

# BODY COMPOSITION

from DAN'S  
HAND



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Most folks join a gym to lose weight. The trouble is, weight is comprised of both muscle and fat. Losing weight means you are losing both. Lose too much muscle and you make it more difficult or even impossible to lose the flabby stuff. Understanding how to focus on the fat and keep the muscle is the most critical component to realizing your goals.

Measuring the changes in your **Body Composition** instead of using a scale may mean the difference in losing that last 8 pounds or adding 2 inches to your chest. But what exactly is Body Composition? Simply put, it is the ratio of lean body mass (muscle, tissue, bone, glands and organs) relative to the percentage of adipose fat that your body is made of. The lean body mass is the good stuff — the essential stuff. You want to keep this but you want to minimize the fat. Most of us have too much of the latter.

Measuring your Body Composition and establishing a benchmark, then re-measuring monthly will help you in understanding how your body responds to nutrition and training. Ask questions like, "What is your personal metabolic set point?" or "How many calories does your body need?" and "Are you getting enough carbs, protein or fat, and in the right ratios?" Getting this right can be the difference between success and failure.

### Body Types

Body Type is the result of genetic and environmental factors. The genetic factors exert the dominant influence, since they are inherited and on the whole can not be changed.

Scientists have determined that human bodies tend to fall into three general types; i.e. **mesomorphic** (muscular), **ectomorphic** (slim and linear), and **endomorph** (fat and round). The table below represents average overall ranges of **Body Fat Percentages**. Depending on what your personal body make up is, it may help you realize that it may take more or less of an effort than others to achieve your desired results. For instance, if you are a female non-athlete with a body fat of 38% and you happen to have an endomorphic body type, it may require more exercise and discipline in the kitchen than a similar person who has an ectomorphic body type.

Upon completion of your **Body Fat Analysis**, cross reference your results to the table below and compare to the desirable target. By multiplying the target Body Fat percentage with the weight you would like to be at in 10 weeks, you can quickly develop real goals. Remember, you will be changing your body on a physiological level and this takes time. **Plan to lose no more than 1-2 pounds a week.**

### Body Fat Percentages

Males	Overall Normal	Desirable Range
Athletes	5% - 16%	6% - 12%
Non-Athletes	10% - 22%	12% - 16%

Females	Overall Normal	Desirable Range
Athletes	11% - 28%	12% - 18%
Non-Athletes	16% - 32%	18% - 28%

### Steps to Take

**First:** You will need to weigh yourself. (Ex: 150lbs.) Now put the scale in your closet.

**Second:** Determine your **Body Composition**. The easiest way of determining your body fat is with a **Hand Held Resistance Meter**. One of these should be available right here at your health club. If not, no worries; just scoot on down to your closest GNC or Vitamin Shoppe and pick up **Skin Calipers** for about \$15. Follow the directions inside the box; believe me, it's a snap. I like this method because you can check yourself easily once a month in the privacy of your own home.

Once you have determined the percentage of fat relative to the rest of your body, you will need to calculate how many pounds of **Body Fat** you have. Multiply your personal percentage by your total weight. (Ex: 30% x 150lbs = 45lbs of body fat.)

**Third:** Calculate the amount of Lean Body Mass you have. Simply subtract your lbs of body fat from your total weight. (Ex: 150lbs - 45lbs = 105lbs of lean body mass.) Lean body mass is simply all of the body's bones, muscles, organs, blood and water - all of the bodily tissues apart from fat.

### Achieving Your Goals

Fluctuations in weight from here on out result from changes in muscle mass, body fat and or water weight. To keep track of which ones are causing your weight changes, measure your body composition once a month.

You may be surprised to discover that while your total weight remains the same, your lean body mass is increasing and your body fat is decreasing. In general, short-term (day to day) fluctuations in weight come primarily from water weight changes. This is the main reason I ask you to please put your scale away.

Lastly, as you gain muscle and lose the fat, your body may appear to be gaining weight or looking larger than before you started; don't be fooled. This "may" be a necessary part of your initial transformation. You see, as muscle is added, the adipose (surface) fat can be pushed further out making you appear larger than before you started. This is only temporary, and will change as you lose the fat.

Once you begin a more scientific and pragmatic approach to weight loss, you will be surprised how quickly you can achieve your goals.

Eat Well!

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