

DECEMBER 2008 WELL WORTH IT

Health and Fitness



ENCOURAGING STUDENTS TO EAT WELL WITHOUT DIETING

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Eating well is really a matter of simplification. It involves recognizing the body's hunger cues and eating in response to them. It means trying new foods whenever possible to avoid nutritional boredom and to increase the chances of meeting nutrient needs. Eating well also means fitting in favorites, which might include some low-nutrient-dense foods, with the understanding that no single food creates or destroys a healthy diet. It requires flexibility, not rigidity, in order to promote the development of a healthy relationship with both food and the body. Eating well is all about the basics of variety, moderation, and balance.

These components of eating well are not always reinforced in our culture. Well-intentioned peers, family members, and even health professionals, often supply students with bits and pieces of nutrition misinformation. In many cases, it's actually the components of restrictive dieting that are reinforced – ignoring hunger, dichotomizing foods as either good or bad, identifying certain foods as off-limits, following rigid meal plans, counting calories or fat grams or points.

There are several pitfalls to Restrictive Eating, but, first of all, we must recognize that restrictive eating is a real health issue for a large number of college students.

Restrictive eating might include limiting intake of a specific nutrient, such as fat or carbohydrate, to the point where even minimal needs are not being met. It also may involve restricting entire food groups, sometimes under the guise of eating healthy or spontaneously becoming a vegetarian.

For some students, restrictive eating involves obsessively counting and limiting calorie intake. Total daily calorie intake may be well below the energy required for maintaining optimal physical and emotional health, to say nothing of how this interferes with a student's ability to focus on academics.

Restrictive eating may exist in isolation, or be accompanied by a preoccupation with body size, weight, composition, or outright body hatred.

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Did You Know

Dr. Mehmet Oz

When It Comes to Body Fat, It's All About Location

Find out why omentum -- a type of belly fat -- is the baddest fat in town

If you're overweight, the extra fat is sure to manifest itself in some outward side effects, like a lack of energy or self-esteem. But many of the risk factors associated with carrying too much fat don't have any outward symptoms at all -- the only way to tell whether being overweight is threatening your life is by focusing on what's happening at your body's most core levels.

What's In a Name?

There are lots of ways to refer to the unhealthy fat located deep inside the belly. But by any name, it's the most dangerous kind of body fat: Omentum, Belly fat, Intra-abdominal adiposity (IAA) and Visceral fat.

Three Kinds of Fat

See, fat is like real estate: It's all about location, location, location. We all have three kinds of fat: fat in our bloodstream (called [triglycerides](#)), subcutaneous fat (which lies just beneath the skin's surface), and omentum fat. The omentum is a fatty layer of tissue located **inside the belly**, where it hangs *underneath* the muscles in your stomach (which is why some men with beer guts have hard-as-a-keg bellies -- their fat is under the muscle). You may hear people on the street refer to it not only as a beer gut but also as belly fat, love handles, a beach-ball belly, or a spare tire. Doctors refer to it as visceral fat or intra-abdominal adiposity (IAA).

Because this omentum fat is so close to your organs, it's their best energy source. (Why go to the gas station on the other side of town when there's a station at the next corner?)

What Belly Fat Does

In addition, the fat released from the omentum rapidly and constantly travels to **your liver**, unlike the fat on your thighs, which patiently waits. The processed material is then **shipped to the arteries**, where it is linked to health risks like high LDL (lousy) cholesterol. Also, the more omentum fat you have, the less adiponectin you produce. Adiponectin is a stress- and inflammation-reducing chemical related to the hunger-controlling hormone [leptin](#).

Those are the reasons why the fat on your thighs doesn't matter as much to your health as does omentum fat, and they help explain why omentum fat (or an "apple" body shape) is more harmful than subcutaneous fat (like thigh fat, which gives you a "pear" shape). Subcutaneous fat isn't supplying a feeding tube to your vital internal organs, and it's not messing up the levels of substances in your blood that are being supplied to those organs.



ASK THE EXPERTS



CABLE LAT PULL DOWNS

By Noah Hittner, BS, Chek-NLC, PES

Question : *I've been doing a lot of reading and I've noticed that a lot of magazines state that lat pulls behind the neck work the shoulders, as opposed to training books and sources on the internet that state that they work the back. Which one of these is more accurate or does that technique work both?*

Answer : To perform a pull down behind the neck without any shoulder girdle and/or spinal compensation, an individual must possess the ability to achieve around 100-120 degrees of ACTIVE external shoulder rotation while abducted. When this ROM is lacking (as will be in the VAST majority of people), the force from the machine pulls the shoulder joint toward external rotation which places large amounts of stress on the anterior shoulder capsule. You'll see this lack of ROM displayed in the individuals performing the exercise behind the neck as compensatory cervical and/or lumbar flexion.

One must take into account the functional anatomy of the situation. The lat attaches anteriorly on the superior portion of the humerus and then winds back, fans out and attaches into the thoraco lumbar fascia (low back). Hence, the lat does not run directly from top to bottom... it runs from top/front to bottom/back, at an angle. An attempt to pull straight down as in a behind the neck pull down to train the lats simply does not follow the lats fiber alignment, there by not following the lats angle of pull! This would make the front of the neck pull down the more appropriate choice based on its anterior to posterior angle of motion.

REMEMBER : A MUSCLE'S ABILITY TO PULL IS DICTATED BY ITS FIBER ALIGNMENT (I.E. ITS ORIGIN AND INSERTION), NOT BY THE MACHINE CHOSEN!

It should also be noted that in a standard lat pull down, the rear shoulder/upper back musculature is also heavily involved. (posterior cuff, rear deltoids, mid/lower traps, rhomboids, teres major/minor). All anatomy and mechanics aside, if the cable should happen to break while performing a BEHIND the neck pull down, the cervical damage could be severe. It's simply not worth the risk.



ALL ABOUT YOGA

By Cyndi Lee, Certified Yogini: Founder of OM Yoga Center, NY

The word Yoga, from the Sanskrit word *yuj* means to yoke or bind and is often interpreted as a "union" or a method of discipline. A male who practices yoga is called a yogi, a female practitioner, a yogini. The Indian sage Patanjali is believed to have collated the practice of yoga into the Yoga Sutra an estimated 2,000 years ago. The Sutra is a collection of 195 statements that serves as a philosophical guidebook for most of the yoga that is practiced today. It also outlines eight limbs of yoga: the yamas (restraints), niyamas (observances), asana (postures), pranayama (breathing), pratyahara (withdrawal of senses), dharana (concentration), dhyani (meditation), and samadhi (absorption). As we explore these eight limbs, we begin by refining our behavior in the outer world, and then we focus inwardly until we reach samadhi (liberation, enlightenment).

Hatha: The word hatha means willful or forceful. Hatha yoga refers to a set of physical exercises (known as asanas or postures), and sequences of asanas, designed to align your skin, muscles, and bones. The postures are also designed to open the many channels of the body—especially the main channel, the spine—so that energy can flow freely.

Hatha is also translated as ha meaning "sun" and tha meaning "moon." This refers to the balance of masculine aspects—active, hot, sun—and feminine aspects—receptive, cool, moon—within all of us. Hatha yoga is a path toward creating balance and uniting opposites. In our physical bodies we develop a balance of strength and flexibility. We also learn to balance our effort and surrender in each pose. Hatha yoga is a powerful tool for self-transformation. It asks us to bring our attention to our breath, which helps us to still the fluctuations of the mind and be more present in the unfolding of each moment.

Om: Om is a mantra, or vibration, that is traditionally chanted at the beginning and end of yoga sessions. It is said to be the sound of the universe. What does that mean? Somehow the ancient yogis knew what scientists today are telling us—that the entire universe is moving. Nothing is ever solid or still. Everything that exists pulsates, creating a rhythmic vibration that the ancient yogis acknowledged with the sound of Om. Chanting Om allows us to recognize our experience as a reflection of how the whole universe moves—the setting sun, the rising moon, the ebb and flow of the tides, the beating of our hearts. As we chant Om, it takes us for a ride on this universal movement, through our breath, our awareness, and our physical energy, and we begin to sense a bigger connection that is both uplifting and soothing.

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