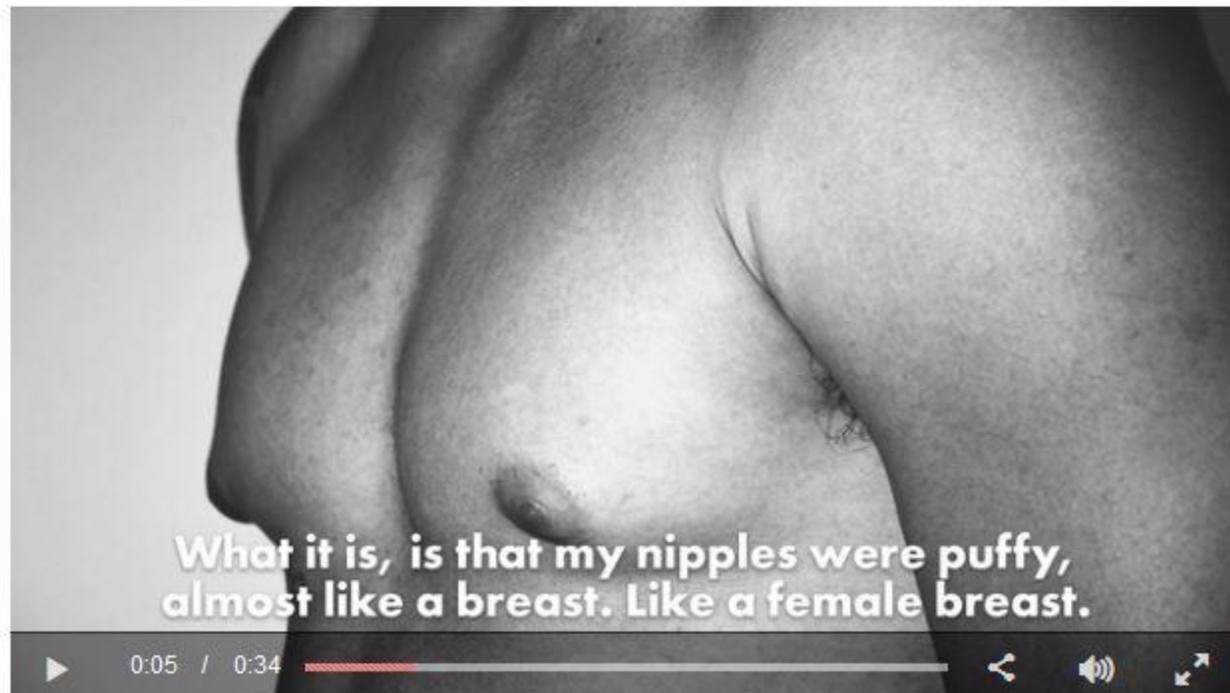


Guys share their struggles with man boobs

By Doree Lewak

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When Miguel Francisco looked into the mirror, the 31-year-old Washington Heights man didn't notice the narrow waist or chiseled abs that came from his long workouts.

All he saw were a couple of unmanly "t - - s."

And that wasn't the worst of it, Francisco tells The Post: He says that after he took anabolic steroids 10 years ago, "there was leakage coming out of my nipples."

Francisco, who works in medical billing, has gynecomastia, a condition in which an imbalance in the hormones estrogen and testosterone results in excess breast tissue. The surgery needed to fix it costs anywhere from \$3,500 to \$10,000, depending on the amount of tissue and other factors. Male breast reduction usually isn't covered by insurance, either, since it's mainly a cosmetic issue.

Nevertheless, the American Society of Plastic Surgeons reports a 36 percent increase in men seeking breast reductions since 2000.

"There's a huge number [of men] who just think, 'Oh, it's fat, I can work it out,'" says Dr. Elliot Jacobs, the Upper East Side plastic surgeon who operated on Francisco in June 2016. "But it doesn't really change that much when you work out. When you put on muscle, it pushes [the breasts] out further."

Nor does weight loss help, either: “You can lose weight, but it’s still there. And it almost looks worse because the body looks slimmer.”

The surgery uses liposuctionlike techniques to permanently remove fat and breast tissue, with minimal scarring. Dr. Jacobs says. The procedure usually takes less than two hours and is performed under local anaesthesia. Patients are required to wear a compression vest for two weeks after, but the downtime post-op is minimal: Most men are back at their gym in a month.

Even so, it takes some men more time than others to decide to go through with it.

Joe Marciano, 21, of Bellmore, has been going back and forth to an endocrinologist since he was 13 years old. “I couldn’t wear certain T-shirts,” says the aspiring cop. “You could see [my breasts] with everything.’ In May, Dr. Emmanuel Asare performed Marciano’s surgery.

“Guys get really worried about it psychologically,” says the Manhattan doctor, who says that, in the past five years, he’s seen an uptick in millennial men opting for the surgery.

“Their whole life is controlled by this,” he adds. “They can’t take off their shirts. They’re very conscious about their chest — they think everyone’s looking at them.”

These days, Marciano doesn’t mind the attention.

“There’s a little tiny scar on the side and that’s it,” he says. “Everything healed in two weeks. I already went shopping for tighter shirts.”

Francisco is also strutting his stuff. “I walk more confidently,” he says. “I walk straight with my chest out. It’s animal stuff. Girls look at that.”