

Choose an Exercise That Suits Your Body Type



Exercise can do wonders to get rid of unwanted pounds and tone up flabby muscles. But it can't turn a short, stocky person into a tall, willowy reed, or a slightly built person into a brawny bruiser. However, your body type may make you better suited to some activities than to others.

Most people fall into one of three categories: endomorphs, mesomorphs, or ectomorphs, based on their overall build, distribution of body fat, muscle tone, and height. (Some people show characteristics of more than one type.)

Endomorphs may be described as:

- Chubby, round, or soft looking.
- Broader at the hips than at the shoulders.
- Small-boned.
- Not very muscular.
- Carrying a higher-than-average amount of body fat.

Endomorphs are poor candidates for jogging or any activity that calls for high impact with the ground. They're good candidates for low-impact or nonimpact activities like biking, walking, or swimming, which minimize strain on the body frame.

Mesomorphs are usually described as:

- Big-boned, with a strong, muscular physique.
- Broad-shouldered, with a narrow waist.
- Rugged looking.

Mesomorphs are good candidates for walking, and short-distance running (like 5-kilometer races) but not marathons, martial arts, or sports requiring balance, power, and agility (like power lifting, tennis, or boardsailing).

Ectomorphs are usually described as:

- Tall, with a long, slender neck.
- Having narrow shoulders, chests, and hips.
- Relatively long limbed.
- Having small wrists and ankles.
- Having little body fat.
- Having difficulty developing powerful muscles.

Ectomorphs are poor candidates for swimming (since they have so little body fat for buoyancy) and sprinting. They're good candidates for jogging, skipping rope, basketball, tennis and other racquet sports, and cross-country skiing.