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Body fat percentage: are you at a healthy weight?



I'm really confused...

Your body fat percentage is essential to know when evaluating your health. It divides your total weight in two categories: fat mass and everything else. You need fat to keep you warm and to protect your organs and joints. However, it is not healthy to have too much or too little fat.

If your body fat percentage is too low, your resistance to diseases and energy levels are lower, and you are at risk of health issues. If your body fat percentage is too high, you have a higher risk of diabetes and other health problems.

It is therefore important to measure your body fat percentage, and stay in the healthy range. In this article, first the usefulness of BMI as a measurement is explained. Then it is described how you can accurately measure your body fat percentage. Finally, you will be able to find out if you have a healthy body fat percentage and will receive tips on losing or gaining weight.

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Measuring your body fat percentage

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An often-used metric to determine whether you are at a healthy weight is body mass index (BMI). It is calculated by dividing weight by the square of your height. The resulting number provides a rough indication of whether you are underweight, normal weight, overweight, or obese.

However, there are some issues with using BMI to determine your health. For example, muscular people often have a high BMI, as muscles are heavier than fat. The BMI of a body builder may show that he is overweight, although in reality he has a quite low body fat percentage. On the other end of the spectrum, BMI often underestimates the fat levels of people with very little muscle mass. The BMI of a tall person is also often higher than his actual body fat percentage would warrant.

BMI was invented to keep tabs on the increasing obesity in Western civilizations. It is useful for measuring levels of obesity in a larger population. Because of differences between individuals, it is less suitable for measuring the fat level of one person. However, it can provide a rough indication.

An accurate measurement of your body fat percentage

If you want to regularly measure your body fat percentage to keep track of your progress, you can also use a Tanita body composition monitor. (<https://tanita.eu/products>) Our bathroom scales send a very small electric current through your body. Since fat, muscle and other tissue all conduct electricity at a different rate, the scale can then calculate your body fat percentage. Of course, there are more metrics you should know to find out if you are healthy. A Tanita weighing scale can also tell you your muscle mass (<https://tanita.eu/muscle-mass>), visceral fat (<https://tanita.eu/tanita-academy/understanding-your-measurements/visceral-fat>) percentage, bone mass (<https://tanita.eu/tanita-academy/understanding-your-measurements/bone-density>) and body water (<https://tanita.eu/tanita-academy/understanding-your-measurements/body-water>) percentage. It can then interpret these data to assess your health and letting you know what you should work on.

Segmental body fat percentages

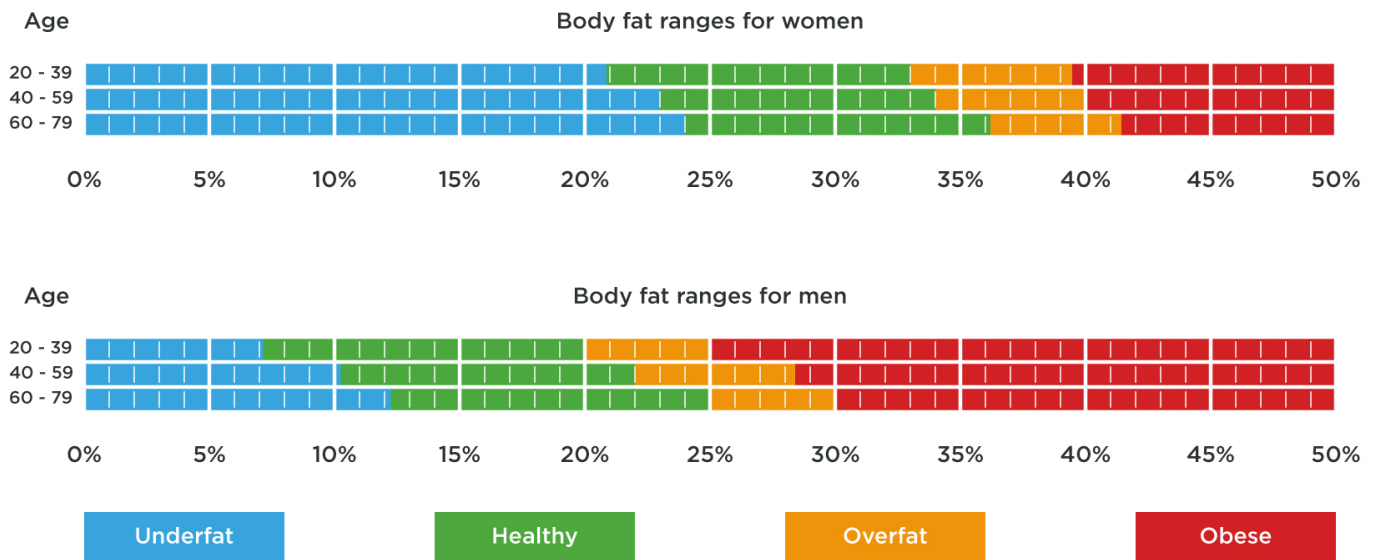
Is the fat in a certain body part bothering you especially? A Tanita Body Composition Monitor can also measure segmental fat percentages for your core and each of your arms and legs separately. Keep in mind that it is not possible to lose weight from a specific body part only. If you exercise and eat below your maintenance level, you will lose fat all over. However, the way fat is distributed differs between different people and body types.

What is a normal body fat percentage?

When you have measured your body fat percentage, you can compare it with the Tanita healthy body fat ranges in order to find out if you have a healthy body fat percentage. These measurements are available for several age ranges.

(<https://tanita.eu/media/wysiwyg/content-pages-images/body-fat-ranges-adults.jpg>)

Healthy body fat ranges for adults



(<http://tanita.eu/media/wysiwyg/content-pages-images/body-fat-ranges-adults.jpg>)

How to lose weight

Below are some pointers on what you can do to lose weight.

- Reduce the intake of sugar and refined carbohydrates
- Fill up on non-starchy vegetables, fats and proteins
- Exercise regularly
- Reduce stress

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- Focus on getting enough sleep

How to gain weight

Below are some pointers on what you can do to gain body fat.

- Eat regularly, at least three times a day but preferably more
- Eat more protein, carbohydrates and fat
- Do keep eating healthily, to avoid other health issues
- Focus on getting enough sleep

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Are you at a healthy weight?

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