

METRO

Stop 'em going south

If you've been lucky enough to get some sun this summer, how confident did you feel in your bikini? Were you happy with the shape and the feel of your bust?

According to the British Association of Aesthetic Plastic Surgeons, 6,156 breast enlargements were performed last year, making it the most requested cosmetic surgery.

Those stats also suggest that British women are far from happy with their natural pair.

Dr Joanne Morgan, creator of the only backless bra for C to GG cups, says our breasts start changing when we're in our twenties – and there's not much we can do about it.

'Glandular tissue keeps the breast firm but, as we get older, this is replaced with a softer, fatter tissue. Depending on genetics, this normally happens when you're in your twenties.'

As well as changing breast tissue, we also have to battle gravity – both factors that are out of our control. But many women unwittingly speed up this process by wearing poorly fitted bras and sports bras (bras can bounce up to 7cm during vigorous exercise). If your breasts aren't supported, you will stretch your Cooper's ligament, each breast's only supportive structure.

'The Cooper's ligament is a

band of elastic tissue that stops your breast from drooping,' explains Dr Morgan. 'Over time, and as you get older, this ligament stretches and pulls the breast down. But if you don't support your breasts properly, you will speed up this process and they will start to sag – which is why it's so important to get a good, supportive bra.'

So what's a girl to do when faced with a pair of droopy boobs? Like many women, Shelley, 29, from Kent, has lost weight since she was a teenager: 'I've exercised regularly since I was 17 and haven't always worn the right support. I'm now at my slimmest but the pay-off is stretch marks on my breasts, which sometimes look like crêpe paper. They don't feel "full" anymore.'

Personal trainer Laura Williams says that breasts do sag with age but you can slow the process with exercise. Be warned – it won't drastically change the shape but 'it will give the breast a strong firm base to sit on'.

Dr Morgan is still dubious: 'Tissue is key when it comes to the appearance and feel of the breast. But if I was slim and had a D cup or smaller, I'd certainly give it a go.'

Dr Joanne Morgan:
www.laveo.co.uk
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Perky: But how can you keep them that way?
Picture: Getty Images

IMPROVE YOUR BUST

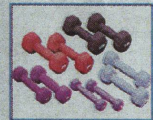
Try Laura Williams's breast-firming exercises and you should start seeing a difference in one month.

■ Pec flies will strengthen the muscles that lift the breast tissue.

Lie on your back with your legs bent and feet flat on the floor. Hold a dumb-bell or bottle of water in each hand and extend your arms up straight up above you at breastbone level. Slowly bring your arms out to the side in an arc, maintaining a slight bend at the elbow. Stop when you feel a stretch in your chest, then return to your starting position. Do two to three sets of 15-20 reps three times a week.

■ A bent-over row will strengthen the upper back muscles and lift the breasts.

From a standing position, place your feet a little more than shoulder width



apart. Bend forward from the hips with your arms extended in front of you while holding a dumb-bell in each hand. Slowly pull the weights up towards your chest. Keeping your arms very close to your sides, lower the dumb-bells to your starting position. Support your back by sucking in your stomach. Do two sets of 12-15 reps three times a week.

■ A pec stretch will improve your posture, which is key to improving the visual appearance of your bust.

Clasp your hands together behind your back, with your palms together. Keeping your elbows straight, lift your hands out and up behind you as far as possible – you should feel the stretch in your shoulders and chest. For a deeper stretch, bend forward from the waist, with your arms above you, but keep your elbows straight. Try to do this exercise every day.

PRODUCTS TO GIVE YOU A LIFT

► **Chimpneys Re-structuring Neck & Décolletage Cream** says it helps hydrate the crêpe-like skin which is often found on droopy breasts. £15. Tel: 0690 636 262.



► **The Perfect C Breast Enhancer** capsules contain 13 different herbs, minerals and amino acids. Take three every day and it promises to increase your breasts by up to three full cup sizes. Studies – carried out by the manufacturer not an independent body – claim it works. £199 for three months' supply. Tel: 0191 291 3385.



► **The skin on your breast is thin and delicate, so keep it moisturised. Try Alquimia Bust Firming Oil**, which includes geranium and fennel essential oils. £38. Tel: 01904 785 557. A cheaper alternative is Bio Oil, £8.95, available at Boots.



► **Don't forget to check for cancerous lumps.** www.breastcancer.org.uk