

Ms Angelica Kavouni MD FRCS
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SHE CAREERS

A day in the life of a... plastic surgeon

Plastic surgeon Angelica Kavouni explains how she deftly combines administering a nip and tuck with being a mum

AS TOLD TO SIAN REES • PHOTOGRAPHS: MARK HARRISON



NAME
Angelica Kavouni
AGE 38
FAMILY
Married to Lucian, 42, with two sons, Julian, 2, and Sebastian, 9 months
SALARY
£100,000 – £150,000

Plastic surgery is a happy profession. Although I admire the strength of physicians who deal with seriously ill people, I knew that wasn't for me. Unlike taking out a gall bladder or fixing a fracture, plastic surgery is creative. And it can make a positive change to a patient's quality of life.

Between 1991 and 2001 I worked for the NHS at The Royal London Hospital. I carried out reconstructive surgery on burns victims or damaged hands – all sorts. It's very practical and you have to make instant decisions.

Working there was challenging, but it's difficult to combine surgery with a family so I joined a private practice. I now work part-time from a surgery on Harley Street. Three of us (including my husband, who's also a plastic surgeon) share secretaries and so on. Working for myself means I have more flexibility. I only took six weeks' maternity leave after I had Sebastian, then I went back to work for one day a week before increasing to three.

I work my timetable to match my children, so I go to bed ridiculously early – I am usually asleep by 9.30pm. My husband works hard and is rarely home before 9pm. Sebastian usually wakes up at 5am. If he goes back to sleep, I sometimes have a snooze for an hour before Julian wakes



Angelica works in a private practice so she can spend more time with her sons

or I get up to do some admin and check my e-mails. We have three computers with a wireless internet connection, so I can work anywhere – in the kitchen or even in the loo!

My hours vary, so I have a nanny who works 9am to 6pm, then two others I can call on at short notice. Depending on my daily schedule, after the nanny arrives, I go to the hospital to carry out operations or to the clinic to see patients. Usually I carry out surgery one day and see patients the other two. I try to be home by 6pm to bath and feed the kids, but if surgery runs late, I might be stuck at work until 8 or 9pm.

My job involves breast augmentation and lifts, tummy tucks, eyelid surgery, facial rejuvenation and face-lifts. It is common for me to see patients going through a divorce who want surgery. They think it might change the outcome of events, but it won't. I tell them to rethink it when they are feeling more emotionally stable.

Seeing the results of surgery can be very satisfying. One woman wouldn't look in a mirror before we straightened her nose and chin, but surgery gave her new confidence. I know there's a lot of prejudice about plastic surgery, but if it's done for the right reasons, it can change a person's life. ■

How to become a plastic surgeon

Medical students must complete a six-year general medical training to become a doctor, followed by two to three years' basic surgical training, then a further six years in higher surgical training specialising in plastic surgery.

Training in one of the sub-specialities of plastic surgery (such as cleft lip and palate, head and neck cancer, burns or hand surgery) is encouraged in the later years of training.

For more information, contact the British Association of Plastic Surgeons at www.baps.co.uk/education.