



We men hate our love handles

Dr Geoff Mullan, 41, on how he got rid of his

There are lots of men out there like me. We go to the gym, we are in pretty good shape, but we have that extra bit of fat on our hips and in our midribs that we can't seem to lose.

However much we exercise or watch what we eat, those love handles won't shift.

I am 41, I'm pretty fit, I run quite a bit and do a couple of triathlons a year, but that bit of bulge in my lower abdomen was bothering me. It's that small roll that can you can notice above your trousers if you are wearing a suit and which makes you look a lot more middle-aged than you would like.

For this reason I did what has become one of the most popular treatments in our clinic on myself — fat freezing, also known as Coolsculpting, the non-surgical method to get rid of "grabbable" fat, which works by freezing your fat cells and causing them to die and disappear.

During the process you clamp each area of fat that you want to get rid of one by one. If it's your love handles, this may require one or two sections on each side depending on their size. That fat is then drawn up into a suction cup and cooled, while the rest of the skin is covered by a protective sheet. Fat freezes at about 10C, a higher temperature

than other tissues, so you can freeze it without damaging the surrounding skin.

The process, for which the technical term is cryolipolysis, takes about an hour for each section and doesn't hurt. After five minutes the area of the body just feels numb.

Afterwards your skin is warmed up with a massage that helps the process. It works because when fat cells are frozen they become distressed and damaged. The body recognises them as useless and will kill them off and excrete them. The quicker the tissue is warmed up again, the quicker the body will start to metabolise the damaged fat cells. The process takes five to six weeks to start working and you will really see the results 12 weeks after the treatment.

Coolsculpting is designed for stubborn pockets of fat rather than as a key weight-loss device. It is popular with men because unlike liposuction, after which you have to wear compression garments, you can walk out of the clinic and within two days you can be on a beach and no one would know you had had it done. However much they hate their love handles, men are just not going to sit at work in a compression garment. While women are more used to having to put in a bit of time — and suffering — for a result, it's the quick-fix solutions that appeal to

men. About 24 per cent of the clients at my clinic are men and 40 per cent of those go for Coolsculpting. Of the overall number who undertake the treatment, 52 per cent are men and 48 per cent are women, which is the inverse of almost every other cosmetic treatment.

I am pleased with the results. My love handles are gone and my stomach is pretty flat. It's permanent too. You have to regain 15 per cent of your body weight before your fat cells will start replicating again. I am about 90kg, so I would have to put on more than 10kg before those pockets of fat start to come back. I think men are now feeling unprecedented pressure to improve the way they look. Quite a few of my male clients come because, thanks to the range of beauty treatments now on offer, their wives look amazing. They worry that in comparison they look a lot older. Many are also reacting to a cut-throat environment at work. Nowadays you need to look as though you can hack it. The days of big boozy lunches and looking a bit rough and flabby around the middle are gone.

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Magazine spread featuring Dr Geoff Mullan's article on Coolsculpting, including photos of him and a woman, and text from the magazine.



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