

BE STRONG

Eat. Move. Live

THE KNOWLEDGE

WHERE DOES YOUR FAT GO WHEN YOU LOSE IT?

This week's focus: Understanding what happens to our body fat when we burn it and how we get rid of it from our bodies.

Why is it important?: Understanding the physiological processes that our body is going through when we are trying to lose weight, can help us to keep focused when we are working hard at achieving our goals, and also when things get tough.

What will we tell you?: How the body burns and then expels fat, resulting in weight loss on the scales.

- 1 Lots of things affect the weight that is displayed on the scales when we get weighed – how much we have eaten or drunk that day, if we are bloated, dehydrated or hydrated, whether we are in ketosis, our hormones, if we have been to the loo properly.
- 2 When we are trying to lose weight, we are actually trying to lose fat from our bodies – we can lose water from our cells, the amount of food and liquid in our tummies, and depending on how we fuel we may even lose muscle – but what we really want to lose is fat! So..... How does that fat leave our bodies?
- 3 Fat is stored under our skin – it's called adipose tissue, and in some cases around our organs as visceral fat. Our body stores fat for the purpose of using it in the future when food is scarce. It is a condensed source of energy for our bodies. When we get into a calorie deficit our body utilises this fat to fuel our activity.
- 4 Fat cannot be converted to muscle (a common misconception) – it is two completely separate metabolic processes. We store and burn fat, then we use different chemicals compounds to build muscle.
- 5 So fat is converted to energy – we get that – but how does burning it as fuel make us lighter? Top scientists did some very complex calculations and worked out that when we burn fat, 16% is excreted as water (urine, sweat, breath, tears etc) and 84% is carbon dioxide that we expel through our lungs.
- 6 Have you heard of the Whoosh Effect? A phenomenon touted on social media as being the reason for weight plateaus then sudden weight loss. The fat cell stores water until all the 'fat' has been used up and then once it has the whole cell disappears and then you see the loss on the scales. Unfortunately there is no scientific evidence to back this theory up.
- 7 However, it is a common phenomenon to lose only small amounts of weight, for a number of weeks then lose a larger amount – despite getting into the right calorie deficit for the whole period – which even if we don't know the reason why for this – it is useful to know that this is how it is for many people and you are not alone.

KEY MESSAGES

Fat loss is a complex metabolic process, and there is probably a lot that we still don't know about it. But have faith in the science that a calorie deficit will bring about the fat loss. And every time you get out of breath, get a sweat on, or you go for a wee, that is the excess fat that you are trying to get rid of, leaving your body.

So stick at it, stay positive and keep moving!