Dermatologic surgery undermining planes
By Michael J. Visconti, DO, and M. Laurin Council, MD, FAAD

Eyelid undermining
Plane: Above orbicularis oculi muscle

The eyelid has minimal subcutaneous tissue, therefore undermining is performed immediately above orbicularis oculi.

Auricular undermining
Plane: Above perichondrium

There is minimal to no adipose tissue on the ear, therefore undermining is immediately above perichondrium.

Scalp undermining
Plane: Within subgaleal space

Undermining is within the subgaleal plane on the scalp due to its avascular nature.
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**Lip undermining**

**Plane:** Above orbicularis muscle

Undermining of the lip is immediately above orbicularis oris muscle to avoid transecting the lateral artery within the muscle group.

**Distal nose undermining**

**Plane:** Submuscular fascia, peristeum, or perichondrium

Undermining of the nose is performed deep to the SMAS & nasalis muscle (within the submuscular fascia, peristeum, or perichondrium) in order to avoid neurovascular compromise.

**Lower cheek undermining**

**Plane:** Mid subcutaneous plane

On the lower cheek, dissection is performed within the mid subcutaneous plane to avoid transection of the parotid duct, CN VII, and arterial supply.
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Forehead undermining</th>
<th>Temple undermining</th>
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<td><strong>Plane:</strong> Deep subcutaneous tissue</td>
<td><strong>Plane:</strong> Superficial subcutaneous tissue</td>
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<td>In the forehead, undermining is done either in deep subcutaneous plane (small, superficial wounds) or subgaleal plane (larger wounds)</td>
<td>Overlying the temple, the superficial subcutaneous plane allows for undermining while avoiding the temporal branch of the facial nerve and temporal artery</td>
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<td>Within the eyebrow, undermining is performed in the deep subcutaneous plane (below the eyebrow hair bulbs) to avoid permanent hair loss</td>
<td>In the neck, undermining is performed in the superficial subcutaneous fat plane to avoid damage to the cervical branch of the facial nerve (anterior neck) or the spinal accessory nerve (posterior neck), in addition to associated vasculature.</td>
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References: