

a heavy burden

I have to get something off my chest...
my boobs suck. Seriously, they're too big!

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I walked into my go-to department store to get fitted for a bra as mine weren't sitting right. In fact, my boobs were spilling out of my bras like a waterfall. I've never shopped at your typical bra stores because they've never carried my sizing. I'd need three of their bras alone to prop up my behemoth chest.

I met my fitter and she inspected the sizes I picked out. "I'm a 12G, but I think I've grown..." These words flowed awkwardly out of my mouth. She disappeared for a short while, before returning with an armful of bras. I popped one on and spillage galore! "Sorry love, this is our biggest size. You're going to have to go elsewhere." My eyes widened. "Are you sure?" I asked, "Is there another brand?" "No," she said, shaking her head. "We don't stock H cups." My mouth dropped. I'd grown to a H?!

I walked away heavy breasted yet deflated. Since my boobs burst forth in early high school, this bra store had fitted me. Though they struggled, I always walked away with a bra that made me feel better about my top load. I felt let down by esteemed brands who didn't want to acknowledge the size of my melons!

I was an inconvenience, an outlier, a girl who carried the weight of the world on her chest instead of her shoulders.

The negatives of having monster boobs piled up in my head. It was an exhausting list...

Endless back and neck pain, underboob sweat and chafing which usually morphs into an angry rash that eats away at my skin. Unsolicited attention – lots of pointing or remarks (one stranger saying to buy a minimiser bra, another saying they've never seen boobs as big as mine in real life) and girls asking me if they can poke or hold a boob.

It's disconcerting when immature boys blatantly point out the size of my chest, query if I'm well supported or eyeball my boobs in conversation, instead of looking at me in the face. One guy remarked to a friend, "It was impossible not to stare at her boobs while we were talking". In moments like these, I want to bury my boobs deep underground, or hide under a blanket.

I can't wear backless shirts, nor crop tops and if I throw on a sweater, it's immediately thrown back off because it makes me look heavier than I am. If I try on a pretty dress in a store, it typically gets stuck around my boobs. I have to summon my mum in to remove it, while my arms flail about in the air. I cry out in triumph when she rips it off, unscathed, price tag still in place.

Strapless bras... that's a no brainer. Star jumps? More like seeing stars from being whacked in the face. Running... well, I pose a danger to myself. And on a regular basis, I'm confronted with a 'solution'. "Have you ever thought about getting a breast reduction?" Mum often falls back on this. "If I can do it, you can do it!" she says to spur me on. Mum was an F cup

before her reduction. I was an F cup in high school! It's a common chinwag with strangers, colleagues, friends... if my boobs hurt and I'm feeling in the dumps, then downsize!

But I have a fear of sharp scalpels. I'm terrified of surgery. I don't want my breasts opened up and squeezed out like a pimple. I don't even pop my pimples. So why pop my breasts?!

Where does this leave me? Well, I have cried. A lot. I've felt stuck, limited, gross, ugly and have viewed myself as being nothing but boobs with a pair of legs. 'Oh look, floating breasts!' has sprung to mind when I've looked at my physique in a mirror.

It's why I recently joined a gym. I can't really exercise the same way others can (cardio is out of the question, not a single sports bra I've put on fits), but I'm trying. I'm starting to eat healthier too.

I've always had cumbersome boobs, they're in my genes, but I do need to take onus for what they've become. I stopped exercising. As a result, they grew from high hills to majestic mountains. If I kept going the way I was, I'm convinced they would have collapsed or taken over my body (I was really hoping they'd grow wings and fly off).

It's requiring more than just a physical change though. I'm having to learn to love the body I've got, even if it feels out of proportion. My boobs make for reliable airbags and cushion my fall if I ever topple over. They're a nifty table for snacking, a hideaway place for money and a built-in life vest. My curvy chest also fills in certain dresses nicely and hides my bloated stomach during ovulation.

Because I was drowning in self-pity (rather than looking on the plus side), I didn't really consider the struggles of others. I caught myself staring angrily at other ladies' less voluptuous chests, wishing we could swap.

But if I ever dared ask what it was like to have less up there, I found my flat friends had equally long lists of lament... they can feel unwomanly and unattractive, it's difficult to shop for a bra that fits well and looks good, and dresses can sit awkwardly around their chest.

So maybe we all wrestle with our chests in our own ways. Too full, barely there, one boob bigger than the other, serious sag factor, carrying weight on the side... there never really seems to be the perfect shape, size or fit. And that's OK. Through thick and thin, we're stuck with our boobs and they're stuck on us. Let's learn to be breast friends with our chests no matter the burden.