

Your Ideal Body Weight

Refer to the next chart to find the body fat percentage range that is appropriate for your age and gender. Take the numbers at each end of the range and subtract each from 100 percent as we show with the following example. We'll need to use another subject, because Lisa is already within her ideal weight range.

Example: Missy, age 35

Lean body weight = 96 pounds

Ideal body fat percentage = 21–27 percent

Step 1: Subtract each of the ideal range numbers from 100.

$$100\% - 21\% = 79\% \text{ and } 100\% - 27\% = 73\%$$

Step 2: Divide lean body weight by these numbers.

$$96 \div 79 = 1.22 \text{ and } 96 \div 73 = 1.32$$

Step 3: Multiply these numbers by 100.

$$1.22 \times 100 = 122 \text{ and } 1.32 \times 100 = 132$$

This calculation gives an ideal body weight range of 122 to 132 pounds for Missy. These numbers are actually

those of a patient in our practice. She is 5'3" tall, and the "ideal" weight charts doctors usually follow tell her she should weigh about 115 pounds. She has not weighed 115 since junior high school, and it's easy to see why she isn't likely ever to weigh so little. Were she to attempt to do so, she would have to dwindle her body fat percentage down below 16 percent (which is unlikely for a woman of her age unless she were a trained athlete, and from a hormonal standpoint would not be particularly healthy even if she could manage to do it). Or she would have to lose pounds of lean body mass from the 96 she currently carries, also not advisable. A better option is to keep every pound of metabolically active lean tissue she has, carry an appropriate amount of body fat for good health, and forget about what she weighs, because **what she weighs doesn't matter!** At 125 pounds, she's tight and lean and strong and healthy. To force herself toward an "ideal" of 115 is lunacy.

IDEAL BODY FAT PERCENTAGES

AGE	MALES	FEMALES
10-30	12-18%	20-26%
31-40	13-19%	21-27%
41-50	14-20%	22-28%
51-60	16-20%	22-30%
61 and older	17-21%	22-31%

Now it's your turn. Using the Ideal Body Weight Worksheet, on page 85, calculate your realistic ideal body weight. This weight will be the target that you aim for. Every pound of lost body fat takes you closer to it. Every

inch lost in the waist reduces your apple shape and your risk for metabolic disorder. Great motivators will say that unless you know where you're going, you can't hope to get there. Now you've got a clear picture of your destination, and that will help you focus your efforts toward a specific goal.

The Well-Composed Body

Unless, like Lisa, you already fall well within the guidelines for a well-composed body, you're about to begin on a journey of self-improvement. After completing the worksheets, you may—like Missy—have found that you had an unrealistically low target weight in mind. Or you may have found that the 20 pounds you've been saying you needed to shed is really more like 40. Wherever you begin, keep reminding yourself that you're not out to lose weight. Your real goal is to develop a properly composed body—one supported by a lean healthy muscle mass, strong and vigorous, with enough fat for good health. Whatever weight that turns out to be is a perfect weight for you. We stress to our clinic patients that our program is not just a weight-loss diet—it's a prescription for reclaiming your health. Fat loss is only a small part of the overall benefit. That's why, when you've completed your intervention and you're ready to maintain your fitness for life, we want you to begin that new lifestyle fitter, leaner, and healthier, not just lighter.

IDEAL BODY WEIGHT WORKSHEET

Your calculated lean body weight = _____

Ideal body fat range percentage for your age and sex
from charts on pages 71–72 and 76–81

_____ % to _____ %

Step 1: Subtract each of these percentages from 100:

100% – _____ % = _____ and 100% – _____ % = _____

Step 2: Divide your lean body weight by each of the
numbers from step 1:

_____ / _____ = _____ and _____ / _____ = _____

Step 3: Multiply each of these answers from step 2 by
100:

_____ × 100 = _____

your ideal weight
is in this range

_____ × 100 = _____