

We are very appreciative of the kind comments received regarding Synergy's online newsletter. A number of you have asked how to sign up others for this e-newsletter. You can either forward them this link: <http://synergyhealthmedical.com/signup/> or simply sign them up yourself and call it a "New Year educational gift."

Medical Editor comments:

As the year begins, we need to face the dreaded "muffin top syndrome." We chose this term to better describe what used to be called "dunlaps' disease," when my belly "dun lap over my belt." Muffin top seems to describe things better, as I look more and more like the Michelin tire man. We are constantly inundated with articles talking about the obesity epidemic in the world, but I did not think this applied to me until I calculated my body fat index:

<http://www.halls.md/body-mass-index/bmi.htm>

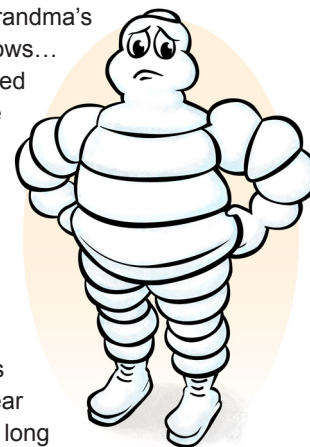
You can also "plug in" various weight reduction scenarios and set your target for 2007.

Here at Synergy Performance Health our mission is to provide a continuum of care for individuals in need of rehabilitation, general fitness, weight management and sport specific training in a supportive and non-intimidating environment. We are continually striving to offer all the support and guidance you need to meet your health and fitness goals. Hopefully these calculations and the following article will be an additional stimulus for us all to make a fresh start in '07.

MUFFIN-TOP SYNDROME: Your New Year's Nemesis

*Tina Schwager, PTA, ATC, Editor
James M. Fox, MD, Medical Editor*

Ahh...the beautifully garnished turkey, hot and juicy...grandma's sweet potatoes smothered in golden brown marshmallows... a steaming assortment of colorful vegetables, smothered in glistening sauce. And let's not forget the delectable array of treats gracing the table from end to end. The holidays may be over, but the memories linger; not just in your mind and heart, but in your midsection, too. Now that you're gearing up to tackle your New Year's resolution to "Be You Again," it's time to take stock of the holiday fallout, namely the roll of flesh gently cascading over the waistband of your pants aptly named Muffin Top Syndrome or MTS. Are the holidays to blame? Perhaps a bit. But excess fat around the midsection doesn't appear overnight; chances are good the foundation came long before that first slice of pumpkin pie. Having an understanding of possible causes and knowing what to do about it can help you ditch the flab and allow you to approach your resolution to be more fit and healthy with confidence and a greater likelihood of long-term success.



In our current society, everything is bigger, including plates and portion sizes. As a result, we end up consuming far more calories than we think. In a 2003 study at Rutgers University that assessed portion-size perceptions, subjects were given plates and bowls of various sizes and asked to select food from a buffet-style setting. The results showed that, percentage wise, participants piled on 20-50% more food than in a similar study 20 years earlier (5), before the Big Gulp and Super Size era. States Jaime Schwartz, a registered dietician and co-author of the study: "People are eating with their eyes and not their stomachs. (4)" Invariably, those excess calories lead to gradual increases in weight and body fat levels. When that excess lands around the middle, MTS has begun.

Other studies point to trans fats as another culprit (see link article about New York City's recent ban on trans fats) (1). Researchers at Wake Forest University studied weight gain patterns in monkeys given a controlled calorie diet high in trans fat and compared them to a group consuming the same calories, but unsaturated fats. The result—a 7.2% increase in body weight over the course of the six-year study. Lawrence L. Rudel, PhD, one of the study's researchers, sums it up: "Diets rich in trans fat cause redistribution of fat tissue into the abdomen and lead to a higher body weight even when the total dietary calories are controlled." (1) Translation--trans fats make you gain weight.

As for potential health problems, the news gets worse. Previously, experts relied on BMI (Body Mass Index) to determine your risk for heart disease, diabetes and certain

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types of cancer. But scientists worldwide now realize it's actually waist-to-hip ratio that is a more reliable indicator. Studies have also shown that belly fat is metabolically active (meaning it has the potential to change and grow), which "could possibly increase colon cancer risk by raising levels of certain hormones that affect cell growth, including...cancer cells." (6) Belly fat increases health risk...period.

Another by-product of our fast-paced, demanding lifestyle is less sleep and more stress, both of which can lead to increased belly fat. The large blood supply present in the abdominal region makes that area prone to the affects of the stress hormone cortisol. Since increased stress keeps cortisol levels high, even more fat gets deposited in the abdominal area. (2) And while sleep deprivation in and of itself doesn't cause MTS, research in this area has indicated that those who regularly get less than four hours of sleep a night are at least 70% more likely to be obese than those getting a full night's rest. (2) In addition, fatigue makes it harder to honor your exercise commitment, creating a cycle that's difficult to break.

Eradicating Muffin Top Syndrome requires a multi-tiered battle plan, with the attack occurring on several fronts. Your strategy must include assaults in the regions of diet, cardiovascular exercise, focused abdominal toning, and lifestyle changes. And to be truly successful, you must have patience in your approach. Remember, the muffin didn't appear overnight, so it won't disappear that quickly, either.

Start with a balanced diet, including some fat. Hands down, this is the best long-term approach to healthy eating. You can't train effectively, nor expect your body to exhibit positive results, if you don't have enough fuel to support your workload and the metabolic changes that take place when you train. Choose nutrient dense foods (those packed with lots of vitamins, minerals

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QUICK BITES

IF THE SHOE FITS...

Whether you're jumping feet first into your New Year's fitness resolution or faithfully walking the line by continuing your current exercise program, proper footwear is essential to your success. Not only will the right shoe help you perform better on the field court or course (think traction and agility), it may also help you avoid an injury, both now and in the long term. While it isn't necessary to pay top dollar for your fitness footwear, it is important to have the right shoe for the job. In terms of structural integrity, cushioning and breathability, shoes are designed with specific demands and movement patterns in mind. And all the bells and whistles? Some are simply gadgets to get your money and attention, while others have a true purpose in protecting your feet and transferring that protection throughout your body. These guidelines from the book "The Right Moves: A Girl's Guide to Getting Fit and Feeling Good," by Tina Schwager and Michele Schuerger, should help you make the best possible purchasing decisions to protect your most worthy investment—your body.

- 1. Selection:** Depending on your activity, you could put as much as seven times your body weight into every step, so your shoes need to provide good cushioning. Activities with lots of lateral (side-to-side) motion, however, demand traction, solid construction and, possibly, added ankle support. Here's an example: if you run more than two miles, three times a week, a running shoe (built to give heel to toe cushioning) is your best choice. But if you power walk, take a boot camp class, and shoot hoops at the local Y all in the same week, you need a more versatile shoe, such as a cross trainer. Cross trainers typically offer adequate cushioning, moderate lateral support and decent traction. Consult with your Synergy trainer or an athletic footwear professional for advice on the best choice for your workout.
- 2. Be picky:** Visit an athletic shoe store with a large selection and ask lots of questions. And don't be shy—try on lots of different pairs. How they feel on your foot is a major part of the decision making process. If they don't feel just right in the store, they aren't going to feel any better when you're working out. The

American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons suggests these guidelines for a proper fit: wiggle room in the toe box for all your toes to move, a thumb's width between your big toe and the end of the shoe, a fairly tight fitting heel and an upper that is snug and secure. Then take the shoe off and give it a good twist, like you're wringing out a sponge. A well-structured shoe will only flex a small amount when you do this.

- 3. Shop like it's a workout.** Wear the socks you would wear while training and, if possible, go later in the day; your feet will be slightly larger, similar to how they would get when you're exercising, and this will give you a truer fit. Be sure to jump, jog, pivot and squat in them, too. Put them through the paces; after all, you don't work out sanding still!
- 4. Shop savvy.** Just like cars and computer, shoe styles can be here one day, gone the next. But with shoes, last years model may be no different than this year's, aside from color and cost. Even if there is some "technical" improvement, discontinued styles are probably still sufficient for your needs. Once you've gathered information from the experts, check out shoe warehouses, discount outlets and online clearances to get the best price.
- 5. Out with the old, in with the new.** The lifespan of athletic shoes varies, depending upon the quality of workmanship and, more importantly, how much you use them. Working out in broken down shoes can actually lead to injury. To determine if it's time to give your tried-and-true tennies the boot, take a long, hard look at them. Place them on a flat surface and examine them from behind. Does the upper sag to one side? Are the heels worn down, causing the shoe to sit at an angle? Check the inside, too. Holes and frayed lining can cause blisters and hot spots. Finally, if your knees, back or feet have been aching, it's definitely replacement time. You may also want to discuss your athletic shoe choices with one of Synergy's Licensed Physical Therapists and ask them about getting a free computerized gait scan and orthotic evaluation.

and fiber) from a variety of food groups, and include good fats, such as omega-3 and unsaturated fats. Sources to consider include olive oil, fatty fish, nuts and seeds. If you need more focused nutritional guidance, ask your Synergy Health Coach to recommend a nutrition specialist.

The basic tenet of weight loss – expend more calories than you consume – is always true. So doing plenty of vigorous aerobic activity is a must. Strive for three to five 30 to 45 minute sessions per week. (2), and incorporate cardio that involves more than just linear movement to engage and tone the muscles of your midsection. Consider adding innovative aerobic classes to your machine routine, or try circuit training as a whole-body alternative. Check Synergy's class schedule and consult a Synergy Certified Personal Trainer to come up with creative options.

In addition to regular blasts of cardio, include exercises that either focus directly on the abdominal muscles or involve stabilizing the core. Rope pull downs, ball crunches, med ball twists...there are countless ways to work your abs. Ask your trainer to show you some incredible mid section firming moves. Lest we not forget the old standby—the crunch. Boring? Maybe. Effective? Absolutely. And since your abs are endurance muscles, go for high reps, with your own body weight or gravity providing all the resistance you need. Technique is essential, though, so again, have your trainer check your form in order to avoid a sore neck.

Finally, take stock of your lifestyle. If stress and lack of sleep

are issues, it's time to slow down and make some changes. Find an outlet that allows you to relax and unwind. Try reading or meditating, or turn to exercise as your release. Journaling is also a great way to get a handle on the source of your stress, allowing you to process your thoughts and, ultimately, free your mind of clutter.

So as you begin the New Year, determined to “Be You Again” and get fitter than ever, be kind and patient with yourself. Understand your limitations, be flexible and creative with your training plan, and keep an eye on that muffin top. As you become more fit and healthy, it will fade away and reveal the “you” you've always longed to be.

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SYNERGY NEWS:



Synergy Performance Health would like to congratulate Dr. William Stetson on his recent honor from the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). Dr. Stetson, a former USC men's volleyball All-American, was selected as one of six recipients of the 2007 NCAA Silver Anniversary Award. This award

recognizes former standout student-athletes who successfully completed their collegiate careers in various sports 25 years ago and went on to excel in their chosen careers.

Synergy Performance Health is proud to have Dr. Stetson and his associates, Dr. Scott Powell (Orthopedic Sports Medicine) and Dr. Gary Arends (Athletic Medical specialist) affiliated with our organization. Check out their website, <http://www.stetson-powell.com>, for more information on their services. Dr. Arends and Powell are available in our Burbank office. Call (818)848-3030 to set up an appointment.

If you would like to read more about this award, follow the attached link:

http://www2.ncaa.org/portal/media_and_events/press_room/2006/november/20061106_silver_anniv_award_rls.html

Third time's a charm, some say. At least that may be the case

for Adam Ford, a Valencia resident and patient of Synergy Health medical director, Dr. Fox. After prior surgeries to repair his knees, he most recently underwent an ACL reconstruction and has since resumed his hobby of competitive motocross racing. Riding since 1977, he went pro in 1980 and raced until 1984, in addition to whittling his golf handicap down to a 5. Ford started racing again in 2002 and currently competes on the amateur circuit, most recently winning the Day In The Dirt 40-Intermediate class. His sponsors include Just Performance, O'Neal MX, Blur, Dunlop, Enzo and N-Style.

In addition to racing motorcycles “just for the love of it,” Adam is the Branch Operations Supervisor for The Mortgage Advisor's Group, Inc. in Valencia, CA (check out www.mxmortgage.com) and also coaches youth soccer. In his first year, he led his under-10 team to an AYSO championship.

Mr. Ford's success is a testament to the hard work and perseverance necessary to recovery from injuries and surgery. Everyone at Synergy Performance Health wishes Adam continued success with his racing endeavors and his commitment to youth sports.

For photos, bio info and race results, click on the following link: <http://www.sponsorhouse.com/Members/AFord/Default.aspx>

AFTER SURGERY, THE REAL WORK STARTS

Say you've got a knee that's been catching for months or stiffens up every time you sit down to watch a movie. You've considered surgery before, but it's a new year and you're finally ready to go for it. Once you do, the problem will be solved and your leg will feel great, right? Well, contrary to that notion, after the scope comes out, the work has just begun.

In the December issue of Arthritis Care and Research, Swedish researchers report the results of a study examining strength levels in middle-aged patients several years after undergoing arthroscopy for non-traumatic meniscus tears. Subjects performed isokinetic testing as well as functional tests, such as one-leg rising from a chair and one-leg hop tests. Those individuals whose test results indicated comparable strength to their uninvolved leg subjectively reported "less pain and better function and quality of life." Those whose isokinetic tests showed a mean deficit of 6% at 180 degrees/sec (endurance) and 9% at 60 degrees/sec (strength) subjectively complained of pain, instability and decreased tolerance to daily and recreational activities. Because the quads help stabilize the knee, disperse

load across it and absorb forces during gait, adequate strength is crucial not only to full function but to the long-term prevention of arthritic changes within the joint. Writes Judith Groch, who reviewed the study for MedPage today (12/4/06): "The 9% quad deficit found in this study...may seem small, but for osteoarthritis, which develops over 10 to 15 years, even subtle muscle impairments may prove significant."

These findings confirm what physical therapists and trainers have always known—you've got to restore strength in your thigh muscles (particularly the quads) if you want to return to full function and protect the precious cartilage that remains in your joint. So if you're considering arthroscopy, be sure to consult with a member of Synergy's Physical Therapy staff for follow-up and progression of your post-operative program.

From Synergy's Medical Director:

See the brief story on Adam Ford in the Synergy News section of this month's e-newsletter.

ADDITIONAL LINKS

A BAN ON TRANS FATS

French fry fanatics everywhere take note: the longevity of your arteries and heart, at least in New York City, has just gotten a little brighter. The city's Board of Health recently announced that, as of July 1, 2007, the use of trans fats in restaurant and fast food preparation would no longer be permitted. Trans fats, formed when liquid oils are changed into solid form during a process called hydrogenation, have been linked to a myriad of health issues, including coronary artery disease, cancer and obesity. The information provided in this link -- <http://www.newsalerts.com/news/article/ny-bans-most-trans-fats-from-restaurants.html:top11:876779> -- tells you more about the ramifications this bold move will have on the long-term health of consumers.

A DOZEN DO'S AND DON'T FOR HEALTHY EATING

New year, new attitude about eating? Why not! If you've made one of your resolutions to clean up your act when it comes to eating, a new approach is definitely in order. And having some guidelines to follow when you're trying to make big changes really gives you an advantage in terms of succeeding. In

"A Dozen Do's and Don'ts," Bonnie Liebman offers one perspective, which is to move toward a more plant-based diet. While you may not want to follow all the tips, you're bound to obtain some useful information to help you get a fresh start in the New Year.

http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0813/is_n5_v23/ai_18362807

CERVICAL CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

Cervical cancer is the third most common cancer among women worldwide, but that number is much smaller in the U.S. thanks to frequent use of Pap smears. If detected early, treatment is simple and 100% effective. However, if routine OBGYN visits and the associated testing are neglected, cervical cancer becomes a silent killer, often going undetected until it is in the advanced stages. This informative link will help educate and inform you and those you love about symptoms and risk factors for cervical cancer.

<http://www.oncologychannel.com/cervicalcancer/>

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