, or shapewear that digs into the exact area that was treated. Others assume they should stay completely still when gentle movement would actually help. The best recovery plans are rarely dramatic. They are practical, consistent, and tailored to the kind of body contouring you had.

Start with the kind of treatment you received

“Body contouring” covers a wide range of procedures, and aftercare is not one size fits all. A patient who had a noninvasive treatment on the abdomen will not need the same level of compression, rest, or monitoring as someone recovering from liposuction, skin tightening surgery, or a combined procedure.

Noninvasive body contouring often comes with mild to moderate swelling, temporary numbness, tenderness, redness, or soreness. Some people describe it as the feeling after a hard workout or a deep tissue massage. You can usually return to normal activity quickly, but that does not mean every clothing choice is a good one. Treated tissue is often sensitive, and anything that rubs, squeezes, or overheats the area can make you more uncomfortable.

Surgical body contouring requires closer adherence to your surgeon’s instructions. Compression garments, wound care, limited movement for a short period, and careful follow-up are typical. The clothing guidance below

still applies, but with one crucial rule: if your surgeon's instructions differ, follow your surgeon. General advice should never override procedure-specific medical guidance.

The first priority is reducing friction and pressure

Right after treatment, most people feel best in soft, loose, breathable clothing. Fabrics matter more than fashion for the first day or two. Cotton, bamboo blends, modal, and smooth technical fabrics usually feel better than stiff denim, lace, coarse knits, or anything with thick seams over the treated area.

If the abdomen or flanks were treated, high-pressure waistbands are often the first thing to avoid. A snug pair of leggings may look harmless, but if the waistband presses into swollen tissue, it can leave you sore for hours. For the thighs or buttocks, rough inner seams and tight shapewear can become irritating very quickly. If the upper arms were treated, fitted sleeves may feel restrictive even if they normally fit well.

The goal is simple. You want clothing that rests on the body without pinching it. Think less about hiding swelling and more about allowing the area to settle. Many patients are tempted to "hold everything in" immediately after treatment. That approach is understandable, especially if they have plans later in the day, but it often backfires. A forgiving waistband, a soft T-shirt, and pants that skim rather than compress usually win.

When compression helps, and when it does not

Compression gets discussed constantly after body contouring, but it is not universally necessary. The value of compression depends on the treatment type, the area treated, and the provider's instructions.

After surgical body contouring, prescribed compression garments are often part of the plan. They can help manage swelling, support tissue, and improve comfort during recovery. These garments should fit exactly as directed. Too loose and they may not provide support. Too tight and they can create uneven pressure, pain, skin irritation, or circulation problems.

After noninvasive body contouring, compression is more variable. Some providers recommend light compression for comfort, while others do not require it at all. A light, smooth garment can feel reassuring on mildly swollen tissue, but aggressive compression is usually unnecessary unless specifically advised. I have had more than one patient feel worse because they pulled on very tight shapewear right after a noninvasive session, assuming tighter meant better. It usually meant more tenderness and more awareness of the treated area.

If you are unsure, ask one specific question before leaving the office: "Do you want me in compression, and if so, how much and for how long?" That single clarification prevents a lot of confusion.

What to wear home from your appointment

Planning your outfit before the appointment is one of the easiest ways to make recovery smoother. The right clothes remove a layer of irritation before it starts.

The best post-treatment outfit usually includes the following:

- A soft top without tight elastic or scratchy seams over the treated area
- Pull-on pants, joggers, or loose trousers instead of jeans or rigid waistbands
- Flat, easy shoes that do not require balancing or bending if you feel sore
- A light layer, since some treatments leave people feeling chilled or unusually sensitive
- Any prescribed compression garment, if your provider instructed you to bring it

That is not glamorous advice, but it works. If you have ever tried to peel fitted denim off tender thighs or fasten a structured bra over a sore torso, you understand why comfort should lead the decision.

The bra question comes up more often than people think

If treatment involved the upper abdomen, back, flanks, or underarm area, bras deserve special consideration. An underwire or a narrow, high-tension band can sit directly on swollen tissue and make a manageable day miserable. In those cases, a soft bralette, a wireless support top, or a smooth recovery bra is usually a better option, at least temporarily.

This does not mean you need to sacrifice support. It means you want distributed support instead of pressure concentrated in one band. Patients with larger busts often do best with a wide-band, wireless bra made from a breathable fabric. The difference between “supportive” and “restrictive” is obvious once the treated area starts talking back.

Shapewear is not always your friend

Many people who pursue body contouring are already familiar with shapewear. It can feel natural to reach for it immediately, especially if there is swelling and you want your clothes to fit smoothly. But routine shapewear is not designed for post-treatment recovery. It often compresses unevenly, rolls at the edges, traps heat, and creates pressure points exactly where you do not want them.

Medical-grade compression, when prescribed, is a different category. It is chosen with healing in mind. Everyday shapewear is chosen for silhouette. Those are not the same thing.

If you had noninvasive body contouring and want a bit of support, ask whether light compression is appropriate. If you had surgical contouring, stick with the garment your provider recommended rather than improvising with a bodysuit from your closet.

Heat, sweat, and irritation can slow your comfort

Freshly treated tissue tends to be more reactive. Heat can increase swelling and discomfort, and sweat can make friction worse. That is why fabric breathability matters. It is also why the outfit you choose for a summer afternoon appointment should be different from what you would wear to brunch.

Loose layers are useful because they let you adjust. A patient who feels fine in an air-conditioned clinic may feel overheated by the time they get to the car. If your treatment area is covered by a synthetic, tight garment, the combination of warmth, pressure, and moisture can leave skin feeling raw by evening.

For the first couple of days, avoid clothing that traps heat for [Body Contouring](#) long periods. This is especially important after treatments to the abdomen, inner thighs, or back, where perspiration can build quickly. If you need to be out, bring a change of clothes if practical. Sometimes the most helpful thing is simply getting out of the first outfit and into something cleaner and softer later in the day.

Movement matters more than people expect

Patients often swing to one of two extremes after body contouring. They either do too much, too soon, because they feel mostly fine, or they become almost completely sedentary because they are worried movement will undo the treatment. Neither extreme is ideal.

Gentle walking is often helpful, particularly after noninvasive body contouring and during the early recovery period after many surgical procedures, if cleared by your provider. Light movement supports circulation, reduces stiffness, and can help you feel less swollen. It does not need to be ambitious. A short walk around the house every hour or two, or a slow walk outside if you feel steady, can make a noticeable difference.

What you want to avoid is heavy lifting, high-impact exercise, deep twisting, aggressive core work, or anything that causes bouncing, pulling, or overheating before your provider says it is safe. If the treatment area is sore at rest, exercise that stresses it usually does not earn you points for toughness. It usually earns you more swelling.

One detail people overlook is that clothing affects movement. If your pants are too tight, your stride shortens. If your bra rubs, you tense your shoulders. If your compression garment bunches, you sit awkwardly and end up more sore. Comfortable clothing supports better movement, and better movement supports better recovery.

Hydration and meals have a real effect on how you feel

You do not need a detox plan after body contouring, and you do not need to “flush out” treatment with exotic juices or supplements. You do, however, need normal, sensible hydration. Fluids help your body handle inflammation and can make you feel less sluggish, especially if you are retaining some water or if the treatment left you a bit fatigued.

Eating normally, with a slight emphasis on protein and minimally processed foods, tends to work well. Very salty meals can make some patients feel puffer. Alcohol can increase dehydration and inflammation, and after a surgical procedure it may also interfere with medications or healing. A quiet dinner, plenty of water, and a good night of sleep usually do more for recovery than any expensive add-on product.

I often tell patients to keep the post-treatment day boring in the best possible way. Comfortable clothes, easy food, water nearby, no heroic workouts, no squeezing into “real clothes” for no reason. Recovery goes more smoothly when you stop fighting the temporary swelling.

Sleeping comfortably can take some improvisation

Sleep position depends on the treated area. If the abdomen, flanks, or back were treated, lying flat on one especially tender spot may not feel good. Pillows become part of the recovery toolkit very quickly. A pillow under the knees can reduce tension through the torso when lying on the back. Side sleeping may be more comfortable for some areas, less comfortable for others.

This is another time when clothing matters. A soft sleep shirt or loose pajama set is usually better than fitted sleepwear with tight waistbands or seams. If you are in a prescribed compression garment, follow your surgeon’s instructions about overnight wear. If not, choose sleepwear that does not make you aware of every turn in bed.

People are often surprised by how much better they sleep once they switch from trying to “look put together” at night to simply dressing for comfort. The body heals better when it is not constantly negotiating with scratchy fabric and pressure.

Showers, skin care, and what not to rub on the area

Post-treatment skin can be sensitive even when there are no visible wounds. After noninvasive body contouring, you may notice temporary redness, tingling, tenderness, or mild numbness. After surgery, you may have dressings, incisions, drains, or specific bathing restrictions. Always follow your provider’s instructions first.

In general, avoid vigorous scrubbing, harsh exfoliants, strong active skin care ingredients, and fragranced lotions directly on the treated area unless your provider says otherwise. Gentle cleansing and patting the skin dry is usually the safer route. Clothing should also reflect this sensitivity. A towel-textured robe, coarse sweater, or heavily seamed athletic top can feel much rougher against healing skin than you would expect.

If your provider recommends massage after a certain type of body contouring, pay close attention to timing and technique. Massage can be helpful in some contexts and unhelpful in others. It should not be self-directed based on social media clips. Tissue that has been treated needs the right amount of handling, not random pressure.

What to avoid for the first several days

Most people recover best when they avoid a few very common mistakes:

- Tight waistbands, rigid denim, and everyday shapewear over tender areas
- Intense workouts, heavy lifting, and anything that sharply increases heat or swelling
- Hot tubs, saunas, and very hot baths unless your provider says they are fine
- Rubbing, scrubbing, or aggressively massaging the area without instructions
- Assuming every symptom is “normal” if pain, asymmetry, or skin changes seem to worsen

That last point matters. Mild swelling and tenderness are common. Escalating pain, significant shortness of breath, spreading redness, fever, unusual drainage, or skin changes that concern you deserve prompt medical advice. Experience helps, but caution is better than denial when something feels off.

Dressing for work and social plans

A practical issue many patients face is how to return to work or attend an event without feeling self-conscious. The easiest answer is to give yourself a small wardrobe of post-treatment basics for a few days. Think structured enough to leave the house, soft enough not to punish the treated area.

For office settings, wide-leg trousers, knit dresses without compression panels, soft blouses, and unstructured layers usually work well. For men, drawstring trousers that look tailored, soft polos, and lightweight overshirts are often more comfortable than stiff dress shirts tucked into a tight beltline. If the abdomen or flanks were treated, the belt itself can become a problem before the pants do.

For social plans, choose silhouettes that skim rather than cling. The urge to wear something very fitted to “check the result” is understandable, but early swelling can make that emotionally frustrating even when the treatment is progressing normally. Better to wear something comfortable, stay hydrated, and evaluate your results on the timeline your provider gave you. Immediate post-treatment appearance is rarely the final story.

The timeline for visible change is rarely immediate

This is one of the most important emotional parts of aftercare. Body contouring often asks for patience. After noninvasive treatment, it can take weeks to months to see the full effect, depending on the modality. After surgical contouring, swelling can persist far longer than patients expect, even when healing is going well.

That delay affects clothing choices because some people start dressing for the body they hope to have by next weekend, rather than the body that is healing right now. Wearing comfortable, forgiving clothes for a little longer is not giving up on the result. It is respecting the process that gets you there.

I have seen patients become convinced a treatment “didn’t work” while they were still visibly swollen and tender, then come back several weeks later fitting differently in the same clothes. Your closet can become an emotional measuring tool if you let it. It is better to judge progress with consistency, photographs if your provider recommends them, and realistic timelines.

Special considerations by treatment area

The abdomen tends to react strongly to waistbands, bending, and sitting posture. If this area was treated, you will usually do better in mid-rise or adjustable-waist garments than in anything stiff or highly compressive. Getting in and out of low cars, twisting to lift bags, and staying seated for long stretches can make the area more sore.

The thighs and buttocks often do best with smooth, loose fabrics that reduce rubbing. Inner-thigh treatment, in particular, can make walking in tight pants feel surprisingly unpleasant. If you have ever had a seam rub during a long walk, imagine that on newly sensitive tissue.

The arms are less discussed, but sleeves can become a real issue. Even a blazer that usually feels roomy may feel wrong after arm treatment. Soft knits and looser sleeves are helpful until tenderness settles.

The back and flanks can be the trickiest for bra bands, waistbands, and chair pressure. If these were treated, think through your day. Long commutes, desk chairs with firm backs, and fitted tops can all become irritating in ways you would not predict beforehand.

When to call your provider instead of adjusting your wardrobe again

Clothing can solve a lot of comfort issues, but it cannot solve everything. If you are repeatedly trying different garments and still feel sharp pain, severe pressure, marked asymmetry, skin blistering, worsening redness, or anything that seems to be intensifying rather than slowly settling, it is time to contact your provider.

Patients sometimes hesitate because they do not want to “bother” the office with what might be normal recovery. In practice, clear communication is part of good recovery. A quick message with a concise description of what you are feeling, when it started, and whether it is improving can save you unnecessary stress.

It is especially worth reaching out if a compression garment feels dramatically wrong. Numbness beyond the expected area, deep creasing in the skin, severe discomfort, or visible areas of excessive tightness should not be ignored.

The best aftercare choices are usually the least dramatic

There is a tendency to think successful recovery comes from doing more, buying more, or following a complicated routine. Most of the time, better results come from being steady and sensible. Wear soft, breathable clothing. Avoid unnecessary pressure. Move gently. Stay hydrated. Sleep well. Follow the instructions that match your exact procedure.

Body contouring can refine shape, but your recovery habits determine how comfortable that process feels. The right outfit after treatment is not just about ease. It is part of protecting sensitive tissue, managing swelling, and giving your body room to do what it is trying to do, heal cleanly and reveal the result on its own schedule.

If you prepare for that recovery period with the same care you gave the appointment itself, you will usually feel better, move better, and worry less. And that, in practical terms, is often the difference between a stressful few weeks and a smooth one.

Aesthetic Plastic Surgery & Laser Center, Michelle Hardaway M.D.

Address: 27920 Orchard Lake Rd, Farmington Hills, MI 48334

Phone number: +12482211957

FAQ About Body Contouring in Michigan

What does body contouring actually do?

Body contouring (or body sculpting) eliminates stubborn localized fat, tightens loose, sagging skin, and reshapes your silhouette. It is not a weight-loss tool, but rather a cosmetic procedure used to refine and tone specific trouble spots after major weight loss, pregnancy, or aging.

How much does body contouring usually cost?

The total cost of body contouring usually ranges from \$2,000 to \$25,000+ depending entirely on whether you choose non-surgical sessions or major surgical procedures.

Because "body contouring" covers everything from simple fat-freezing to comprehensive post-weight-loss surgeries, pricing is heavily categorized by the method used.

What is the best type of body contouring?

Liposuction is a huge topic and worth discussing in more detail, but in terms of body contouring and sculpting, nothing does the job better than liposuction, particularly VASER liposuction.

