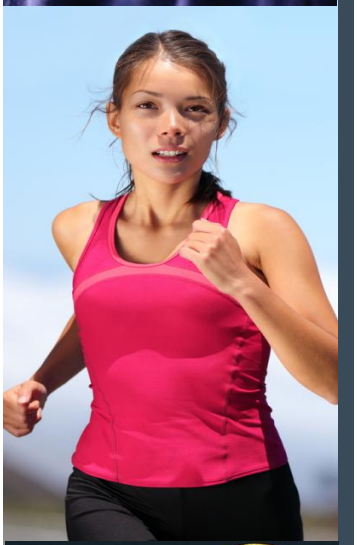

HEALTH AT A GLANCE

Assessing Your Weight and Health Risks

For many people, the scale is their go-to tool for determining the status of their weight and health. While it provides useful information, the scale doesn't tell the whole story, such as fat mass versus lean mass. Measuring body fat is importannt, since high levels have been shown to increase the risk of health problems such as high cholesterol, high blood pressure and diabetes. So, in addition to that scale, consider adding the following measures to your weight assessment toolbox.

Body Mass Index (BMI)

Body Mass Index, or BMI, compares weight in relation to height. This is an indirect measure of body fat and is a reliable indicator of the risk for weight-related diseases, including heart disease and diabetes; the higher your BMI, the higher your disease risk.

Calculate It: Multiply your weight (lbs) by 703, divide by your height (in), then divide again by your height (in). Example: 150 lbs x 703 = 105,450; 105,450/68 in. = 1551; 1551/68 in. = 22.8

BMI	Classification
Less than 18.5	Underweight
18.5 - 24.9	Healthy
25 - 29.9	At Risk
30 or Higher	High Risk

Limitations: While BMI correlates with body fat in most people, it can overestimate body fat in athletes or people with muscular builds. It can also underestimate body fat in older people, or those who have lost muscle mass. For these people, waist circumference and direct methods for measuring body fat can be more useful.

Waist Circumference

Waist circumference measures abdominal fat, which has been shown to increase the risk of disease more than fat stored in other areas of the body. The recommendation is for men to keep their waist measure below 40 inches while women should aim for less than 35 inches. Disease risk goes up when waist measures exceed these recommendations.

Measure Your Waist: Stand and wrap a tape measure around your middle, about an inch above your belly button. Measure just after you exhale.

Body Fat Percentage

Directly measuring body fat percentage will give you a clear picture of your body composition. This can be done with skinfold thickness measurements (body calipers), underwater weighing, bioelectrical impedance and dual-energy x-ray absorptiometry (DXA). However, these methods are not always readily available, can be expensive and require highly trained personnel.

Hitting Your Target

Is the ideal number you strive for tied to your college weight or fitting into your "skinny" jeans? Why not re-evaluate and look beyond that? At what weight/BMI/waist measure do you enjoy increased energy, a sense of well-being, and a reduced risk for disease? Make that your target!

If you're trying to downsize, use these tips to help you set realistic goals:

- **Aim to lose 1 - 2 lbs a week.** This may not sound like much, but losing 1 lb every week for a year adds up to 52 lbs! Plus, losing at this rate makes it more likely that you will keep it off.
- **Small losses have a big payoff.** Losing just 5-10% of your body weight (10-20 lbs for a 200 lb. person) can have a positive impact on your numbers and lower your disease risk.
- **The best weight loss approach:** This involves a combination of increased activity through formal exercise (cardio and strength training) and daily activities, and dietary changes, like boosting fruit and veggie intake, eating breakfast, losing liquid calories and reducing portions.

Key Websites:

www.mayoclinic.com
www.heart.org

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