



How to Measure Your Waist Circumference

The size of your waist is a better indicator of metabolic health than your weight on the scale

Waist circumference reflects the dangerous fat carried around the organs (visceral fat), where body weight may change due to changes in bone, muscle, water and fat mass.

A good rule of thumb is to keep your waist circumference to half of your height or less. Tracking your waist circumference weekly is a great and simple way to measure your progress. Measuring your waist circumference can help you interpret your weight more accurately. Fasting may change our body composition, gaining healthy, lean mass to keep our bones, joints and organs strong as we age. It's a great kind of weight gain!

During fasting, human growth hormone (HGH) increases, which helps create healthy weight gain when we start to eat again. You can simultaneously lose body fat and gain lean mass while fasting, but the scale won't tell you this. Some people appear quite skinny but carry a lot of visceral fat, which may be revealed by the waist circumference. A DEXA body composition scan is also useful to measure body fat percentage (See handout on DEXA).

Here are some rules to make sure you are measuring your waistline consistently every time:

1. Remove clothing from the waist line.
2. Stand with feet shoulder width apart (25 to 30 centimetres, or 10 to 12 inches) and back straight.
3. Locate the top of the hip bone, which is at the side of the waist not at the front of the body.
4. Align the bottom edge of the measuring tape with the top of the hip bone. Wrap the tape measure all the way around the waist parallel to the floor and not twisted.
5. Take two normal breaths and on the exhale of the second breath tighten the tape measure so it is snug but not digging into the skin.
6. Take the measure of the waist to the nearest half a centimetre (1/4 inch).

