

Measuring a healthy weight

MISSION VERY POSSIBLE!

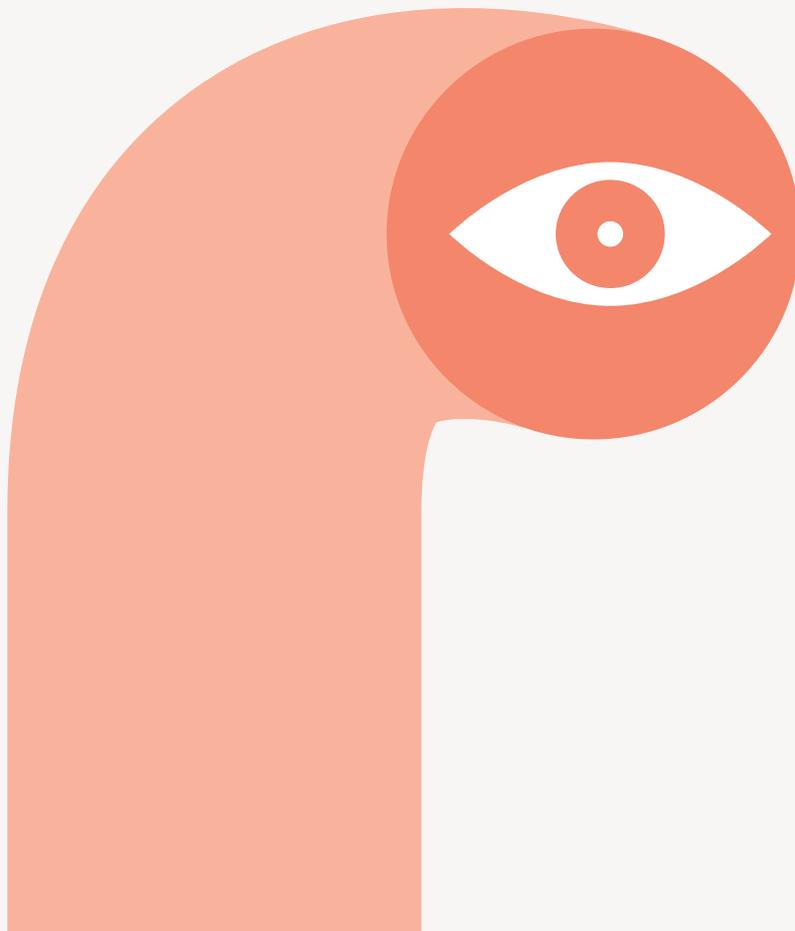
This provides practical information for employees who are looking for help with reaching a healthier weight. It explains how to work out if a person's weight is increasing his or her risk of developing certain health conditions. Please remember that weight can be a very sensitive issue for many people and care is needed when deciding how to present the information to employees.

Calculating healthy weight ranges

There are a number of different methods that can be used to advise employees on standard or healthy weights for adults. These include:

- **Body mass index (BMI)** – This is a measurement that considers the relationship between your weight and your height and gives an estimate of your risk of weight-related diseases.
- **Waist circumference (also known as waist measurement)** – Research has found that central obesity (weight stored around the waist) increases the risk of developing conditions such as heart disease and diabetes.

Information for employees on both these methods is given on the next pages, along with some guidelines on how to calculate daily calorie requirements for anyone wanting to lose weight.



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ARE YOU A HEALTHY WEIGHT?

Being a healthy weight reduces your risk of developing certain health conditions. Below we explain two easy ways to find out if you are a healthy weight: body mass index and measuring your waist. We also explain how to work out the number of calories you need per day.

Body mass index

This is a measurement that considers the relationship between your weight and your height and gives an estimate of your risk of developing weight-related disease.

To calculate your body mass index (BMI):

- 1 Measure your height in metres (without shoes) and your weight in kilograms (without shoes).
- 2 Multiply the figure for your height by itself.
- 3 Divide your weight (in kilos) by the figure in step 2

EXAMPLE

Height – 1.6m (5 feet 3 inches)

Weight – 70kg (11 stone)

$$\text{BMI} = \frac{70}{(1.6 \times 1.6)} = \frac{70}{2.56} = 27$$

The table below outlines how your BMI relates to your weight.

Category	BMI	Action needed
Underweight	Below 18.5	Seek advice on a weight management programme as you may need to gain weight.
Ideal	18.5 to 24.9	You're a healthy weight so maintain current levels of physical activity and calorie intake.
Overweight	25 to 29.9	Start to increase your level of physical activity and reduce calorie intake.
Very overweight/Obese	30 or above	You're a healthy weight so maintain current levels of physical activity and calorie intake.

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HEALTHY WAIST MEASUREMENTS

Waist measurement is a good indicator of how your weight might be influencing your health. Men tend to carry extra weight in the abdominal area. This is known as central obesity and is commonly referred to as an 'apple' shape. Central obesity increases your risk of developing heart disease and diabetes.

Use a tape measure to measure your waist. (Measure it at the mid-point between the top of your hipbone and bottom of your ribs.) Then check the measurement against the box below.

Waist measurement for:



	Men	Women	South Asian Men	South Asian Women	Action needed
Healthy measurement	Less than 94cm (37 inches)	Less than 80cm (about 31.5 inches)	Less than 90cm (about 35.5 inches)	Less than 80cm (about 31.5 inches)	This is a healthy waist measurement, but if you feel the need to tone up, check that your diet is well-balanced and that you are doing enough physical activity.
At increased risk	Over 94cm (37 inches)	Over 80cm (31.5 inches)			Now is the time to try to lose some weight. Increase your level of activity and make some changes in your diet to reduce calorie intake.
At high risk	Over 102cm (40 inches)	Over 88cm (over 34.5 inches)	Over 90cm (about 35.5 inches)	Over 80cm (about 31.5 inches)	You need to take some action now as your weight is increasing your risk of developing illnesses including heart disease, and diabetes. Increase your level of activity and make some changes in your diet to reduce calorie intake.

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HOW TO CALCULATE YOUR DAILY CALORIE REQUIREMENT

Managing your calorie intake is important for weight control:

- When your calorie intake exceeds your calorie expenditure, your weight will increase.
- When your calorie intake matches your calorie expenditure, your weight will remain constant.
- When your calorie intake is less than your calorie expenditure, you will lose weight.

If you're overweight and need to reduce your calorie intake, work out your daily calorie requirement by following the three steps below.

Step 1

Work out your personal resting metabolic rate (RMR) by doing the following calculation.



Age	Men	Women
18-29 years	15.3 x weight (in kilos) + 679	14.7 x weight (in kilos) + 496
30-59 years	11.6 x weight (in kilos) + 879	8.7 x weight (in kilos) + 829
60 years or over	13.5 x weight (in kilos) + 487	10.5 x weight (in kilos) + 596

Step 2

Work out your current activity level.

Inactive – Mainly sitting down all day and evening = **1.3**

Lightly active – Some activity – for example, walking, housework and general chores = **1.4**

Moderately active – Active most of the day and taking part in moderate-intensity activity three or more times a week = **1.5**

Step 3

Calculate your daily calorie allowance:

Daily calorie allowance = Resting metabolic rate (RMR) x Activity level

This is the number of calories you can consume each day to maintain your current weight.

To lose weight, you must reduce your calorie

intake by 500-600 calories per day.

Limiting your calorie intake can result in a reduction of the nutritional value of your meals, so seek advice before making changes to your diet.

Joining a weight management group can help to keep you motivated and provide you with lots of support and ideas.

Another alternative to reducing your calorie intake is to increase your level of physical activity so that you use up more calories. See the BHF booklet *Get active, stay active* for suggestions on how to increase your level of activity.

A combination of a healthy diet and doing more physical activity will have the best outcome!