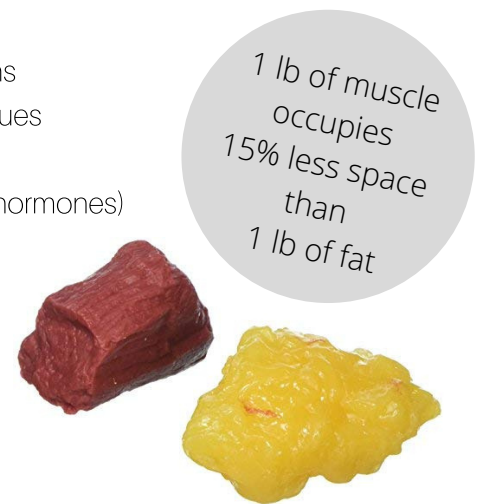


UNDERSTANDING WEIGHT & BODY COMPOSITION

Weight has historically been fixated on as a measure of health. While a healthy weight is important, it looks different for everyone. Health issues can occur at very low weights or higher weights, thus a low weight is not necessarily more healthy. Focusing on creating healthy habits that incorporate nutritious foods and physical activity is the best way to improve your health.

BODY WEIGHT VS. BODY COMPOSITION

- Body weight is made up of fat mass & non-fat mass
 - Fat Mass: body fat under the skin, in muscle tissues and around internal organs
 - Non-Fat Mass: blood, bones, muscle (smooth, cardiac, skeletal), organs & tissues
- Some fat is essential (hormone regulation, energy stores, protecting vital organs)
- Women require higher levels of body fat (associated with fertility & reproductive hormones)
- The Importance of Muscle Mass:
 - Muscle is more dense than adipose tissue (fat)
 - Increases metabolism
 - Helps protect bones
 - Reduces injury risk



FUNCTIONS OF BODY FAT:

- Aid in body temperature regulation and insulation
- Protect and cushions vital organs/ intestines and helps protect from injury
- Skin protection, softening, & flexibility
- Hormone regulation: cholesterol, prostaglandins, menstrual cycle, & reproductive hormone levels
- Stored energy reserve used during extended exercise and when there is restricted food intake



THE SCALE: FRIEND OR FOE?

- North America is a very weight centric society that places a great deal of emphasis and value on body weight
- Diet culture teaches us that our value as humans is directly correlated to the number on the scale
- Why the Scale can be misleading:
 - Our body weight fluctuates throughout the day due to hydration levels and waste excretion
 - Increases in muscle mass can cause weight to be maintained or increased (but body size is reduced)
- Weight does not translate directly to health:
 - There are health risks associated with lower weights, higher weights and average weights
 - Risks are more closely linked to ongoing behaviours that impact health
- The Verdict:
 - Stepping on the scale regularly is NOT the best way to determine if your health is improving
 - Weighing yourself daily and not seeing drastic 'improvements' can actually harm your healthy habits process and set the stage for overeating and further weight gain
 - All the scale really measures is the relationship that your body mass has with gravity



Sources:

- Nutrition Therapy & Pathophysiology 3rdE,
- Precision Nutrition
- Dietitians of Canada