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Yes, it happens to the best of us. Aging often brings on the muffin top. That jiggly piece of stomach that is squishy and squeezy. Also called belly fat, waistline flab, or roly-poly guacamole. Tight pants accentuate the tummy roll. Body-hugging shirts highlight the puffy pouch. The spare tire in the middle gets a lot of flack.

“Any woman can get a muffin top. But women are more likely to gain excess belly weight – especially deep inside the belly – as they go through perimenopause and into menopause, when their menstrual cycle ends. That’s because as estrogen levels drop, body fat is redistributed from the hips, thighs, and buttocks (where it used to be stored as a fuel reserve for

breastfeeding) to the abdomen," according to an article on WebMD.

Melting the muffin top is hard work for oldsters. Our metabolism slows down in the senior years and our bones, muscles and joints grumble at us. Forget the latest sad fad diet. Forget empty promises from diet supplement manufacturers. Forget pills and potions.

Yes, we can focus on stomach health while not becoming obsessed with our belly bulge. Here's a mantra: "The fat on my stomach protects my vital organs. I will honor my stomach fat while working to make it healthier."

Muffin Top: A Love Story is an award--winning movie about a wife whose husband dumps her for a thinner woman. It's a 2014 body-image romantic comedy about accepting your muffin top stomach. And it's belly--laugh funny. See the trailer at muffintopmovie.com.

Media exposure can influence body image over time by sending a message about what it means to have an ideal body shape, size, and weight. This exposure can place pressure on individuals to attain the thin, attractive ideal depicted in the media. For women, this ideal is usually composed of being slender and attractive; and for men, the ideal includes being tall, lean, muscular, and masculine. It is common for people to begin to measure themselves against these unrealistic ideals and determine that they have come up short. Negative body image, or body dissatisfaction, may result when an individual feels a strong pull to live up to this standard, or internalizes this standard of beauty and body image. Body image concern may range from minor discontentment or low self-esteem, to depression, or anxiety. For eating disorder information: mirror--mirror.org.

At the end of life, did anyone ever lament, "I wished I'd worked harder on my muffin top?" No. So stop obsessing over your jelly--belly. Stop saying hurtful words to your ouch-pouch. Yoga pants and a long shirt can cover the wiggle--jiggle area quite well. It's time for a new wardrobe for a midsection makeover. What's a muffin top's worst enemy? A pair of low-rider jeans and a snug tank-top. Throw away too-tight trousers. Being comfortable in your clothes is in style. And polyester stretch pants are fab.

Or proudly strut that jelly--belly. Head high and shoulders back. And dare those anorexic supermodels to make fun of females with pooches.

Hold on. You need to know about the different types of belly fat. But, don't badmouth what's below the belly button.

Subcutaneous Fat vs. Visceral Fat

"Subcutaneous fat that lurks beneath the skin as "love handles" or padding on the thighs, buttocks or upper arms may be cosmetically challenging, but it is otherwise harmless. However, the deeper belly fat – the visceral fat that accumulates around abdominal organs – is metabolically active and has been strongly linked to a host of serious disease risks, including heart disease, cancer and dementia, according to a 2017 article in The New York Times. So, converse with your physician as needed. What type of a muffin top do you carry around?

Wise words. A flat stomach does not equal happy. Six-pack abs do not equal happy. A toned tummy does not equal happy. A beefcake belly is not the holy grail to happy. A washboard waist is not the secret to a happy life.

"I have belly fat like everybody else, and I don't want to be airbrushed on the cover of a magazine." - Amanda Seyfried

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