



Lowdown on Body Fat

You may not want to think about your body fat, but do you know **where** you carry fat can affect your risk for some conditions?

The fat directly under your skin is **subcutaneous**. You'll find most of this fat in the buttocks, hips, thighs and upper arms.

Visceral fat resides deeper and wraps around your stomach, liver, intestines, kidneys and other organs in your abdomen. Some fat is needed to pad your organs and protect them, but excess abdominal fat poses a greater health risk than subcutaneous fat. It can produce inflammatory substances that promote diseases such as type 2 diabetes, heart disease and stroke.

Scientists use waist size to determine if we have too much abdominal fat. Women with a waist size of 35 inches or more and men with a waist size of 40 inches or more may have greater risk for the conditions listed above. Even normal-weight adults are at higher risk if they have excess belly fat. **Tip:** To measure waist circumference, run a tape measure around your torso just above your navel.

Inactivity adds to your risk. Researchers at Duke University Medical Center observed that sedentary adults experienced a nearly 9% gain in visceral fat after 6 months without exercise.

Good news: When you lose excess weight, you shed fat all over your body. In addition to lower-calorie, healthful eating, adding exercise to your weight-loss plan can help you lose visceral fat.

So what works? Several studies show 30 to 45 minutes of brisk exercise 5 times a week will help trim your waistline and the fat underneath. Gradually increase your exercise time to an hour a day on most days of the week.

Losing a little around the middle could gain you a lot.

Heartfelt Advice



Is it possible to prevent heart disease? Yes, it is. During **American Heart Month**, review all the positive choices you can make for your heart. Check the boxes that apply to you.

- 1.** I keep my **waist circumference** below 35 inches (for women) or below 40 inches (for men). Numbers above these indicate excess belly (abdominal) fat, which raises heart disease risk (see "Lowdown on Body Fat").
- 2.** I don't **smoke** (or, I'm ready to quit). Cigarette smokers are 2 to 3 times more likely than nonsmokers to die from coronary heart disease.
- 3.** I get at least 30 minutes of cardio **exercise** 5 days a week, plus 2 to 3 strength training workouts. Routine exercise strengthens your heart.
- 4.** I limit **saturated** and **trans fats** and have low-fat dairy, lean protein and at least 2 cups of fruits and 2½ cups of vegetables daily.
- 5.** I get my **blood pressure, cholesterol, triglycerides** and **blood sugar** checked as my health care provider advises.
- 6.** I limit **alcohol** to 1 drink a day (for women) or 2 drinks a day (for men). Excessive alcohol intake can increase blood pressure and triglycerides. (A drink is 1 ounce of liquor or 8 ounces of beer or wine.)

Scoring:

If you answered **yes** to at least 4 questions, well done. If you've got changes to make, focus on 1 at a time, starting now.



Goodbye Tobacco, for Good

If you recently quit tobacco, avoiding relapse is the final stage of kicking your habit. Giving in to just 1 cigarette or dip is a minor setback you quickly correct; a relapse is returning to your old pattern of using.

Don't let 1 little slip become a slide into relapse. First, don't tell yourself, *I've given in so I may as well give up.* You're smarter than that. Quickly renew your commitment to quitting for good.

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Serious Exercise for Homebodies

Is working out at home as effective as a gym workout? Yes. You can get fit and slim without a gym.

Create an official workout zone at home – even if it's small, you're more likely to use a space dedicated to exercise.

Strive to reach full fitness by including multiple forms of exercise. Here are some examples to kick-start your plan:

Cardio exercise: Check out space-saving elliptical trainers and treadmills; add a fitness tracker to monitor your progress.

Floor exercise: All you need is a roll-up floor mat to practice yoga poses, Pilates, push-ups and stretches. For an advanced core workout, include planks (a type of Pilates exercise) or a stability ball routine.

Weight training: Start with 3-, 5- or 8-pound weights and resistance bands to mix it up.

Machine-free workouts: Collect exercise videos that have workouts with no equipment required, such as Pilates, Zumba or circuit body weight routines. **Tip:** Browse the online workout options at ACE Fitness: www.acefitness.org/acefit/ACEfit-workouts/.

Just getting started? Get evaluated by your health care provider, particularly if you're unaccustomed to routine exercise or have health concerns.

“Don't judge each day by the harvest you reap but by the seeds that you plant.” – Robert Louis Stevenson

Secrets of Organic Food Labeling

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

If you pay a premium for organic apples and free-range chicken, you may wonder if the package claims are genuine. Here's an overview of what's required to make these healthy-sounding declarations.



Foods labeled as **organic** must meet USDA standards, which are based on the **Organic Foods Production Act**. These standards cover the product from farm to table. **The USDA Organic logo** verifies that the organic farm:

- Supports animal welfare.
- Gives animals access to the outdoors rather than keeping them in cages or pens.
- Does not use genetically modified ingredients, irradiation, synthetic fertilizers, antibiotics, growth hormones or prohibited pesticides.
- Has yearly on-site USDA inspections.

Good to know: If your vegetables and fruits don't bear the USDA Organic logo, look at the produce sticker. If the first number in the 5-digit code is a 9, you've got an organic product. Conventional produce starts with a 4 (regular) or 3 (hybrid, such as a grapple – grape and apple).

The USDA Organic symbol is not handed out lightly. There are many regulations, and some companies forego the process. Instead, they use vague terminology to make their products sound organic. Watch out for:

- The term **natural** – it's not regulated, so it's meaningless.
- The terms **GMO free** and **fair trade certified** – they don't mean organic.
- Products imported from countries that don't regulate organic claims.



Bottom line: If you are buying organic, look for the USDA Organic logo. It verifies that the product you're buying has 95% or more organic content and follows all of the rules listed above.

Goodbye Tobacco, for Good >>Continued from other side.

5 Keys to Preventing Relapse

- 1. Don't have even one.** People who avoid that first puff or chew are more likely to succeed over time.
- 2. Remove temptations.** Avoid places and situations that trigger your urges, such as alcohol, socializing with tobacco users or boredom.
- 3. Don't give in to stress.** It's a major trigger for smoking or dipping, and in actuality tobacco use **causes** stress. Fortunately, conquering nicotine addiction will significantly reduce your stress.



- 4. Get support.** Call a friend or your quitline coach.
- 5. Get medical advice.** If you have recurrent depression, insomnia, or withdrawal symptoms or you worry about weight gain, see your health care provider.

Don't put yourself down if you relapse – it means you need to try a different approach to quitting. Your health care provider can help you find a method that works for you – for good.



Smart Moves toolkit is at www.personalbest.com/extras/15V2tools.

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