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Exercises to lose belly fat

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You can lose belly fat if you'd like without spending a lot of money or needing special equipment. Part of the process is changing what you eat. This does not mean starving yourself or eating grass, but making a few simple changes to your current diet. Adding more movement into your routine and changing some habits are also important. Again, though, you don't have to get radical and work out eighty hours a week. You just need to make changes in at least a few of the things you do each day if you want to lose belly fat. Losing belly fat begins at bedtime. Several studies have proved that getting a good night of sleep has a positive impact on your ability to lose weight. Your metabolism is hard at work breaking down food into energy while you sleep. It is also regulating various hormones that affect fat cells and how the body uses them. Not getting enough sleep prevents those processes from working correctly. The average person requires 7 - 8 hours of sleep a night. If you want to lose belly fat, don't skimp on your Zs. Peopleimages / Getty Images Walking is a great way to lose belly fat without spending a dime. In as little as 30 minutes each day, a brisk walk can help melt away belly fat with very little impact to other parts of the body. That makes walking a great choice for people who don't want to, or can't, exercise more strenuously. Having trouble getting motivated? Try walking somewhere you can get a reward, like to the store where you can treat yourself to a sweet snack - preferably something healthy, but we all have to start somewhere. kali9 / Getty Images Yoga is an excellent activity for getting rid of belly fat. Poses like the plank and downward-facing dog not only keep the body moving and engage specific abdominal muscles, but they also increase strength. Burning more calories than you take in through movement and strengthening the muscles throughout the body are both fat burning activities that target belly fat. A bonus - meditation is a key point of yoga, so your mind is also engaged in the process. Powerful stuff. hobo_018 / Getty Images Cut a rug if you want to lose some belly fat on the cheap and easy. Dancing is an amazing form of exercise, and it doesn't require any special equipment. While 30-minute exercise segments are best, shorter bursts of high-energy movements are also helpful when trying to lose fat. Got a song stuck in your head or find yourself alone on the elevator? Go for it - dance like no one's watching for a fun way to lose belly fat that doesn't cost a penny. gradyreese / Getty Images Take advantage of any opportunity you find during the day to work those abdominal muscles. Keep your feet off the floor mat when driving to engage them. Do squats while blow drying your hair or brushing your teeth. Take the stairs whenever possible. Don't lean against the sink while washing dishes - flex your knees, instead. All of these little moves can be done during your normal activities. Give some thought to ways you can tighten your belly muscles more throughout the day, and you'll be surprised at how many opportunities you find that help get rid of belly fat. bymuratdeniz / Getty Images Vegetables, fruits, and whole grains are excellent foods to eat when trying to lose belly fat. They are complex carbohydrates, so your body has to work hard to break down the nutrients inside them. This burns calories and fills you up in a healthy way. Also, your body uses energy from its fat stores to do so, and much of that is stored in the abdomen. You can replace one or two of your current menu items with any of these for an easy way to lose belly fat without making large changes or spending too much on fad foods. carlosgaw / Getty Images Foods like white bread, refined-grain pasta, and sugary drinks contain simple carbohydrates, so your body doesn't have to work very hard to process them. Additionally, your body burns those types of carbohydrates to make energy instead of using its fat stores to do so, so those stores just stay put while your body gets a sugar high. Avoid those foods as much as possible to lose belly fat. There are great tasting substitutes out there, so trade out at least one or two the next time you're grocery shopping. fcafotodigital / Getty Images Of water, that is. Water makes you feel fuller faster when you drink a glass before eating a meal. This handy trick is great for fooling the body into thinking it's full because of food and not zero-calorie water. Drinking water also speeds up your metabolism, causing you to burn more calories. Water also helps the body process waste, which reduces belly bloating. If you are trying to lose belly fat, choose water periodically throughout the day. abu / Getty Images The body does not recognize liquid calories in the same way as it does calories from food. As a result, alcohol, energy drinks, designer coffees, and all kinds of super-sugary drinks negatively affect belly fat. If you want to lose it, avoid any drink that has a high sugar content and choose water, alcohol-free or sugar-free alternatives, instead. AaronAmat / Getty Images We all have a certain amount of fat in our diet. It is unavoidable. The difference is in the types of fat we take in. Monounsaturated fats and omega 3 fatty acids are good for us. They take longer to digest, so you feel fuller longer, and they reduce stress, which is a huge factor in gaining belly fat. Saturated fat, like that found in red meats, should be limited. Trans fat, like that found in processed foods, should be avoided entirely. dulezidar / Getty Images Fat gets a bad rap, but your body genuinely needs it (in appropriate amounts) to stay healthy. There are a couple of different types of fat with different health implications that you need to be aware of. Subcutaneous fat (aka the good cop)We are all born with subcutaneous fat. This kind of fat is essential when it comes to the way your body stores energy. Among other reasons to make peace with this type of fat, it helps protect your body if you fall or bump into something, and it acts as a layer of insulation to help control your body temperature. Subcutaneous fat also produces ample amounts of two essential hormones. One is leptin, which helps regulate your appetite and burn stored fat (in other words, you need fat to burn fat). The other is adiponectin, which helps regulate the levels of fats and sugars in your body that can help protect against diabetes.Visceral fat (aka the bad cop)Visceral fat is frequently stored beneath the muscles in your abdomen, close to vital organs like your liver, stomach, and intestines. Having too much visceral fat can be a problem: It can increase insulin resistance, raise your blood pressure, and put you at serious risk for health issues like heart disease, type 2 diabetes, stroke, cancer, and Alzheimer's disease.And here's where it gets tricky... Visceral fat is often harder to see, since it hides beneath layers of muscle.Research has even linked visceral fat to metabolic disease and an increased risk of death in people with a "normal" body mass index (which is further proof that appearance isn't always indicative of good health).If you're trying to lose some of either type of body fat, try one (or a few) of these science-backed tips.1. Exercise on the regularExercise does more than just release endorphins — it actively decreases the amount of visceral fat in your body. Studies have shown that aerobic exercise in particular is very helpful, so try hitting up a fun dance class, going for a walk, or running a few times a week. 2. Take a minute to chillStress isn't just exhausting — it can actually harm your body. A 2000 study linked visceral fat to the stress hormone cortisol, finding that women with more abdominal fat also had more negative moods and a lot more stress in their lives.Tackle both issues by prioritizing stress relief. Whether it's catching up on a great book, taking a slow-flow yoga class, or soaking in the tub, try to get in some R&R.3. Second-guess the bread basket A low carb diet isn't exactly fun, but it can be an effective way to reduce body fat. Research has shown that a lower carb, higher fat diet can make a significant difference in belly fat.While you don't need to cut out carbs completely (elimination diets like this can often backfire), you may want to shift to a more low carb way of life.4. Jump on the keto bandwagon Speaking of low carb, the ketogenic diet is more than just a trend: It's an effective way to lose visceral fat. A 2004 study found that the keto diet significantly helps with short-term fat loss, especially for men.Going keto means replacing carbs with high fat options to put your body in a state of ketosis so it burns fat for energy.Want to try it? Here's a beginner's guide to get you started.5. Focus on soluble fiber Not all fiber is created equal. There are two kinds: soluble and insoluble. To lose visceral fat, you want to focus on soluble fiber. Soluble fiber can help slow down the delivery of digested food from your stomach to your intestines, which reduces appetite and, in turn, can reduce visceral fat.One study even found that increasing the amount of soluble fiber you eat by 10 grams per day can reduce visceral fat gain by almost 4 percent. It may not sound like much, but it's a start!Foods high in soluble fiber include black beans, brussels sprouts, avocados, broccoli, and pears, among others. 6. Consume less sugarAs delicious as sugar may be, too much of it just isn't good for you. Consuming a lot of added sugar has been linked to an increased amount of body fat, and a 2017 study focused on kids found that eating less sugar could reduce body fat in just days.It may not be the easiest thing to do, but trying to eliminate sugar from your diet can be extremely beneficial.7. Skip the cocktailsIt should be no surprise that too much alcohol isn't great for your body. In addition to hangovers and other health concerns, research has shown that drinking a lot of alcohol can cause fat to be stored as visceral fat.8. Stay away from trans fatsBy now, you've likely heard that trans fats aren't the healthiest. Trans fats are artificial fats that are mainly found in processed foods. A 2007 study on animals found a connection between trans fats and increased belly fat. Trans fats have also been linked to an increased risk of heart disease and death. Many companies have now removed trans fats from their products, but keep an eye out for them and, in general, try to avoid processed foods if you're hoping to lose body fat. 9. Get some sleepYes, it might seem like bragging about how exhausted you are is an essential aspect of adulthood, but seriously: Go to sleep. Studies suggest that not sleeping enough can lead to an increase in abdominal fat.10. Eat more proteinProtein is such an important part of your diet, especially if you're trying to lose fat. Research has shown that people who eat a lot of protein have less visceral fat.Try eating protein at every meal (and even including it in snacks) to ensure you're getting enough to help reduce visceral fat. 11. Give intermittent fasting a go It sounds scary, but intermittent fasting isn't as intense as it seems. It involves alternating between cycles of eating and fasting, and there are plenty of options to fit your lifestyle.Research has shown that intermittent fasting can help you lose weight and significantly reduce visceral fat. Here's how to do it safely.12. Make probiotics part of your daily lifeProbiotics are basically the good kind of bacteria. You can get them in supplement form or by eating fermented foods like kombucha and sauerkraut. A 2010 study found that probiotics from the lactobacillus family can help decrease visceral fat and body weight. As an added benefit, they're great for your gut and for digestion. 13. Opt for high-intensity interval training workoutsWe already know aerobic exercise is important when it comes to losing body fat, but if you're bored with the treadmill, opt for a high-intensity interval training workout, also known as HIIT. These bursts of intense exercise followed by active recovery have been shown to decrease abdominal and visceral fat. Plus, HIIT workouts deliver what's known as the "afterburn." It means your body continues to burn calories for hours after the workout, which can lead to a reduction in body fat.14. Don't forget about weightliftingDon't forget to add weights into the mix. Research has shown that strength training is an effective way to reduce visceral fat, especially when mixed with cardio. In fact, combining the two for a HIIT workout isn't a bad idea at all. 15. Meditate more oftenSince both reducing stress and getting more sleep have been linked to a decrease in visceral fat, it makes sense that meditation would also be an effective way to get rid of excess belly fat.Meditation has been linked to reduced stress levels and it has also been found to help with insomnia and even improve the quality of sleep.Despite many ads promising quick fixes and belly-targeting results, targeted weight loss (also known as spot reduction) doesn't actually work. There's no science-based evidence that attempting to lose weight on just one part of your body is effective.Actually, at least two studies have found that trying to target belly fat doesn't work. A 2011 study found that 24 people who did abdominal exercises for 6 weeks didn't lose any belly fat. Another study of 40 women who had overweight found that resistance training of the abdomen did nothing to reduce belly fat.Losing weight is an extremely personal decision, but it's also a difficult one to discuss. Some of the previously mentioned tips require major changes to your diet and lifestyle.You should always consult your doctor before making any significant weight loss decisions to make sure they'll work well for you. Everyone is different, and your weight loss plan may look different from someone else's.Be patient and commit to a weight loss plan that's been approved by a professional (a doctor, dietitian, or certified personal trainer). And remember that your health, not your weight, is what matters most.

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