

## FITNESS AFTER 40

# WHAT HAPPENED TO MY WAIST?

**You exercise sporadically. You eat about the same as you always have. Then one day you can't button your pants. What gives?**



Hormonal changes and loss of lean body mass (muscle) contribute to this waist creep the expansion of our waistlines we tend to experience as we approach, and pass, our 40s.

On average, women lose five pounds of muscle per decade after 18 years of age. If we continue to eat as we did when we were younger, the issue of calories in versus calories out comes strongly into play. But keeping the creep at bay is easier than you think.

### **Blast the Fat**

We know it. We've heard it. We've read it. But we are so busy with our careers, our lives and our families that we don't want to admit it. There is no "magic pill" for losing weight and staying, or getting, into good physical shape. The bottom line is we have to eat healthy...and sweat more.

**Food:** Simply put, we need to eat a variety of fruits and vegetables; consume whole grains and high-fiber foods; limit saturated and trans fats; cut down on sugars and simple carbohydrates; and limit alcohol. Controlling portion sizes is key,

too. Don't deprive yourself of what you want. Eat healthy - most of the time. And indulge - a little. It's all about balance.

**Exercise:** 30 minutes most days of the week is recommended for general health. But to keep our lean mass up and our body fat percentage down we need to add just a little more effort.

### **Fidget**

According to researchers at the University of New Mexico, people who fidget burn an additional 352 calories per day than people who do not fidget.

Those extra 352 calories can add up to a yearly net loss of about 36 pounds! So fidget, take the stairs, park farther away, pace while talking on the phone, walk to a colleague's desk, conduct meetings standing up or walking around, dance, exercise while watching TV, make housework brisk, walk the kids to school, garden - be as "inefficient" as possible, making as many trips and taking as many steps as you can.

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## WHAT HAPPENED TO MY WAIST? continued

### **Structured exercise**

#### **A) BREAK IT UP**

Rise 20 minutes earlier to fit in some strength training and core work. Then break up your “30-minutes-most-days-of-the-week” cardio into 10- or 15-minute increments throughout the day, or however it fits into your life. Your goal is to reach 200-300 minutes of cardiovascular exercise per week. Write down how much you exercised each day in a cheap calendar, then total the week. Keep adding to it until you’ve reached your 300 minutes and exercise has become a way of life.

#### **B) GET THE COMBO**

Use large muscle groups. Combine movements. Pushups work wonders for the upper body. Or try a stability ball “wall squat” with bicep curl. Use as many muscles as possible within each exercise. Now’s the time to be creative.

#### **C) CRANK THE INTENSITY**

Less time means higher intensity. Work each muscle until fatigue with a weight you can lift at least eight times but no more than 15. Experiment with a circuit. Add intervals to some of your cardio.

#### **D) BURST FORTH**

Between exercises, add a jump, a jack or a shuffle. Not only does this raise your heart rate and increase total calorie burn, but it also adds bone-protecting impact to your workouts.

#### **E) SWITCH IT**

Our bodies need variety to see results, and as we grow older we are more susceptible to overuse injuries. So protect your joints and muscles, and challenge your body, by shaking things up.

*Your body is an amazing machine. Take care of it and it will take care of you.*