

BELLY FAT 101

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BURNING BODY FAT

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE



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Introduction

The dreaded bulge of the belly better known as belly fat can be a detriment to our physical health and well-being. For years, medical experts have been warning us that too much weight around the middle places us at high-risk health conditions and even early death. As we age, many of us will experience an expansion around our mid-section that seems out of control.

What can we do about our growing middle?

There is hope for all of us. You have the power to control reverse belly fat and squash the potential effects of illness that may accompany having excess weight around the middle.



Let's take a closer look at the effects of belly fat and how to burn it off.

What Causes Belly Fat?

There are multiple causes of belly fat. The primary contributor has everything to do with the calories you consume and the energy you burn ([mayoclinic.org](https://www.mayoclinic.org)).

When we eat foods or drink beverages that contain a significant number of calories and fail to exercise or engage other forms of physical activity, those calories store themselves away in the form of excess fat throughout your body, but especially around your belly.

This padding of fat, however, does not stop at the subcutaneous level where it is just below the skin. Instead, there is an additional layer of fat known as visceral fat, deep within our belly that surrounds our internal organs.

Risk Factors For Belly Fat

There are a few risk factors that may contribute to certain individuals gaining belly fat over others.

Poor diet. Diet plays a critical role in belly fat as weight gain will inevitably wind up in mid area of the body.

Alcohol. If you drink alcohol like its water or merely as a way to relax in the evenings, it may be causing your belly fat. Alcohol carries a fair number of calories which can have direct impact on your waistline.

Gender. Women are particularly at risk for belly fat due to the loss of estrogen as they age which unfortunately contributes to the accumulation of fat around their middle.

Age. As we age, unless we are physically active, we generally lose muscle as a rule. That loss of muscle contributes to a change in our metabolism, limiting our ability to burn fat effectively.

Genetics. Family genetics can also play a role in belly fat which means you are particularly susceptible to experiencing difficulty with burning calories.

The Health Consequences Of Excess Belly Fat

According to WebMD, “A large waist circumference is a red flag for excessive abdominal fat, which is associated with obesity-related conditions, such as type 2 diabetes, high cholesterol, high triglycerides, high blood pressure and coronary artery disease.”

Samuel Dagogo-Jack, MD, president of the American Diabetes Association tells WebMD that “visceral fat in your middle makes toxins that affect the way your body works. Among them are chemicals called cytokines that boost your chances of heart disease and make your body less sensitive to insulin, which can bring on diabetes.”

Dr. Eric Jacobs, PhD, who conducts research for the American Cancer Society reports that cytokines cause inflammation and studies conducted in recent years find links between belly fat and pancreatic, colon and esophageal cancers.

A study (*Central obesity and increased risk of dementia more than three decades later, Whitmer, et al*) of 6,583 members of Kaiser Permanente being followed by researchers for about 36 years discovered that high levels of belly fat in the midlife years had a three times greater risk of developing dementia 30 years later as compared to those subjects were the lowest levels of belly fat.

In contrast to subcutaneous fat, visceral fat is an endocrine organ that secretes hormones and other harmful chemicals that are linked to various diseases. For example, RBP4 (retinol-binding protein 4 was determined to increase risks of heart disease (*Plasma Retinol-Binding Protein 4 (RBP4) Levels and Risk of Coronary Heart Disease: A Prospective Analysis among Women in the Nurses' Health Study, Qi Sun, et al*).



The Million Women Study (*Coronary heart disease incidence in women by waist circumference within categories of body mass index, Canoy, et al*) showed a direct link between coronary heart disease and a larger waist size, this occurred even when other heart disease risks were accounted for. Women with larger waists had a double risk of developing heart disease and the risk increased by 10% for each additional 2 inches of the women's waist size.

An study in Indi, (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/27573429>) of 3,000 premenopausal and postmenopausal women found that those with waists in size as large as or larger than their hips had a 3 to 4 times higher risk of breast cancer as opposed to those women with small waists.

A Korean study found colorectal cancer risks were doubled in postmenopausal women with high levels of belly fat.

Life expectancy is affected by belly fat too. A study analyzed data of 650,000 adults discovered a much reduced life expectancy for the largest waist size circumferences, 3 years for men and 5 years for women. This effect persisted despite other risk factors, including physical activity, smoking, alcohol use habits and even body mass index.

Men with a waist circumference of 43 inches have a 50% greater risk of death versus men with a 37-inch waist.

Women with a 37-inch waist have an 80% higher risk of death in comparison to women with a 27.5-inch waist.

12 Strategies To Burn Fat

It is highly possible to burn away that dangerous belly fat, but it will require a deep level of commitment. Kee in mind that while it is impossible to specifically target belly fat, these methods do work in burning body fat, which inevitably will target that belly fat too.

Work On Your Abs

There is no one way to shed the fat, but the keyword for this journey will be consistency. Your goal should be to improve your core. Improving your core means building abdominal muscles so that those muscles work on your behalf to dump the fat.

Change Your Diet. If you have not already done so, it is time to take a long, hard look at what it is you are putting into your body. There are multiple ways you can change the way you eat. There are several dietary lifestyles out there that can produce results.

Paleo Diet

The paleo diet sometimes lovingly referred to as the “caveman diet” challenges you to ditch dairy and refined foods and focus your efforts on eating lean meats, fruits, and vegetables. This way of eating models itself after the beginning of time when humans ate what the earth gave them millions of years ago.

Fruit and veggies are rich in fiber, minerals, and vitamins which help contribute to that sense of satisfaction, reducing the overall desire to eat. The paleo diet enables its followers to burn fat which can ultimately lead to weight loss.



In addition to lean meats, veggies, and fruits, the paleo diet allows for nuts and seeds. What is important to note is that you cannot consume them in large quantities. Since your goal in following this diet will be to burn fat and lose weight, you will have to limit your intake.

Research suggests that this diet does yield immediate, short-term results and may aid in reducing the risk for chronic conditions. Here are a few examples of what you can eat on the paleo diet.

- Fish
- Lean, grass-fed meats (pork, poultry, beef)
- Game animals such as bison
- Eggs
- Nuts and seeds such as cashews, walnuts, almonds, pumpkin seeds
- Olive oil, walnut oil
- Eggs,
- Non-starchy vegetables including asparagus, peppers, onions (in moderation), leafy green veggies such as spinach, collards, kale

Paleo requires that you avoid the following foods:

- Processed foods
- Foods that contain butter, margarine and sugar
- Legumes
- No peanuts
- Artificial sweeteners
- Sugar drinks

Keto Diet

Say bye-bye to excessive carbohydrate intake with the ketogenic diet. Your focus instead involves increasing your vegetable intake, protein, and healthy fats. This diet tricks your body into using its fat stores for energy.

Keto followers typically adhere to managing their daily caloric intake as follows five to ten percent calories come from carbs, fifteen to thirty percent of calories come from protein, and sixty to seventy-five percent calories come from fat.

After starting this diet, within two to seven days, your body enters a condition known as ketosis, triggering your body to make and release ketones. These ketones are used in place of carbs, and this triggers the much-desired fat burn for energy.

Followers report an increase in energy once they move past the initial stages of ketogenesis. Keto dieters may initially experience something known as “keto flu” which can trigger symptoms such as nausea, exhaustion, lightheadedness, and diarrhea. However, these symptoms generally only last one week. Once you enter week two, energy levels creep up and the scale shifts down.

Here are some examples of foods you can eat on the ketogenic diet.

- Beef, pork, poultry
- Fish
- Green leafy vegetables such as lettuce, collards, spinach, kale
- Other vegetables like broccoli, cauliflower, zucchini and Brussel sprouts are okay
- Avocado
- Cheese
- Coconut oil
- Sour Cream
- Plain Greek Yogurt
- Olive oil
- Nuts and seeds (in moderation)

You should avoid the following foods when following the ketogenic diet:

- Starchy vegetables like potatoes, or corn
- Table sugar and foods made from it
- Fruit

- Liquor
- Rice, pasta and other starches
- Candy
- Pasta
- Soda or sugary drinks

Mediterranean Diet

The Mediterranean diet is a heart-healthy diet that includes fish, fruits, red wine, and vegetables and access to healthy fats. What's not on a menu? Unhealthy fats are off limit. The Mediterranean diet is a favorite among health care providers because it is shown to improve good cholesterol readings or HDL and lower the bad cholesterol or LDL.



This diet allows you to not only consume fruits and vegetables, but you also have the option to eat pasta and rice, unlike low-carb diets that restrict the intake of such dishes.

Here are a few examples of the foods you can consume on the Mediterranean diet:

- Fish
- Extra-virgin or virgin olive oil
- Wine
- Nuts
- Rice
- Pasta

- Vegetables

Foods limited in moderation on the Mediterranean Diet?

- Butter
- Sausage and bacon
- Red meat and other fatty meats
- Milk (limited to two percent milk)

One study demonstrates that those who follow a Mediterranean diet have a reduced risk for cardiovascular mortality and overall mortality (mayoclinic.org).

Whatever path you pursue to rid your body of belly fat, make sure you take the time to research your choice of lifestyle change. Establish your goals for weight loss. Evaluate the commitment that the diet will involve. Also, take the time to examine the health risks that may accompany the diet and sustainability over the long term.

Skip Processed Food

All processed food has some level of detriment to your health, especially that of weight gain. Choose whole real clean food and your waist will thank you.

Drink Water

It may be time for you to bid your favorite soft drink farewell. Soda, even diet soda, can contribute to the fat surrounding your middle. Drinks that contain sugar like juice and sweet tea can wreak havoc on your best efforts in the battle against the bulge.

You will need to replace those higher caloric drinks with water. Studies show that eliminating sugary drinks and alcohol may remove as much as 1800 calories per week from your diet. Imagine that! That's almost a full pound.

You know the adage; aim for seven to eight glasses of water each day. Some studies even suggest that you should drink 16 ounces of water before a meal. This action can help you take in as much as thirteen percent fewer calories.

Another suggestion is that when you are in the throes of a hunger pang episode, you should first drink water to ensure that what may appear to be a state of hunger is not merely a case of dehydration. Dehydration can cause you to eat at times that are not necessary or even consume more calories than are required.

Our body is seventy-percent of water. To sustain the various metabolic processes that take place, we have to replace water loss. Water can prove beneficial in adding digestion of food and burning calories.

Get Some Sleep

It may seem impossible for some and basic for others but establish a bedtime schedule. Take the necessary steps to ensure you go to bed at the same time every time. When we fail to secure a good night's rest, our body has to find a way to sustain us. We inadvertently trigger stress within our body, and as a result, it also stimulates a shift in our metabolism. This shift in our metabolism compels the body to preserve fat –specifically around our middle.

According to one study, “two groups of overweight non-smokers ate calorie-restricted diets for 14 days. One group documented an average of 8.5 hours of sleep per night, and the other logged 5.5 hours of sleep per night (which the authors point out is a “norm” for the period). Each group consumed approximately 1,450 calories a day.”

“After two weeks, the people who slept more lost weight faster than the group who slept less. More than half of the weight loss during the 8.5 hours of sleep was fat versus only one-quarter of the weight loss during the 5.5 hours of sleep. The moral of the story here is that those who slept longer vs. those who were sleep-deprived burned more fat.”

Shockingly, the folks who slept less also lost 60 percent more muscle. The three hours of lost sleep altered the body's metabolism in such a way as to make the body want to preserve fat at the expense of muscle ([PsychologyToday](#)).

Additionally, the research found those subjects who got less sleep also had high levels of the appetite stimulating hormone ghrelin, which caused those subjects to awake hungrier than the group who had ample sleep.

Sleep helps our body to repair itself and enables our metabolism to reset itself each night. Unfortunately, if we do not get an adequate amount of sleep, the metabolism begins to work against us. It functions at a terrible, slower rate and burning calories and fat becomes extremely difficult.

Your goal should be to aim for a minimum of seven to eight hours of sleep per night.

Find Your Physical Fitness

Burning belly fat may very well require you to introduce fitness into your daily regimen but figuring out what will help you to burn belly fat may seem overwhelming. The good news is that there is no magic bullet and you have the option to find the fitness regimen that works best for your physical abilities and schedule.

Here are a few exercises you can perform to trigger the burn.

Treadmill Incline

Some people loathe the idea of having to board a treadmill, but for those who are looking to keep it simple, the treadmill can be a no-brainer in the fight against the bulge. Walking 20 minutes a day, five days a week at a slight incline can help you to increase your calorie burn by as much as fifty percent ([Prevention.com](#)).

High-Intensity Interval Training (HIIT)

High-Intensity interval training is very popular among fitness enthusiasts. It delivers rapid results and helps to sculpt the body. Some people utilize stationary bikes for their HIIT, and others leverage more intense machines that force them to use all of their major muscles groups.

HIIT challenges you to give 110% to the workout. The physical activity is quick, wrapped in bursts of intense exercise and interval training followed by recovery periods. What's great about this form of fitness is that it gets your heart rate up and triggers the much-desired fat burn.

High-Intensity Interval Training boosts the body's need for oxygen. This oxygen shortage then causes the body to demand more oxygen even during the recovery period. It helps the body to burn fat even while it is at rest.

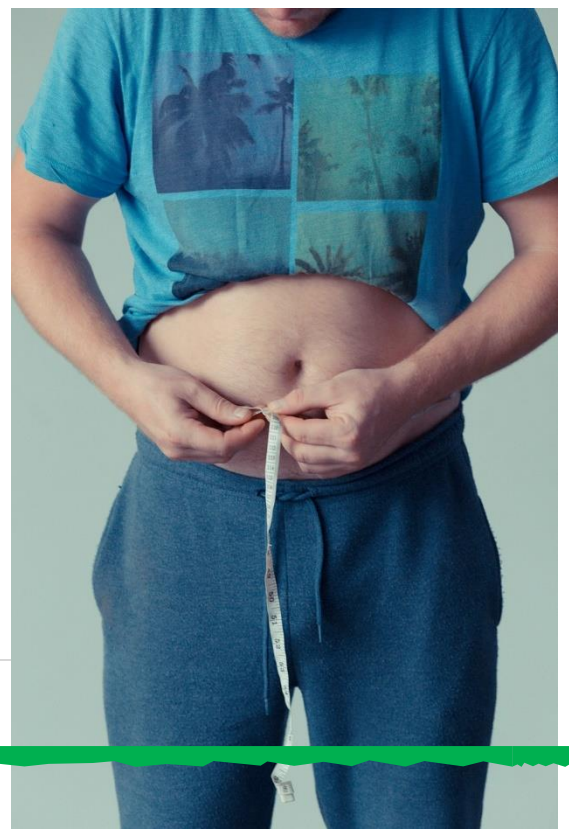
This form of fitness is a favorite because it increases the metabolism and gives it a boost for a period of 48 hours even after the routine is complete. People like HIIT because it does not require a lot of your time. In just thirty minutes, you can achieve surprising results.

Finally, you do not need equipment for these workouts. You can do it by merely using your body weight in the form of sit-ups, push-ups, planks, lunges and squats.

Stress Management

Take control of your stress. This piece of advice is probably better said than done. Unfortunately, stress can be an enemy of our body –especially for individuals with a significant amount of belly fat. Stress potent enough to shut down any fat burning or weight loss work no matter how well you are sticking to your new way of eating.

Our body loves to release hormones in response to stress. Our brain triggers this release of hormones so that



adrenaline enables you to have a fight or flight response. At the same time, your adrenals release cortisol (also known as the “stress hormone”) to ensure you have the energy to deal with the episode effectively. We need this hormone and adrenaline rush to escape a harmful situation.

Unfortunately, if we remain in the realms of a chronic crisis, we are at risk for experiencing persistent cortisol elevation.

If cortisol levels remain elevated, they can cause a bevy of problems for our body including:

- High blood sugar
- Insulin resistance
- Carbohydrate cravings
- Fat deposits throughout the body including around the belly
- Reduced libido
- Bone loss
- Hypertension
- Suppression immunity

There’s good news. There are a lot of tools that can help you be better at dealing with stressful situations.

Stress Management Tips

There are a few things you can do to rein in your stress levels. Here are a few tips to help you get started.

Practice Meditation

Set aside five to ten minutes a day (to start) to practice meditation. Meditation is a natural way to help your mind and body relax. Mindfulness meditation will help you to garner a bit of self-awareness and release emotions that are contributing to your state of physical stress.

Get Support

Find a network of friends and family who will listen to you without judgment, offer sound advice and validate your concerns. Sometimes, venting to a good listener goes a long way to help you release a bit of frustration into the air rather than holding it inside. Talking with someone you trust will alleviate your stress. Remember to stay away from those who might add to your stress during this time where possible.

Make Time for Fitness

Aside from using fitness to burn belly fat, fitness is a fantastic way to also burn through stress. Exercise helps to trigger the release of endorphins and serotonin which serve as positive mood-boosting agents. Endorphins are known to (webmd.com):

- Lower stress
- Rid us of anxiety and depression
- Improve self-esteem and;
- Improve our sleep experience

Fitness can take place in a variety of forms including:

- Walking for 20 minutes
- Swimming
- Yoga
- Working around the house

Set Goals

Your path to decreasing belly fat is a long-term commitment. Whatever choice you make, you will want to ensure that you can sustain it and if not, have a backup plan in place. What will you do if this diet does not work? What will you do to get back on track if for some reason there is a momentary lapse in your vow to make this lifestyle change?

Remember to ensure that your goals are SMART. At a minimum, they need to be measurable and you have to go back to evaluate progress towards those goals over time. If your goal is to change your diet, you might consider journaling the foods you are eating to determine if you are making any changes. Also, there are multiple apps available that can help you track your goals and general process towards success.

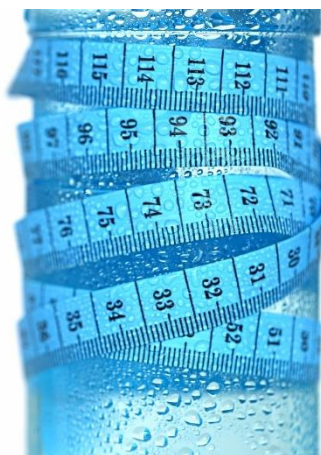
Build a Support System

Next, if you have a significant amount of weight to lose, you will want to ensure that you have a support system in place to cheer you on through this process. Support systems may consist of family, friends, or even an online group of people with similar goals. Ideally, you will want to ensure that these people are in your corner and are not a source for negative vibes. Remove any negative forces from your circle as soon as possible as you will need positivity to achieve this change.

Identify people who will be there when or if you relapse and willing to coach you back into the fight against your middle.

In Summary

In summary, we must take efforts to gain control of belly fat. Failure to do so can leave you vulnerable to several chronic conditions that can be debilitating and even contribute to an early



death. You have the ability to take control of your belly fat through exercise and diet. It is a lifestyle change that will require you to commit to it for long-term, lasting results.

In choosing your path, remember to do your due diligence in the way of research before diving into a particular form of eating. Make sure that the path you elect to follow is sustainable. Find a support network of

friends, family or like-minded individuals who have similar goals and want to see you succeed.

Finally, do be afraid to seek professional help for your fitness or mental well-being. Your goal is success. Give yourself permission to seek help if necessary.