

Too many misconceptions?

Another popular misconception is that you can replace fat with muscle. By the time we reach adulthood, we have a finite number of fat cells and muscle fibers. The only thing we can do is try to influence their size. Reduce your body fat and all of your fat cells will be smaller, including the ones located in your inner thigh area. When you build muscle, you increase the size of the muscle fibers you already have, you don't add new cells.

So let's talk about reducing fat in general. Some of the major themes are:

Don't diet. Rather than trying the latest fad diet or skipping meals, just reduce the total amount of calories you consume daily. Multiply your weight by 11. The figure you get is the approximate number of calories you need to eat to maintain your current weight. If you reduce that amount by just a couple of hundred calories a day, it will create a deficit between the calories you take in and the calories you expend.

Cut fat. A gram of fat has nine calories, a gram of carbohydrate or protein has only four. You'll have an easier time reducing calories if you reduce your total fat intake. You should never get more than 30% of your daily calories from fat. When you're trying to lose fat, you should probably hold the fat calories to 20% of the total.

Burn calories. Add to your daily calorie deficit by increasing the amount of time you exercise over the course of a week. Aerobic exercise (walking, cycling, in-line skating, swimming), performed three to five times a week for 30-60 minutes will help you increase your daily calorie deficit. Question: When you've burned more calories than you've taken in, where does your body get the other calories it needs for energy? Answer: From fat already stored on your body.

Lift weights. Although weight training doesn't help you burn calories during a workout like aerobic exercise does, as you become more muscular your resting metabolism speeds up. You'll burn more calories while at rest than you would if a higher percentage of your body weight came from fat.

Although you can't spot reduce, you can select exercises that use the muscles in your problem areas. I do have some favorite leg exercises. If you have access to a gym, leg extensions, leg curls, leg presses, and the abductor/adductor machine will work your legs. If no equipment is available, squats and lunges, performed while holding dumbbells in your hands, will also give your legs a great workout. (**Tip: the wider you position your feet while doing squats or using the leg press, the more you'll recruit your inner thigh muscles). Good Luck!!!

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