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Best exercise for reducing belly fat

To whittle your middle, grow tree trunks for legs. Muscular legs can help you fend off belly fat, according to a study from Japan. People with the most muscle mass on their legs had the least visceral fat—the dangerous kind that surrounds organs. Related: The 6 Secrets to Transforming Your Legs—and Ultimately Your Whole Body Compared with smaller muscles, your leg muscles burn more fat before it can deposit around your organs, explains study author Michio Shimabukuro, M.D., Ph.D. Start melting your middle by adding these three lower-body exercises to your routine today. (If you're looking for a full-on belly blasting routine, check out the 21-DAY METASHRED from Men's Health—at-home body-shredding program that strips away fat and reveals hard muscle.) Dumbbell Squat Barbell Split Squat Kettlebell Side Lunge and Touch This content is created and maintained by a third party, and imported onto this page to help users provide their email addresses. You may be able to find more information about this and similar content at piano.io The hot potato squat may sound like a kid's recess activity, but don't be fooled—it's also a cutting-edge fat-loss exercise that will get your heart pumping and your muscles burning in almost no time, says BJ Gaddour, C.S.C.S., owner of StreamFit.com. It starts with one of the most effective exercises invented: the squat. When done correctly, a squat trains a lot of muscles, particularly big ones like your quadriceps, hamstrings and glutes. In fact, it burns more calories per rep than almost any other exercise. But why stop there? Gaddour throws an airborne dumbbell into the mix to make this classic move even more challenging and beneficial. "Holding the weight on just one side of your body increases the demand placed on your core to keep your body stable," he says. "As the weight changes from side to side, your core muscles are worked from every angle." If you want more fat-loss moves like the hot potato squat, enroll in The Ultimate Boot Camp Workout. Designed by Gaddour, the routine contains a series of 10 intense exercises that will help you torch belly fat, pack on muscle, and sweat your way to a six-pack. This content is created and maintained by a third party, and imported onto this page to help users provide their email addresses. You may be able to find more information about this and similar content at piano.io Beth Bischoff Exercise how-tos adapted from The Women's Health Big Book of Exercises, The Women's Health Big Book of Pilates, and The Women's Health Big Book of Abs. When you're trying to target your lower abs, all abs-strengthening moves are not created equal. Fact is, some are much more effective at working those tough-to-get-to muscles. So we asked celebrity trainer Michelle Lovitt, an Asics America conditioning coach, for her top moves to target your lower belly. She came through with these 5 super-tough ones you'll love (after the fact, at least). (Love her technique? Work one-on-one with Michelle in her Ultimate Flat Belly DVD.) Rolling Plank This core-stabilizing move improves strength throughout your core—especially in your lower abs, says Lovitt. Bonus: it also builds lower back strength, she says. Beth Bischoff How to do it: Begin in a plank position with your body forming a straight line from your shoulders to your ankles (A). Rotate to your left side and into a side plank. Hold for 10 seconds (B), then rotate into a right side plank and hold for another 10 seconds (C). That's one rep. Return to a plank position and repeat. Cross-Body Mountain Climbers Although this is a multi-tasking move that works your whole body, Lovitt says its main target is your lower abs—it engages your abdominals and oblique muscles (for stability) while also working your hips and low back. Beth Bischoff How to do it: Assume a push-up position with your arms completely straight. Your body should form a straight line from your shoulders to your ankles (A). Lift your right knee toward your left elbow (B), lower, then raise your left knee toward your right elbow. That's one rep. Roll-Up Since this move requires you to roll your body out one vertebra at a time (in other words, very slowly), you engage the deep abdominal muscles in your lower abs. You also use those deep abs muscles to keep your pelvis stable when you come back up, says Lovitt. "This is an amazing overall abs exercise," she says. Beth Bischoff How to do it: Lie flat with your legs squeezed together, your feet flexed at the ankles, and your arms reaching back close to your ears (A). Inhale with control as you bring your arms forward, shoulder-width apart, and plant the backs of your shoulders on the mat. The back is flat. Continue inhaling as you lift your head through your arms and begin rolling up and forward, one vertebra at a time (B). Exhale with control as you continue forward, reaching your arms across the room and trying to touch your forehead to your knees (C). Reverse the movements as you inhale with control back to position A. That's one rep. MORE: Lose Your Belly With Just 2 Exercise Moves Swiss Ball Jackknife This move really targets those tricky muscles in your lower belly, plus it works your rectus abdominus (as in, your six-pack muscles), hips, and low back, says Lovitt. Beth Bischoff How to do it: Assume a push-up position with your arms completely straight. Rest your shins on a Swiss ball. Your body should form a straight line from your head to your ankles (A). Without changing your lower back posture, roll the Swiss ball toward your chest by pulling it forward with your feet. Pause (B), then return the ball to the starting position by rolling it backward. That's one rep. Hanging Leg Raise Lovitt says she loves this move for tackling your lower abs because it engages the deep psoas muscle (a muscle in your stomach in front of your spine), your low back, and of course, your lower abs. Beth Bischoff How to do it: Grab a chin-up bar with an overhead shoulder-width grip, and hang from the bar with your knees slightly bent and feet together (A). Simultaneously bend your knees, raise your hips, and curl your lower back underneath you as you lift your thighs toward your chest. Pause when the fronts of your thighs reach your chest (B), then slowly lower your legs back to the starting position. The article 5 Exercises That Will Show Your Lower Belly Who's Boss originally ran on Womenshealthmag.com. This content is created and maintained by a third party, and imported onto this page to help users provide their email addresses. You may be able to find more information about this and similar content at piano.io iStock/KirinOur gut microbiome controls far more than we give it credit for, which is why having your gut colonized with beneficial types of bacteria is so important. One way to do this is by taking a probiotic supplement. You can also make these 12 foods that boost good gut bacteria part of your everyday diet. Not only will this help you get sick less, feel happier, and ease digestion but it can also help you de-bloat, flattening out your tummy in the process. Try these home remedies to lose belly fat. iStock/Joshua ResnickSalt, in moderation, is a good thing—the mineral is necessary for a healthy heart and brain. But too much salt and you'll retain water, bloating up like a water balloon. Cutting salt is one of the primary ways to drop extra water weight (one reason you may see a big weight loss when starting a new diet!). Move the salt shaker off your table so you'll get out of the habit of routinely salting all your food. Then if you taste your food and still really want salt you can still stand up and get some. For more weight loss benefits, add these fat-burning foods to your plate to help you lose weight. iStock/VagengeymMany people chew gum as a way to stifle cravings or prevent mindless eating but this tactic may have an unfortunate side effect: belly bloat. Everyone naturally swallows a small amount of air when they chew but it's magnified for people who chew gum, which causes gas and bloating. In addition, some artificial sweeteners have been shown to increase your appetite for junk food, so gum could be increasing your waistline on two fronts. iStock/m-guccilli's called a "beer belly" for a reason. Boozy bubbles are a major cause of belly bloat, as anyone who's ever looked in the mirror after a few too many drinks can attest. But it's not just the carbonation that is the culprit. Alcohol can lead to an overgrowth of bad bacteria in your stomach, leading to gas, not to mention all the empty calories that are going straight to your waistline. Instead, skip the alcohol altogether or limit yourself to one serving per day. iStock/PeopleImages/First, it's gross. Second, chewing while breathing through your mouth can make you swallow as much air as food, causing your belly to inflate. Learning proper table manners will not only help you keep a trimmer tummy but will also make your friends and family much happier. These are 8 other common causes of a bloated belly. iStock/suslik3Sugar treats, while obviously delicious, aren't very good for our bodies—and that includes our tummies. Not only do the added calories add inches to our waistlines, but sugar overload leads to insulin resistance, which tells the body to store extra fat around the waist. But that's long-term stuff. Sugar also bloats your tummy in the short-term by feeding the bad bacteria in your gut, leading to extra gas. When it comes to flattening your belly, nixing sugar is one of the best things you can do including these 42 other easy tips to lose weight fast! iStock/monkeybusinessimagesOut-of-whack hormones have all kinds of uncomfortable side effects and belly bloat is one of them. There's a reason that bloating is one of the primary complaints women have during menopause! While you can't turn back the clock and reclaim the hormone profile of your 20's, you can make sure you're within the normal range—something your doctor can check for you. In the meantime, eating right and exercising are natural ways to balance your hormones. iStock/Portugal2004Nearly 20 percent of Americans suffer from chronic constipation and being perpetually backed up can affect your whole body, including uncomfortable bloating and swelling in your stomach. iStock/mustipanCruciferous veggies are one of the healthiest vegetables you can eat, but unfortunately they're also the ones most likely to cause your tummy to inflate. Thanks to raffinose, a compound that produces extra gas as it breaks down, broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower and the like can seriously increase your waistline. But don't ditch them forever. Just save them for meals where you can wear loose pants. Here are other surprising foods that cause gas. iStock/PeopleImages/Americans are getting less sleep than ever these days and it's taking a toll on our health—most visibly on our waistlines. Losing just 30 minutes of sleep per night can make you gain weight, according to a study done by the Endocrine Society. Worse, that weight is more likely to go straight to your tummy. Instead, the researchers found, the best sleep cycle is one that follows your natural circadian rhythms, which means sleeping and waking around the same time as the sun. Here are the 7 ways to banish belly bloat in your sleep. iStock/NoDeroqProcessed foods are one of the biggest sources of salt in Americans' diets—and the scary part is you probably don't even realize it. Because of the way these addictive foods are formulated, salt is hidden in everything from soups to pasta sauces to even sweet things like boxed cakes. Swap out processed foods in favor of fresh fare and your tummy will thank you. Not only will you lose the salt-bloat but you'll also lose the extra empty calories and lose weight. Learn about these 50 more ways you can lose weight without a lick of exercise. iStock/rezarWant a flatter stomach? Look in your glass—milk and soda are two major causes of tummy inflation. Approximately 65 percent of the human population has a reduced ability to digest lactose after infancy, which means that your glass of warm milk before bed may be the reason you wake up with too-tight pajamas. And when it comes to soda, both regular and diet are belly busters both from the sweeteners used and the carbonation. Try eliminating these from your diet and see if it helps flatten your tummy. iStock/MilosStankovicWhereas many beverages can increase your waistline (see above), there is one that is guaranteed to trim your tummy: water. Drinking plain ol' H2O works because staying fully hydrated tells your body it's okay to release any extra water it's retaining, decreasing the accompanying bloat. Plus, drinking water has been proven to reduce cravings for sweets, lower your appetite, and help you feel satiated faster. Here 9 more ways to bust belly fat in a single day! iStock/trinetuzunFruits like berries, cherries, apples, and oranges are high in quercetin, a natural compound that reduces inflammation in the belly. And if you put a bowl of the good stuff right where you can see it in your kitchen, you're more likely to reach for it when you want a snack. These are the 10 reasons why apple cider vinegar is brilliant for slimming down. iStock/canyonosFennel, peppermint, and ginger have all been shown in research studies to have calming effects on the belly. They work by enhancing digestive enzymes so your food gets moved through your system faster. And faster-moving food means a flatter tummy. In addition, peppermint reduces cramping and gas, ginger helps with nausea and inflammation, and fennel is a diuretic to help you stop retaining water. iStock/dolgachovWant a flatter stomach in two seconds? Stand up straight! Slouching emphasizes belly rolls but straightening your spine elongates your whole body, making you look taller and sleeker. Want to go even flatter for a picture? Use the old modeling trick and arch your back slightly—this will pull your skin tighter across your stomach while moving it farther away from the camera, making it look slightly smaller. Yeah, it's a temporary fix but good posture offers many health benefits beyond looking good. iStock/laforStress skyrockets your levels of cortisol, often called “the belly fat” hormone because it signals to the body to store fat around your waist. Add the daily stressors of living our modern lifestyle and you can see how cortisol can be constantly coursing through your veins. This perma-stress mode isn't good for a lot of healthy reasons, your tummy being just one of them, so it's important to take time every day to de-stress. Yoga, meditation, walking, journaling, doing a hands-on hobby, or playing a musical instrument are all great time-tested methods. (Hint: Know what isn't? Watching television. The boob tube actually increases your levels of cortisol!) iStock/BraunSYour phone, tablet, and television may be affecting your waist size in more ways than one. Obviously if you're sitting on electronics then you're not moving around and burning calories. But the effects go beyond just energy. Blue light from electronic screens can disrupt your circadian rhythms; so our addiction to electronics is reducing our sleep as people favor Netflix-bingeing to bed. Both of these effects have been linked to higher levels of belly fat. These 21 other terrible habits will make your belly fat worse. iStock/Peter HermusSpanx are maybe no one's idea of a good time, but sometimes you just need a little extra (firm) help to flatten your tummy to wear your favorite dress or for a special evening out. And there's nothing wrong with turning to technology to help you get there. Body shaping undergarments have come a long way in the past few years with more breathable fabrics and styles for both men and women. iStock/Rocky89Fibrous foods are as close to a “miracle belly flattening pill” as we have. Fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, particularly those high in soluble fiber, have been proven to reduce fat around your midsection. In addition, these foods fill you up so you eat less, flattening your stomach over time. Try one of these 5 easy ways to turn off your fat genes and keep the weight off for good. iStock/SquareDixie\$No, we're not telling you that you need a tummy tuck (although that would flatten your belly, we suppose). Rather, there are several common health conditions that can make your belly bulge and until you fix the anatomical issues underneath, nothing else can flatten it out. For instance, many women have a diastasis recti, or separation of the abdominal muscles, after pregnancy. In about 25 percent of these women, the muscles never quite come back together, leading to a permanent protrusion. Similarly, a hernia (congenital or from an injury) can also cause your belly to stick out. Both conditions can be resolved surgically. iStock/Troels GraugaardDo you really need another reason to drop the cancer sticks? Fine. Smoking is making you fat. Not only does lighting up not help you stay slim—an all-too-common myth about smoking—but people who smoke have a higher concentration of fat around their midsection. iStock/vitapixIBS, or irritable bowel syndrome, is the most common gastrointestinal disorder. IBS symptoms include nausea, diarrhea, constipation, stomach pain, and bloating—So. Much. Bloating. While the causes aren't all known, it's thought to be linked to lifestyle factors like diet, exercise, hormones, and stress. Sufferers often find that making changes in these areas eliminates or reduces their IBS (and their stomach circumference!). Here's how these 10 myths about fat can keep you from losing weight. Originally Published: January 14, 2019Originally Published in Reader's Digest

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