

Waist and Hips Measurement

Extra weight (if your BMI is over 25) is only one health risk factor. Where fat is stored on your body is another. If you have abdominal fat stored around your waist as opposed to those who have excess fat in their hips and thighs, you also have a higher risk of health problems even if your BMI is normal. So we recommend measuring your waist circumference at least every 3 months.

Tracking your waist measurement may be the best way to determine your progress. And it can take the emphasis off the number you see on the scale.

To measure your waist:

Place a tape measure around your bare abdomen at your natural waist (usually just above your belly button). Be sure the tape fits snugly but does not compress your skin. Place the tape parallel to the floor. Then relax, exhale and measure your waist.

To measure your hips

Place a tape measure around the widest part of your buttocks.

To determine your waist/hip ratio, simply divide your waist measurement by your hip measurement:

For example, if your waist is 40" (102 cm.) and your hips are 50" (127 cm.), you divide 40 by 50 (or 102 by 127):

$$40" / 50" = .80 \quad (102 / 127 = .80)$$

The goal for women is to have a ratio less than .80 (waist is 80% of hip)

The goal for men is to have a ratio less than .95 (waist is 95% of hip)

If you are an apple-shape you will have a more weight around your waist. If you are a pear-shape you will have more weight around your hips.

Your risk of chronic diseases such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease increases gradually with each inch (about 2.5 cm.) your waist increases above 35 inches (89 cm.) for women and 40 inches (102 cm.) for men. And similarly, your risk increases as your waist/hip ratio increases above the goals listed above.