



Changing Body Composition: The Right Way

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So you've gotten through the holidays...and chances are if you didn't get a chance to read Nutriworks' Fall Newsletter's holiday tips, you may have put on a few pounds. There's even a better chance that those few added pounds are not lean body mass, but rather some extra fat from the more hefty portions sizes that Thanksgiving and Christmas brought.

Going forward into your season, it's likely that you'll want to get back to where you were prior to the holidays or even back to where you were a few months (or years) ago. Unless you're a couch potato and haven't been active in a while, exercise isn't going to be the best way to reach that goal. Nutrition is.

A few things to keep in mind when you're trying to decrease body fat and you're already in training mode:

- 1) You can't restrict calories too much or your workouts and/or workday will suffer
- 2) It takes several weeks of doing something consistently before your body will respond (i.e. 4 days "on" during the week, but taking the weekends as "cheat days" won't cut it)
- 3) Know your limits. Your body fat percentage goal is okay, but chances are it's not realistic on a long term basis.

When you set out to change body composition (for purposes of this article...decrease body fat), you've got to put some thought into it. You can't just think, "I want to get my body fat down to 14%," and start trying to reach that goal. There are several factors that will dictate whether or not this "dream" goal is even attainable. The first major factor is age. A person will automatically lose lean body mass each decade he or she ages. It actually becomes more difficult to maintain and/or decrease body fat percentage. Secondly, you should look at your eating patterns. How many times do you eat in a day? How much do you eat at one sitting? How much do you eat out? These are the more important nutrition concepts that will need to be altered to reach that goal. Are these things that you're even willing to change to get there? Finally, are you including resistance training and cardio in your exercise regimen? Both are vital to decreasing body fat.

Once you've thought through some of the answers to these questions, it is then that you can begin striving to reach your goal. Make sure your mealtimes are balanced and frequent in order to cut down on overeating. There are times you may need to focus on how you're eating around your workouts. Timing can be everything for some people. These are just a few easy ways to start working towards your goal of decreasing body fat.