

THE EDIT

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the free spirit issue

*Khaki, animal print, suede, denim...
fashion for the woman on the go*

BEAUTY: THE BOTTOM LINE

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HOME

WHAT'S NEW

BRANDS

CULTURE

SALE

WEEK

ACCOUNTS

Beauty: *The* BOTTOM LINE

< **LET THE MILKSHAKE** in hair
taking control of your
beauty routine with "that"
problem area

When we're young, we get
complacent about our bodies.
We think we're invincible, we
don't worry about our skin, we
don't worry about our hair, we
don't worry about our weight. But
as we grow older, we realize that
we're not invincible. We realize that
we're not perfect. We realize that
we're not the only ones who
have problems. We realize that
we're not the only ones who
need help. We realize that we
need to take care of ourselves.
We need to take care of our skin,
our hair, our weight. We need to
take care of ourselves. We need
to take care of ourselves. We
need to take care of ourselves.



We're not saying a bigger bottom isn't a beautiful thing but, for many of us, hips, bottom and thighs represent slimming's axis of evil – an obstinate hump on an otherwise co-operative landscape. And it's often governed by hormones, says Dr Keoni Teta, naturopathic doctor and co-author of *The Metabolic Effect Diet* (Harper). If it's just a case of a few extra pounds of flesh around the hips then with unyielding effort the weight will come off eventually, even if nature's cruel trick means it might go from bust before bottom.

"In places where fat is burned easily, your waist, for example, the fat cells have a higher percentage of beta-adrenergic to alpha-adrenergic receptors," explains Dr Teta. "The beta receptors bind to adrenaline and noradrenaline, causing fat to be burned for energy, rather than stored. Fewer beta receptors in the hips, buttocks and thighs help create an hourglass shape, but mean when you want to shift weight, fat is slower to burn. "

If diet and exercise haven't yielded results, it's time to look at your hormone balance. "Oestrogen dominance is a main culprit for unexplained weight gain on the bottom, hips and thighs" explains Dr Martin Galy, a bio-identical hormone specialist from the renowned Marion Gluck Clinic, London. "Look at a standard 28-day menstrual cycle. For two weeks after ovulation, oestrogen and progesterone levels begin to rise. Key is how much oestrogen you have in relation to progesterone. An imbalance can occur when the ovaries are producing too much oestrogen, or not enough progesterone to counteract it."

Other symptoms of oestrogen dominance include swollen breasts, headaches, carb cravings, heavy periods and irritability.

"Progesterone levels decrease over time," says Dr Galy. "Usually, this begins in a woman's early thirties, with some noticing symptoms, such as weight gain, immediately, because only a slight drop in progesterone is enough to exacerbate an existing mild imbalance."

The most important step to correcting a hormone imbalance is to tailor your diet to your cycle. "Modify your sugar intake by eating a Low GI (Glycaemic Index) menu," urges Dr Galy. "When you take in sugars, the body produces insulin, causing the ovaries to secrete more oestrogen. So: less sugar, less insulin, less oestrogen."

"In the second two weeks when hormone levels are rising, avoid food containing phytoestrogens," says Dr Galy. The main culprits are soy (avoid soy milk and tofu), and soy-based, processed products (processed foods tend to have a high GI anyway).

So what can you eat? "Fill your diet with green vegetables, like kale, broccoli and cauliflower, which help metabolise excess oestrogen. Green tea is also effective," adds Dr Galy.

The good news: hormones can help burn fat too. "A low-carb diet will decrease the activity of the alpha receptors, increasing effectiveness of the fat-burning beta receptors," says Dr Teta. "Supplements, such as green-coffee extract promote fat burning in more stubborn areas."

Fundamentally, without hormones you wouldn't have any kind of womanly shape. But, if your bottom has become a bigger issue than you would like, understanding your hormones can help put you in control of your curves.