



Belly Fat, Begone! *3 Easy Ways to Trim Inches Off Your Waist*

Many Americans have a little extra padding around their midsections—but if you have too much, it could put your health at risk. Mayo Clinic specialists say that people who gain excess belly fat are at greater risk of serious health problems—like heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and certain cancers—than people who accumulate fat in other areas.

Fortunately, the problems posed by excess belly fat can be easily cut down to size. According to Michael Jensen, MD, an endocrinology specialist and obesity researcher, 99% of people who lose weight tend to lose it in the abdominal region first.

So how do you go about losing that weight? Through healthy eating and regular physical activity!

To keep your tummy trim, experts at the Mayo Clinic suggest you:

1. **Eat a healthy, balanced diet.** Favor plant-based foods, like fruits, vegetables and whole grains, and choose leaner sources of protein/meat and low-fat dairy products. Be sure to limit your saturated fat intake (it's found in meat and high-fat dairy products, such as cheese and butter). Instead, eat moderate amounts of monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats—you'll find them in fish, nuts and certain vegetable oils.
2. **Watch your portion sizes.** Even if you're making healthy food choices, those calories can add up! At home and in restaurants, make a point of slimming down your portion sizes; eat until you are satisfied, not stuffed.
3. **Make exercise a part of your daily routine.** The Department of Health and Human Services recommends healthy adults engage in moderate aerobic activity, like brisk walking, for at least 150 minutes a week or vigorous aerobic activity, such as jogging, for at least 75 minutes a week. In addition, it's helpful to do strength-training exercises at least twice a week. If you want to lose a large amount of weight, you may need to exercise more.

After you shed those excess pounds, be sure to maintain your newfound weight loss through healthy diet and regular physical activity. Your body will thank you—and so will that favorite pair of jeans!