



THE
Lose
YOUR
BELLY
DIET

The Lose Your Belly Diet Report: How to Get a Honed, Toned Stomach

Lots of people want to lose weight and get into better shape but when you press them on what this really means, you'll often find that their main concern is with their stomach. What they really want is a flat, toned stomach with a six pack that will help them to look better both in and out of their clothes.

Only problem is, too many of those same people have little idea of how to go about achieving that goal and they end up barking up the wrong trees as a result. Read on and in this report, we'll take an in-depth look at everything you need to know to get a honed, toned stomach.



Weight Loss Through Diet

The first thing to recognize is that getting a ripped mid-section involves losing weight. In order to have highly defined looking abs, it is usually agreed that you need to drop your body fat to below ten percent. It is certainly true that getting your body fat that low will be sure to make your abs visible but actually, you don't need to go that far.

Abs become visible when the amount of 'padding' (fat) on top of them is low enough that they can be seen pressing through the skin above. Get your body fat percentage under 10% and even the most undefined set of abs becomes visible.

However, if you want to get visible abs without going to this extreme, then the other option is to make your abs visible by making them *stronger*. Stronger abs protrude further and so can be seen through 12 or even 15% body fat. We'll look at how to get stronger abs in a little bit but for now, know that 12-15% is a much better target and far more achievable than aiming for 10%.

How to Diet Effectively

So how exactly do you go about losing that weight though? There are actually a number of answers and the best one is going to depend on your lifestyle and your preferred eating habits. More importantly: it will depend on your biology and your hormonal balance.

A lot of healthy experts and online 'gurus' will recommend that the best way to lose weight is to stick to a diet that is low in calories and then to combine this with extra activity. Extra activity will make you burn fat faster and if you aren't consuming extra calories then this will create a deficit resulting in you quickly becoming slimmer.

To manage this then, all you need to do is to track the total number of calories you are consuming and then measure the total number of calories you burn off (your 'Active Metabolic Rate'). As long as the latter is higher than the former, then you should maintain a 'calorie deficit' and your body will have no choice but to burn away the unwanted fat stores to keep you moving around.

You can measure your AMR using a number of calculations but actually a better option is to use a fitness tracker. This will take into account not only your height, weight and gender but also the amount of daily steps you take, your heart rate at any given time and a range of other metrics (such as exercise).

You can then track your calories consumed by using an app like MyFitnessPal. This will allow you to simply scan foods through your phone by using the barcode and to that way tally up the number of calories you are eating. Again, as long as the total burned is higher than the total eaten, your body should have no choice but to turn to your stored fat to burn for fuel.

Maintain this deficit every single day and you'll be able to encourage gradual and regular fat loss.

How to Make This Manageable

One problem with this strategy? It is not at all convenient or practical.

I always say that unless you can stick to a diet plan or training program indefinitely, then it is pointless. Why lose lots of weight for a month or two only to give up and go back to normal and bounce back?

It's also true that no fitness tracker is completely accurate (the way they measure the heartrate isn't perfect to begin with and that's just one issue) and that it's impossible to be *completely* aware of your caloric intake. You really think that any two apples have the precise same number of calories?

What about the fact that weight loss is also reliant on hormones? As we'll see in a minute...

In other words, this is a whole lot of effort for something that isn't guaranteed to work perfectly anyway!

And with that in mind, you would actually do much better to find an easier and quicker alternative to counting every single calorie. That alternative? Guestimating.

The best strategy I can recommend is to spend a little time with a fitness tracker and to that way measure your expenditure over several *normal* days.

At the same time, measure your caloric intake and see what you regularly eat and where the most calories are coming from.

After a week or two weeks, you can stop. Take a look at this information though and then see where the problems are. What are the biggest contributors to calories in your diet? What are the worst culprits? You might surprise yourself to learn that there are just a few very big contributors that add a large amount of calories to your diet. If you cut these out, then you can quickly get your calories down somewhat.

Now try to reduce the number of calories that 'sneak in' without any real benefit. These are the calories that you can do away with and not really notice are missing. One of my favorite examples is soda drinks: many of us drink Coca-Cola on a regular basis as well as others like 7Up and these will add a huge number of calories to the diet over time while not really providing us with any sustenance.

Other common culprits include:

- Sugar in tea
- Butter on bread
- Creamy tea

With all this done, you should have a new average intake that is a little more satisfactory and closer to your daily burn. But we're going to go further by redesigning breakfast and lunch.

Take a look at your current breakfast and lunch and look at what the worst culprits are again in terms of calories. What is it about your breakfast that makes it fattening? Likewise for your lunch?

Then, ask yourself what you can make very easily at both times of the day that will be low in calories while also being satisfactory and giving you enough energy for the day ahead. 'Easily' is the operative word here because your diet needs to be easy to stick with.

A good example might be this:

Breakfast: 2 x pieces of toast with avocado

Lunch: Tuna fish salad with a smoothie and two boiled eggs

These meals should be simple and ideally, they should come to no more than around 700 calories combined.

When you manage this, you now have less need to calculate calories on a daily basis. Why? Because your breakfast and lunch are going to be consistently the same and will be guaranteed to provide you with only a small number of calories.

Seeing as the average calorie burn is around 2,000 for women and 2,500 for men, you now have a *big* amount of budget to spend in the evening without worrying about ruining your calorie deficit. That means that for this most interesting and social of meals, you can now relax and enjoy yourself without needing to worry about counting calories.

Is having the same breakfast and lunch every day boring? Maybe, but it is much easier to be boring during these rushed meals than it is in the evening when you might be enjoying date night or going out with friends for dinner. It's also easier to be strict when you're less tired.

Eating like this also makes it much easier to make little tweaks and changes to see how this affects your energy levels and your weight loss. Not losing weight as fast as you like? Then try swapping the smoothie for a vitamin tablet. Too hungry? Then try adding something small in like crackers for a mid-morning snack.

With consistency, you gain the ability to run small self-experiments and thereby hone your routine to be perfect for your lifestyle and your diet.

And of course ,if you still don't want to eat the same thing every day, you can always come up with a few replacements for breakfast and lunch with the same number of calories and same ease of preparation later on!

The Problem With Purely Counting Calories

Counting calories will go a long way to helping you lose your belly but it will only go *so far*. The big problem with this form of dieting is that it ignores individual differences and the role of our hormones in particular.

There are some people out there who will very jealously protect the notion of restricting calories to lose weight being the be-all and end-all. This is however a short-sighted and ultimately damaging view.

If there is no role for hormones to play in weight loss, then why is it that men who take steroids are incredibly ripped, lean and covered in muscle?

Why is it that many women gain weight when they go on the oral contraceptive?

Why is it that many people *lose* weight when they use certain anti-convulsants?

Why does hypothyroidism or polycystic ovaries cause weight gain?

The thing to note here is that you might not have diabetes or hypothyroidism, but your metabolism might still be slower than other peoples. It might be better to think of this as a spectrum rather than a condition with binary possibilities. We all have slightly different metabolisms and these greatly affect how we respond to our diets.

People who accuse overweight individuals of simply being lazy or lacking will-power are overlooking this crucial point. People who claim that calorie counting is the only scientific option for weight loss are ignoring the fact that an AMR will really be controlled *drastically* by hormones.

To stop doing that, you can instead start looking at some of the things you can do to fix your metabolism and your hormone balance and you can start playing to the strengths of your individual body.

For example, if you want to increase testosterone and thus burn fat while building muscle, then a good option is to train with weights. This is particularly effective for women and it will help you to burn more fat even when you are sleeping.

Likewise, it is also important to ensure that you are getting plenty of vitamins and minerals. Many of the supplements that athletes take for weight loss and for performance are nothing more than nutrients that come from our food: things like vitamin B complex, vitamin C, coenzyme Q10, PQQ, resveratrol, creatine etc.

If you can eat a more nutritious diet then you will find your body starts to burn more fat and turn this into useable energy so that you can train harder and exercise more will power. A good place to start is with a good multivitamin. Creatine is also very useful.

Likewise, do what you can do to increase the natural sources of nutrients in your diet. That means eating things like avocado, egg, organ meat and vegetables. Swap these in and get rid of things like chocolates, crisps, cake and candies – these are empty calories that provide no nutrition and which cause a sudden spike in blood sugar (leading to fat formation or ‘lipogenesis’).

Another tip is to make sure that other aspects of your lifestyle are in order. That means ensuring that you are sleeping properly and that you have a healthy sleep *cycle*. It means exposing yourself to natural light (vitamin D is often likened to a 'master key' for our hormones).

Manipulating Hormones

Take into account the natural rhythm and cycle of the hormones. When we wake up, our blood sugar will be incredibly low and this will result in our bodies performing as though they were 'fasted'. At this point, you will burn more fat because your body will have no other source and you will be producing more adrenaline. If you exercise during this time (called 'fasted cardio') then you will be forced to burn more fat than you otherwise would. Likewise, if you can extend this period, then you'll be able to burn more fat for longer.

There is much more to take into account as well. For instance, when you are tired and lethargic after a long day at work, you will be more likely to want to eat. Likewise, exercising straight after intensive cardio exercise will cause your body to send more energy to your muscles in order to restore glycogen – rather than storing it as fat.

Find what works for you and consider changing the timing of your meals in order to accelerate your weight loss.



Training for Abs

On top of all this, you also need to think about exercise and how your training will factor in to your ability to develop great abs.

Remember, our aim is to make our abs thick enough that they can protrude through 12-15% body fat. This is the same thing that happens when you contract your stomach to 'tense' your abs and the six pack becomes visible as a result.

At the same time though, we're also going to be trying to burn fat through exercise in order to hasten the process of losing weight and to make it easier to maintain a calorie deficit.

An ideal form of exercise that can do both these things? Concurrent training.

Concurrent training means cardio exercise with resistance layered on top. For example then, you might use the stationary bike but with the resistance on a high setting so that you really have to push to get the wheels to turn. Alternatively, you might use a punch bag or perhaps battle ropes in order to burn fat while keeping the muscles toned and honed.

This combined method has been shown to burn more fat than using either cardio or resistance training on its own. What's more, is that it will also help you to tone your abs by using them (especially a heavy bag if you are throwing your hips into each punch) and it will develop more muscle to increase your metabolism.

On top of this, you should also look at resistance exercises that directly target the abs. These include the likes of sit ups, leg raises, crunches etc.

Note though that your aim is to challenge the rectus abdominis – the sheet of muscle down the stomach that has the six pack separations we want to achieve. The purpose of this muscle is to prevent you from folding backwards and to help you when you want to fold forward. Note that you only train the abs when you fold at the *stomach* though. If you do sit ups and you are folding at the hips, then you are training the wrong body part!

While you are at it, you should also think about how to train the other important muscles in the mid-section. The transverse abdominis for example is the band of muscle that surrounds the core and supports the back. This helps to hold the stomach in to keep it flat and you can train it with stomach vacuums – exercises that involve bringing your belly button in to try and touch your spine. Plank and other exercises that require you to keep your torso straight will also train this area

Finally, the obliques are the muscles that run down either side of the ab and that are used for twisting the body and generating torque. To develop these, try adding a twist to your sit ups and crunches, or using movements that challenge you to move your legs in a circular fashion.

Using all *three* types of training is what will ultimately give you the most defined and well-rounded looking mid-section.

Of course, you can't just focus on the abs though and you should also add in a little extra resistance training for the rest of the body. Try to use compound movements which will trigger the biggest hormonal changes throughout the body and will help you to use your body in a more functional way to utilize the muscles in conjunction with one another.

Walking

On top of all this, it's also important to try to become *generally* more active. That means your aim is not just to get more workouts in your week, but to be constantly walking, running, cycling and even just going up and down the stairs.

Take a look at your lifestyle and see where you can fit a few more walks in. This might mean that you get off your bus a stop early and walk the rest of the way into work, or it might mean you make a habit of going for walks with your family at the weekend. Even work like gardening can help, as can starting a hobby that's active such as dancing.

Exercise that doesn't leave you absolutely exhausted means that you can go again sooner rather than needing to wait to recover and this also helps you to keep your hormone balance a lot more even. You'll even sleep better!

So, there you go: that's how you go about getting into lean shape and flattening those abs. Of course, there's a lot more to it than that from the lifestyle that surrounds your training to the way that you present yourself and make the most of your new abs. For all that and much more, be sure to check out the full book: *The Lose Your Belly Diet*!