

Fitness Focus

Body composition

Body composition is what your body is made up of. Your body is made of several components: muscle, bones, tissues, water, and fat cells. The health of your body composition depends on three things; nutrition, physical activity and genetics. Nutrients are the building blocks needed by your body to create your body composition.

Carbohydrates, fats, and proteins, as well as water and minerals, are the principal building blocks of **body composition**. One measure of body composition is the ratio of lean body mass (bones, muscles, tissues, nutrients and water) to fat. Because lean body mass weighs more than fat using a scale to determine your ideal body composition does not work. A person, who is overweight on a scale, may actually be in good shape. It is just as important to avoid having too much fat. Your body needs both lean body mass and fat to function properly.

Healthy body composition: Food provides the fuel and building blocks that keep your body functioning. The energy that food gives your body contributes to your body composition. Maintaining a healthy ratio of lean body mass to fat mass allows you to enjoy life. Be active, have energy to spare, and grow and develop.

Growth and developmental influences on body composition: There are many factors that influence your body composition. The role of nutrients, how much energy you take in (food), and how much energy you use (working, playing, growing, and learning) influence your body composition and are controlled by you. Factors you cannot control, such as age, gender, and genetics, food sensitivities, and lifestyles, also play an important role in your body size, type and shape.

Physical activity and healthy nutrition are the keys to maintaining a healthy body composition. Being physically active helps you control your weight, to strengthen your muscles, and balance the calories in and out. You should try to participate in moderate physical activity most days of the week; daily is better.

Benefits of fat:

- * Acts as an insulator, helping the body adapt to heat and cold
- * Acts as a shock absorber, helping protect internal organs and bones from injury
- * Helps body use vitamins effectively
- * Acts as stored energy when the body needs energy

Benefits of lean body mass:

- * Helps in burning calories
- * Provides structure for the body
- * Helps the body move effectively

Lesson Review: Answer a separate sheet of paper in complete sentences.

1. What is your body made of?
2. Body composition is the ratio of what two things?
3. What are the components of lean mass?
4. What can you do to maintain a healthy body composition?
5. Why is it important to have both lean mass and body fat?

