

GOALWEIGHT

How liposuction helped one man overcome his last weight-loss hurdle.

BY BONNIE STARING

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When he was in his late 30s, Ed Hollis (left) decided to work out more vigorously than before and made a conscious effort to eat better. He felt he had to as his weight, then yo-yoing in the mid-to-high 200s, was affecting his overall health. “Oddly enough, I felt it most in my ankles when I was playing soccer. All that extra weight was hard on them.”

His efforts soon turned into results and the pounds came off – until he hit a plateau. “My arms and legs were skinny but the fat continued to hang around my middle. No matter how hard I tried, it wouldn’t budge.”

At the time, Ed felt ready to give up. He’d done everything he could, including climbing 10,000-foot mountains every weekend (he was living in Albuquerque, New Mexico, at the time). No matter how high he climbed, his love handles hung on for dear life. “I didn’t look bad, but the weight was there and I knew it.” Ed learned to disguise his middle with the clothes he wore and avoided anyone holding a camera. Most of the “before” pictures he has of himself were taken when he wasn’t aware of it.

After years of mulling over the possibility, Ed, now 41, finally felt ready to talk to someone about liposuction earlier this year. Based on his research, he chose to meet with Dr. Jerome Edelstein, MD, FRCSC, at his Toronto clinic. Ed was further impressed with the plastic surgeon immediately. “He told me this wasn’t a matter of weight loss – it was a matter of body image. Having liposuction was something that would enable me to feel better about myself, become more confident and be able to continue with the healthy lifestyle I’d already established.”

Dr. Edelstein describes Ed as an ideal patient for liposuction treatment. “He was doing everything properly to get rid of his excess weight,” he explains. “All Ed had left to lose was the stubborn fat that’s hard to remove through diet and exercise alone.” Dr. Edelstein recommended body contouring in a circumferential pattern from the abdomen to around the flanks, stopping at about mid-back on either side of his spine. The cost for this type of liposuction procedure ranges from \$3,000 - \$8,000.

In April 2008, Dr. Edelstein performed liposuction on Ed using two techniques during a two-hour-and-twenty-minute procedure. “Over most of the area, I used tumescent liposuction, which is fairly standard, and ultrasonic liposuction on the most stubborn areas, such as the flanks and back,” Dr. Edelstein explains. “That’s when we treat the tissues with an

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ultrasound probe. It vibrates at a very high frequency and it helps liquefy the fat before it’s removed from the area.”

Ed still laughs about the morning after his surgery. “Dr. Edelstein was very clear about what to expect (a temporary build-up of excess fluid), but there was still that part of me that thought I’d get up the next morning and see that all the fat had miraculously disappeared.” But a few weeks of wearing thin compression garments under his clothes prevented the fluid from collecting and kept the skin smooth. “Patients should be able to return to work in a week and start moderate exercise after approximately two weeks,” advises Dr. Edelstein. Ed, who plays soccer on a regular basis, waited about a month before returning to the playing field and was able to participate fully. “I felt a difference almost immediately – my sense of balance and stability had definitely improved.”

The only thing Ed notices now, eight months after the procedure, is a bit of numbness at some of the incision sites, which Dr. Edelstein insists is normal. “The incisions are very small, less than a centimetre, so any scars will be hardly noticeable,” adds Dr. Edelstein.

At this point, Ed has lost 15 pounds as a result of the procedure (he’s 197 pounds now). And without his “flabby middle” holding him back anymore, he plans on sticking to his healthy regimen. “Having liposuction made a vast improvement in the way I feel. Before, I wouldn’t take my shirt off. Not on the beach. Not anywhere. Not even in my own home. And I can now, without feeling self-conscious.”

Shirt or no shirt, Ed claims that the best part of his experience has been working with Dr. Edelstein. “He wants to see me succeed. From the get-go, Dr. Edelstein insisted that it wasn’t the procedure that would help me improve, it would be the way I treated my body after the procedure.” And, as Ed has proven, the talented plastic surgeon was absolutely right. **e**