

Dr. Carolyn Chang's One Piece of Wellness Wisdom

BY JENNIFER MASSONI PARDINI **Dec 19, 2024** 3 min to read

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Dr. Carolyn Chang

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When it comes to full-circle moments, living in the San Francisco Bay Area has been a key one for Dr. Carolyn Chang. The plastic surgeon, who started her San Francisco practice in 2001, was born at Stanford Hospital while her father was getting his Ph.D. Afterward, the family moved

to Tennessee so he could pursue his interest in basic science research. Later, she returned to Stanford for undergrad, medical school and residency at one of the only combined general surgery/plastic surgery programs in the nation at the time.

With the 2024 opening of Chang's satellite office in Menlo Park, she has fulfilled another full-circle intention, seeing patients on the Peninsula primarily for consultations and some select procedures. "I have a lot of women patients who I operated on in their 30s, and now they are entering menopause," she says of an area of well-being she is particularly passionate about. "As they have aged and are now in their 40s and 50s, they have different concerns. It feels good to age with them and continue to work with them to achieve their health and wellness goals."

Chang continues to perform surgeries at her San Francisco practice, sit on the foundation board of California Pacific Medical Center, stylishly support causes around town and spend as much time as she can with her 8-year-old twins — ideally somewhere warm and close to home.

Where did you grow up? Oak Ridge, Tennessee. People are always surprised to hear that I'm from Tennessee. It's a fun conversation starter.

If we asked your 7-year-old self what she wanted to be when she grew up, what would she have said? To

be a five-foot-ten supermodel, that was it! In east Tennessee, there was not a lot of fashion. There was no European design influence. But I had a piano teacher who was Italian and really elegant with a flamboyant personality. She had Steinway pianos with European high fashion magazines all over the place. So I'm seven years old, waiting for my piano lesson and flipping through these things, and my jaw is dropping, looking at the beautiful models dressed in gorgeous clothing. That's when I realized there was a world of

fashion out there, and I wanted to wear it!

What neighborhood do you live in today? When I first moved back to San Francisco after completing a fellowship in New York City, I lived in Pacific Heights, and I stayed there for a

long time. Then one day, I thought, you know what? I want that modern urban experience again. I want the concierge. I want to live in a high-rise. I want to see tall buildings. So I looked at South of Market. That's how I ended up in a modern convenience

building. And I've been super happy.

Do you have a favorite restaurant or bar? I love going to the bar at Mister Jiu's — it is the hippest, chicest place. You can order à la carte at the bar, and it's a whole different scene from the

main dining room. It's delicious, and it's casual, and it's cool, and the service is great. You can go over and over again.

How about a shop or store? My longest-standing salesperson, and the one I probably bought one of my first designer pieces from, is Cindy at Chanel. Chanel will always be my favorite store because of that. I've had such a good relationship with them for over 20 years. Cindy will spend as much time finding me a card case as she will a suit.

Any hidden gems that you're willing to share with us? It may not be hidden, but I think it's a gem. It's Z. Cioccolato on Columbus. It's a fudge and candy store. I have a huge thing for colorful candy, like chewy, sour, sweet candy. If you look from the outside, you can see these huge vats of saltwater taffy, and you get a bag and just pile it up with custom collections, so I cannot walk by there ever without going in.

Where can we find you on the weekends? Anywhere warm and hopefully with my kids.

Where do you like to explore in the greater Bay Area or get away for a day? The place I really want to go that I have never gone to before, after being here for so long, is the Hearst Castle.

Giants, 49ers, Warriors, Sharks or Earthquakes? I love watching the Warriors because basketball, to me, is the most fun. It's just constant activity.

What local event do you look forward to all year? The Oscar de la Renta fashion show in Lake Tahoe. I love that event every year, because the lake is spectacular, and the weather is so perfect usually. It feels like a total vacation. People dress up and wear hats, and before the show we can even see the clothing up close. You see people you haven't seen in a million years.

What is your wellness advice for readers in this new year?

Sometimes I think you get bogged down in the day-to-day and the anxieties of life, and it really takes a toll on your health. Worry is a major source of stress. So, when I'm trying to juggle a million things and manage all of the potential problems that come along in life, I stop, step back and realize all these things that I'm worried about in the future may not actually happen. Then I clear my mind of the potential issues and only deal with them if they actually become problems. And I would say that more than 50 percent of the time, it never happens. **WMC**

