


Module 8: Lifelong Health and Wellness


Topic 3 Content: Healthy Weight and Body Composition Notes

Introduction

Healthy Weight and Body Composition



Introduction



You can measure your body mass index, or BMI, and the circumference of your waist to find out if you have a healthy weight and body composition. While these two measurements are good indications of your overall fitness, both measurements are considered screening tests. Being outside the normal range for BMI or having a lower waist circumference are two things you may want to consider discussing with a trained health care professional. Click each panel to learn about body mass index and waist circumference.

Body Mass Index (BMI)

Waist Circumference

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Body Mass Index (BMI)

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Your body mass index, or BMI, refers to your weight-to-height ratio. In other words, if you are 6 feet tall, or 72 inches, and you weigh 154 pounds, then your BMI is 21. Because your BMI is simply a ratio of your weight to your height, it cannot always accurately assess your body composition because it does not differentiate between muscle, fat, and bone tissues. Especially for body builders and athletes, BMI is not the best possible measure of body fat.

Use the chart shown to measure your BMI. If you are concerned about the results, speak with a trained health care professional for additional health assessments to achieve a full diagnostic.

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Waist Circumference

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Another way to estimate your potential disease risk is to measure your waist circumference. Excessive abdominal fat puts you at a greater health risk. Therefore your waistline may indicate that you have a higher risk of developing obesity-related conditions. For a man, you are at high risk if your waist circumference is greater than 40 inches. For a non-pregnant woman, you are at risk if your waist circumference is greater than 35 inches.

Remember, this is just a screening test and you should seek out a health care professional for a full health evaluation if you have concerns about your waist circumference.

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