

Find Out If You're Overweight or Overfat



Many people fret about how much they weigh. The real issue of concern is what percentage of their body weight is made up of fat. The ideal is about 16 percent for men and about 20 percent for women. Standard height and weight charts ignore this issue.

Here's a simple test to do at home to determine if you are fat, or exceed the average level of body fat.

The Pinch Test

Pinch a fold of skin from these three areas.

- Upper side of upper arm.
- Midway up the back of the thighs.
- Just to one side of your abdomen.

Measure the thickness with a skin caliper or ruler. If you can pinch 1 inch or less of flesh, your body fat level is low or moderate. Every 1/4 inch above that represents 10 pounds of excess fat.

Knowing your level of body fat is critical if you've been on a crash diet or if you've lost weight quickly, because unless you've been exercising regularly, the loss may be in muscle tissue, not in actual body fat. In other words, you may look slimmer, but still be overfat. A scale will not show this, but a measurement of body fat will.