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## Plastic Surgeons Say Doing These Two Things Can Ruin Your BBL Results

Melanie Rud | May 20, 2022



There's no shortage of discussion about the potential dangers associated with the Brazilian butt lift (BBL). (It's part of the reason new safety guidelines were established to help mitigate the procedure's somewhat infamous reputation.) To that point, when it comes to ensuring both a safe *and* a successful BBL, the absolute most important factor is choosing a well-established, board-certified plastic surgeon who performs these procedures as a regular part of their practice, advises **Dr. Steven Williams**, a board-certified plastic surgeon in Dublin, California.

That being said, what you do—and don't do—during the post-op period can absolutely impact the end result. A BBL involves fat grafting—and ensuring the survival of that fat during the postoperative period, the first six to eight weeks especially, is paramount, Dr. Williams says. This means avoiding things that can compromise the vulnerable state of newly transferred fat, such as decreases in oxygenation or physical trauma, he explains.

Simply put, you want to avoid putting too much pressure on your buttocks, which is challenging but possible—if you plan accordingly. “If you don't prepare for the post-op period before you have the surgery, you can easily get into trouble and end up compromising the results,” cautions Dr. Johnny Franco, a board-certified plastic surgeon in Austin, Texas. But what,

exactly, does this entail, and is there anything that can actually definitively ruin your results? Ahead, top plastic surgeons answer RealSelf member's most pressing post-BBL questions.

## **How do patients handle the plane ride home without ruining their results?**

***RealSelf member @delynne1***

"Sitting is the one activity that clearly has an effect on BBL results, [because] transplanted fat cells are vulnerable to stress—which includes the physical pressure of the weight of the body when sitting," explains Dr. Williams. He advises his patients to sit for no longer than 15 minutes at a time for the first week, gradually increasing the amount of time over the next four to six weeks. This allows the transplanted fat to establish a new vascular supply so that it doesn't end up dying or being resorbed by the body.

Obviously, this can pose a potential issue for patients who've had an out-of-town surgery and need to get home. "I see this all the time with people who have traveled for a BBL but haven't accounted for the fact that they then need to fly home," says Dr. Franco. He asks patients to wait a minimum of 7 to 14 days before flying.

While BBL pillows—which support the back of the thighs, to take pressure off the buttocks—can be helpful during the post-op period, they're not great travel companions, says Dr. Michael Horn, a board-certified plastic surgeon in Chicago. These pillows put pressure on the back of the legs and can cause blood to pool in the feet, increasing the risk for clots, he explains. Your best bet is to avoid flights longer than three hours for the first three weeks post-op and, if and when you do fly home, get up and move as much as possible, to reduce pressure on the buttocks and minimize the risk of a blood clot, he says.

## **My compression garment is a little loose. Should I downsize? Will a too-tight one ruin my BBL?**

***RealSelf member @Veda2046***

Compression garments are crucial during the post-op recovery period, as "they're meant to minimize swelling and pain," explains Dr. Horn. "The constant pressure helps prevent excessive fluid buildup and helps your body absorb any fluid that does accumulate. Without compression, post-op swelling can linger much longer than necessary."

But that certainly doesn't mean tighter is better. In fact, wearing a garment that's too tight *can* negatively impact your BBL results, says Dr. Franco, who adds that it's a common mistake patients make. "People decide to tighten the garments without talking to their doctor, which can lead to things such as skin abrasions as well as lumps, bumps, and even dents on the

buttocks,” he says. Extreme constriction can restrict blood flow to the area, potentially damaging the transferred fat cells, adds Dr. Horn. The garment should fit snugly but not be uncomfortably tight. When in doubt, check with your doctor to ensure it’s fitting correctly.

**“I accidentally slept on my back, five days after having a BBL. Will this ruin my results?”**

*RealSelf member @phuongypoooh*

While sleeping on your stomach for at least three to six weeks after the procedure is ideal, if you end up sleeping on your side or your back, it’s not the end of the world. “Sleeping in an area where there’s been fat grafting has minimal impact on fat survivability,” says Dr. Williams. “Unlike sitting, when the majority of our weight is in the area where we’ve placed grafted fat, when we sleep, our bodies do an excellent job of distributing our weight throughout the entire body.” He also reminds patients that “it’s almost impossible to confine yourself to a single position when you’re sleeping—most of us move around constantly,” reducing the odds of putting direct and prolonged pressure on one spot.

**“I fell on my butt, two weeks after a BBL. Did I ruin it?”**

*RealSelf member @Chewy75*

This is another instance where you (probably) don’t need to be super-worried. While you definitely want to try and avoid any trauma to the buttocks, it really would have to be a pretty hard fall to affect that grafted fat, says Dr. Franco. If that’s the case—and/or the fall resulted in any pain, swelling, or bruising—Dr. Horn suggests checking in with your plastic surgeon.

**“I had sex, 10 days post-op. Did I just throw my money away?”**

*RealSelf member @Cabledog*

“The largest issue with sexual activity 10 days postoperatively relates more to the potential for bleeding than it does for fat loss, as any activity that raises the heart rate and blood pressure risks a bleeding event in the areas that have been operated on,” says Dr. Williams. How long you should wait depends on the extent of the liposuction performed, he adds, so your best bet is to check with your doctor. Still, having sex is unlikely to ruin BBL results; you can also opt for positions that eliminate pressure on the buttocks, to be safe, says Dr. Franco

**“If I get a BBL, what would happen to my shape if I get pregnant? Would it ruin it?”**

***RealSelf member @sakhe***

“Getting pregnant after a BBL should be fine, as long as you’re fully healed. There will obviously be weight gain and some fluctuation and your buttocks could change shape, however, pregnancy doesn’t tend to affect the areas treated in a BBL,” says Dr. Horn. The results of a BBL tend to look good because the waist and tummy shrinks in proportion to the curve of the butt, and it’s hard to predict how the tummy will respond to pregnancy, notes Dr. Franco. He adds that getting pregnant post-BBL is less of a concern than after something such as a tummy tuck or a breast lift, given that those parts of the body are most affected by pregnancy. Bottom line: Getting pregnant after a BBL might alter the end result a bit, but it’s not going to ruin it.

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