

Losing All that Excess Belly Fat and Getting a Well Toned Flat Stomach

Trimming down and toning up your entire body, from head to toe, is definitely something that many people want to do. But chances are, there's one place in particular where all that excess fat just doesn't want to seem to go away, no matter how *hard* you try!

And yes, that place is the *belly*.

So many people, across the world, seem to have problems losing all the fat that inevitably ends up accumulating at their belly.

Even if you aren't particularly interested in having those well-defined washboard abs that are oh-so-appealing, you'll still probably want, at very least, a stomach that is nice, flat, and good looking.

Unfortunately, due to the difficulty that many face when they try to lose belly fat, it is very easy to just get cheased off and give up. Do *not* make this mistake! You *can* lose your belly fat, and your belly *could* be as flat as you want it to be.

But to stand a chance at achieving this, you need to be willing to do what it takes, and learn the *best* possible ways to achieve your goal!

Really, all that stands between you and your target right now is the right know-how. Sure, you may have already been down this road before, and tried out numerous things from the latest fad diet to those exercise machines that promise you instant results.

If those things haven't worked for you, there's still no need to panic.

Why? Well, simply because the truth is that all you really need to trim down your belly fat is some very basic knowledge that has really long standing implications!

Over the course of this guide, we'll be giving you the keys to attaining the kind of stomach that you can be proud of. Better still, we'll actually let you know everything that you need to know about losing weight, especially that troublesome belly-fat!

By the time you're done, you should have be fully armed and equipped with what you need to turn your dreams into reality.

To start off with, one thing that it would help you to have is a good and clear understanding of why exactly belly fat accumulates to easily – and why it is so dreadfully hard to lose!

How Belly Fat Ends Up Where It Is!

Why is it that at point in time not too long ago, you had a nice flat belly, but then things just ended up going all wrong, and before you knew it, you were pot-bellied – or worse!

Well, there are really many factors that could have contributed to your belly's gradual decline, but to sum it all up: It's your lifestyle! Not just yours, really, but rather the lifestyle that most of us lead in this day and age.

Does this sound like your regular day: Waking up early to the *annoying* sound of that hated alarm clock? Heading to work and sitting hunched in front of a computer for most of the day? Going out to lunch, only to go back to office and into your cubicle once again?

And then, when your work is finally over, you probably join some friends or colleagues for dinner and drinks, before, *finally*, heading home completely exhausted and just relaxing in front of the television.

Okay, even if this isn't your day exactly, it is a typical day in the working life. Unless your job involves something that is physically strenuous, chances are that you rarely, if ever, actually end up getting any real exercise.

Of course, this is a far cry from back when you were younger and you used to play sports, or even just go for more outdoor activities with your friends.

Basically, at some stage of your life, you probably stopped being as active as you once were, and started leading a more sedentary lifestyle. True, you probably had good reasons for doing so, but it is what causes most people to end up slowly but surely bulging around the waistline.

Because of this sedentary lifestyle, even if your eating habits did not change drastically, you would still end up piling on weight.

Once that weight is there, it just keeps on getting harder and harder to lose. Prevention, in many cases, is way better than a cure – but let's face it, unless you happen to have a time machine it is a bit late for that.

Still, based on what we've discussed so far, you can see at least one of the things that you're going to have to start doing if you want to lose all that weight: Exercise.

However, that's really just the tip of the iceberg.

Now that you know where things went wrong, let's start looking at how you can put them right again. Naturally, 'putting things right' is what you should be interested in most right now, so pay attention!

Introductory Theory of Combating Belly Fat

Ready to battle the bulge? If you are, then it's time we get started doing just that. But where is the *best* place to begin?

Granted, if you really feel like it, you could go and start running or something right now. However, before you start on an exercise program, it would help to know a little theory that will help *streamline* your efforts in a grand fashion!

Yes, theory can be dull, but as you're about to see, this is going to form the foundation of all your efforts from this point onwards.

Understanding what you're trying to accomplish is the first step to actually accomplishing it. Without knowing this theory, you'd be practically stumbling around in the dark, and that's going to result in you getting nowhere at all.

In fact, it is the main reason most people have such a tough time trimming down.

Only one thing is worse than not having the information that you need, and that is actually having the *wrong* information. And believe me; the wrong information really is pretty abundant!

First up on our agenda in exploring the theory of combating belly fat is to reinforce some very basic ideas that you may recognize...

Calorie Intake vs. Calories Burned

Are you cringing at the mention of calories? Truthfully speaking, they aren't as scary as you might think – despite the fact that many a starvation diet has caused a lot of people to regard the mere word 'calorie' with a lot of suspicion.

Here's the lowdown on calories in general though: They're just a measure of *energy*.

Not so scary sounding are they? Well, as we said, they really aren't scary. But the reason why so many people watch them is simple: What excess energy isn't used by the body, is stored, sort of like a battery.

Unfortunately, the way in which the body stores excess energy is in *fat*.

See the connection now? Generally speaking, pretty much every food or drink you encounter will have calories in it, from proteins, carbohydrates, and even fats.

And you know what? Your body *needs* energy to survive. So don't jump the gun right now and think that the only thing you need to do is stop consuming all calories whatsoever. Matter of fact, you shouldn't even cut down on your calorie intake too much.

After all, without enough energy, you'll face a host of other problems, and your body fat will end up being the least of your worries.

At the end of the day, it's all about balance.

As you go through your everyday life, your body will inevitably use up the energy that you've gained from food. No matter how sedentary your lifestyle may be, this is true, and it may surprise you to note that you're burning calories even while you slouch in front of the TV.

Of course, the more strenuous and physically demanding the activity, the more energy is being used.

That's where the balance comes in! If you're burning up more calories than you're consuming, then gradually, you're going to be making use of the 'stored' energy too. Or, in other words, you'll be burning fat!

Some people actually measure their daily calorie intake down to the smallest unit, and then calculate how many calories they'd have to burn to lose weight. If you wish, you could do this too with relative ease.

However, as you're about to find out, you don't really have to do so.

On one hand, counting calories will provide you with a very reasonable way to actually quantify a lot of your efforts. But weight loss doesn't really have to be about that at all.

By following some of the things that we're going to be prescribing, you'll see that through a mix of knowledge and common sense, you'll be losing weight with ease, and not even needing to really count every single calorie you consume.

Anyway, we're getting ahead of ourselves somewhat at this stage.

For now, you should be able to see how it is important to balance your calorie intake against your calories burned in some way. That's a brilliant position to start from, and it leads us nicely to another point worth discussing.

Approaching a Balanced Lifestyle

Starvation diets aside, controlling your calorie intake is going to form a key part of what we discuss later on. Yes, some changes to your lifestyle may be necessary, depending on what type of lifestyle you lead right now.

Now that you know how almost every food and drink type has calories, it should make sense that the idea would be to control that calorie intake somehow, without starving your body of the nutrients that it needs to survive.

Further added to this is the fact that as important as calorie intake is, it is equally important to burn calories.

Naturally, this leads us with to other lifestyle changes, involving physical exertion, or some form of exercise.

From this point on, both of these ideas are going to be a recurring theme. Frankly speaking, they're the *core* theory behind the two-pronged approach to acquiring a flat stomach that is going to work best!

To sum it up, what we're going to be looking at is:

1. Cutting down on your daily calorie intake in a healthy fashion
2. Stepping up on the amount of calories you burn daily

Accomplish both of these, and you'll find that you're going to be more healthy, and start to get that wonderful toned stomach that you desire.

But as you can probably imagine, a lot of this is going to hinge on the specific approach that you take, so don't tune off just yet!

Having covered this introductory theory though, we're ready to move on into the first step of actually taking *action* to *fight* your bulging stomach!

Dieting 101: A Healthy and Wholesome Approach

Diets are a pain. Everyone knows that, and if you've undertaken some before, then you'll undoubtedly be fully aware at just how tough and annoying they can be to adhere to strictly.

But knowing what you do now, you can adopt a better approach to dieting.

Here's the thing: Imagine if your 'diet' didn't require you to completely cut off eating everything that you like to eat and starve yourself. Imagine if you just needed to alter your eating habits slightly instead of severely.

Depending on your current eating habits, the amount of alterations that you'd need to undergo would differ, naturally, but the bottom line is this: If your diet is not too unpleasant, and not too hard to get used to, chances are you'll have a much easier time sticking to it.

And therein lies the secret to effective dieting: It is about finding something that works for *you*, and then pursuing it!

Covering everything that there is to know about dieting would be a Herculean effort though, especially for a guide of this kind. Instead of giving you the microscopic view, which will have a lot of unnecessary facts, let's just go over things as they relate directly to what you're concerned with most, and that's losing weight!

By the time we're done with this section, you'll find that you're well prepared to get started adopting some of what we recommend!

Consuming Balanced and Nutritious Meals

By far, this is the most important part of your diet, so be sure to pay close attention to this section.

Whenever you sit down for a meal at a restaurant, or start to prepare one at home, there is the choice of what to actually eat. This is where your most crucial decision comes in: *Picking* the right meal.

Why is this important? Well, one thing about calories that you don't know yet is that they aren't distributed evenly.

As a rough guide, refer to the following table to see how different types of foods could have vastly different calorie counts, depending on what they're made up of:

1. 1 gram of fat = 9 calories
2. 1 gram of carbohydrates = 4 calories
3. 1 gram of protein = 4 calories
4. 1 gram of alcohol = 7 calories

Needless to say, from the above chart it would be obvious that grams of fat and alcohol are going to up your calorie count by a lot. Whereas, protein and carbohydrate can be consumed in larger amounts for less calories!

No, this does *not* mean that you should cut out all fat from your diet, but rather, that you should limit how much of it you take in.

To adapt a balanced diet, think of it this way to start off with: Your body needs to have the correct amount of proteins, carbohydrates, minerals, fiber, fats, vitamins, and salt. Thus, it's your job to ensure that your body receives all of those things.

But at the same time, just because your body needs these things, it doesn't mean that you need to go overboard with any of them, especially fats.

Try to do the following, and you'll find that you can have a healthy and balanced diet that really puts you on the right track to losing that bulge around your stomach!

1. Eat lots of fruit and vegetables

Fruit and vegetables are great sources of nutrients, and have pretty much no fat in them, so you don't have to worry too much about consuming them in large quantities.

Green vegetables in particular are packed with vitamins and minerals, so be sure to take them as much as possible!

2. Switch from refined grains to whole grains

Recently, it has been discovered that eating whole grains can alter your glucose and insulin responses within your body. While you may not know the significance of that, it basically means that your body could burn belly fat a lot faster.

Certainly, it won't hurt to pursue this further.

3. Avoid 'trans fatty' products, such as margarine, crackers, and so on

In a nutshell, 'trans fats' come in products that have partially hydrogenated oils. More of interest to you though is the fact that they've been shown to contribute greatly to fat being stored around your waistline.

Avoiding such foods would up your chances of dismissing all that excess weight around your belly!

4. Drink more water

Keeping yourself hydrated is important, and throughout your life you should consume enough water for your body to operate. But remember: Drink more *water*, not more drinks!

The difference between drinking plenty of water, as opposed to drinking tons of coffee or other beverages is that water has no calories to speak of. So instead of constantly drinking stuff that is going to just pack on the calories, switch to water, and you'll see amazing results!

5. Try to vary the types of foods you eat

Instead of sitting down to a meal that is, essentially, mostly just potatoes with some chicken, or bread and curry, try to add more *complexity* to your meals.

Have small portions of multiple types of foods, especially fruits and vegetables. That way, you'll fill up on a lot of great tasting food, but only have a *fraction* of the calorie intake as you would otherwise.

Sounds easy, doesn't it?

Armed with these five steps, and the knowledge that you've learnt regarding balanced diets, you'll find that you're able to quite easily cut on your calorie intake. And the best part is, you should be able to do so in a way that doesn't require you to torture yourself!

Not a bad start, right?

Of course, there is more that can be done, even in this regard.

Starting to Ingrain Great Habits Alongside a Healthy Diet

Admittedly, habits are a tough thing to change, but it is certainly worth making an effort to do so, especially since you're committed to battling the bulge!

Want to know the easiest way to replace your bad eating habits with good ones? Simple: Start slowly, and work your way up. Rome wasn't built in a day, and altering your habits isn't going to be accomplished in one either.

Take small, but firm steps forward, and you'll find that in no time at all, you've embraced a healthy set of eating habits that will really complement all your other efforts.

So what are these miraculous 'habits' that we're speaking of? Well, as you'll soon see, most of them are pretty easy to carry out, so it's not like you're going to have to jump through hoops in order to hit your target.

Take a glance through the following really easy habits that you can get on board with immediately:

1. Chew, chew, and chew some more!

Never underestimate the value of chewing your food. This seemingly simple activity is very, *very* important. Firstly, being a physical exercise, chewing actually is burning some calories too, no matter how small an amount.

Secondly though, and more importantly, chewing allows you to savor your food more, and thus, makes you feel full faster, on a psychological level, than gulping down meals would.

Take this advice to heart, and try to consciously force yourself to chew more with every bite!

2. Eat smaller meals but on a more regular basis

Most people eat 3 cardinal meals a day, normally about 6 to 8 hours apart. Breakfast. Lunch. Dinner.

Although there's nothing really wrong with that, as it is, after all, the way that most of us were raised, the truth is that there is a better way to eat, and that is by eating more often, but in smaller quantities!

Instead of going with the 3-meals-a-day route, try eating every 2-3 hours, but in small quantities. Resist the temptation to eat more, and you'll find that this works wonders.

Why it actually works ties in with the human body's metabolism, which is given a 'kickstart' by the action of eating. So eating more often would ensure that your metabolism is constantly burning at an optimum level!

3. Be sure to eat breakfast, not supper

Surely you've heard by now that breakfast is the most important meal of the day, and that really is very true. No matter what you do, do *not* skip your breakfast entirely.

But, as recommended just a minute ago, you don't need to have a heavy breakfast.

Giving your body's metabolism that vital first start soon after you wake up is going to ensure that your metabolism rate isn't slowed down, but rather, is at full swing from the beginning of the day onwards!

Also, do not have a 'last minute bite' before you hit the sack! Eating right before you go to bed ensures that there'll be a ton of excess energy that will be forced to be stored, as fat.

Stay away from supper-then-sleep routines at *all* costs.

4. Stop stress!

Try, as much as you can, to be as relaxed as possible while you eat. Stress is something that can really ruin things for you in *so many* ways, if you let it.

For one thing, people who are stressed tend to eat more than they normally would, or should. And for another, stress has been shown to negatively impact digestion, which can cause various other problems too.

Take deep breaths, and try to go for as stress-free an eating environment as you can!

5. Get a good night's sleep

Please note that this doesn't mean you should be sleeping *more* – but rather just that you should be getting a good 7-8 hours worth of solid sleep every night.

A solid night's sleep is its own reward – and will help you to generally attain higher energy levels. Low energy levels, on the other hand, is sometimes fixed by consuming more calories, or coffee, both of which are bad.

Furthermore, a good sleep is essential to manage stress levels, which just sweetens the pot that much more.

None of these small habitual changes should be too hard for you to manage, no matter how used to another type of lifestyle you are. Despite that, it would be best to do as prescribed, and not bite off more than you can chew (no pun intended!).

Go slow, and ease into each habit gradually.

At first, you may find that most of the time, you don't consciously remember the habits that you're trying to foster. Use some reminders if you like, such as a list of habits displayed in someplace that you're bound to notice.

As time goes by, you're bound to find that most of these habits really become second nature, and that's when you can really see their full benefits begin to manifest.

Of course, as you know, dieting is only the first part of the formula that we intend to follow. If you remember, back when we were discussing the theory, we mentioned the need to incorporate both a reduced calorie intake as well as calorie *burning* to really fight the flab!

Now that you know all about the former, it's about time we discussed the latter, and this is where you will find that things really get very proactive.

Yes, that means that you are about to discover what you can actually do, on a day in, day out basis, to trim your stomach down to a size that you can be proud of.

Think you're ready to begin doing just that?

Exercising Your Way to a Trimmer Stomach

Let's face it, you probably knew that we'd be getting to this sooner or later, and perhaps you even dreaded it. For many people, especially those that have led a relatively sedentary lifestyle, getting started with exercise is a real chore.

But do you know what the bright side is?

Once you get a good exercise routine going, it will slowly become easier and easier to carry out, and soon, you'll feel so good exercising that you'll actually want to do it!

If you can achieve that, then your fight to trim down your stomach is pretty much won already.

Of course, to do so, you're going to need to start somewhere. Borrowing the same philosophy as when we discussed habit-forming earlier on, it is best to start slow and work your way up with exercise to.

In other words, don't try to run for an hour straight when you first start out. Give yourself, and much more importantly, your body, time to ease into any type of exercise.

Knowing all of this is going to help ensure that your approach to exercise is spot on.

Bear in mind that the reason for the exercise is simple: You want to burn calories. More calories than your regular intake of food provides, so that your body is forced to tap into its stores of energy, in the form of fat, and start burning them too!

If you've been measuring your calorie intake, this part is easier. But even if you haven't, so long as you followed the advice that we outlined in the previous sections, your intake should be low enough that the exercises we recommend will more than suffice to give you the balance you desire.

Before we look at the types of exercises that you're going to want to carry out though, here's something that you should always remember:

Just because you're trying to lose that belly of yours, it does not mean that all your exercises should concentrate on that area.

Really, this is a common mistake that many people make. Truth is, most focused exercises that target a specific muscle group, in this case, the abdomen, do not burn fat in that area literally. Instead, they build muscle tone.

So if your plan is to achieve dashboard abs, then this is great. But for someone seeking more to combat a bulging stomach, it can even be counterproductive – at least as far as appearances go.

Consider it this way: If you're building muscles in your abdomen before the fat is burned off, it's going to add further bulk to that area. Admittedly, this bulk will be in the form of muscles, but it will still cause an even bigger bulge than before.

As we go over some of the exercises that you're going to want to carry out, you'll see this in greater depth. Let's get started with that right now!

Engaging in Cardiovascular Exercises!

Heard the term 'cardiovascular exercises' before? Don't panic, they aren't anything complicated.

In reality, cardiovascular exercises are simply exercises that get your heart rate up. Granted, lots of types of exercises do this, but some of the more common cardiovascular exercises are things such as brisk walks, jogging, running, or even swimming.

No, you don't need to do many cardiovascular exercises, unless you want to, and as you progress, you'll find that you probably take a liking to one form of exercise as opposed to others.

Assuming you haven't been exercising regularly, it is probably best that you start out with something that is a 'low impact' exercise. In other words, something that won't tax your body too much, but will still help you burn those pesky calories.

Try brisk walks, swimming, skating, or even cycling to begin with. These types of exercises should be pretty easy for you to carry out, no matter what your fitness level is.

Eventually, you may even find that you want to take things up a notch, and move on to jogging, running, skipping rope, or even rowing.

When you do take things up a notch, you'll find that you need to spend less time exercising to burn the same amount of calories as previously. This means that with whatever free time you have, you'll be able to get *more* results out of it!

Ideally, you should try to make time for about 20 to 30 minutes of such exercises at least 3 to 5 times a week.

Yes, that's right, you don't need hours, just 30 minutes or so should be enough to really get you off to a great start! Of course, as the feel-good factor comes into play, you may even find that you want to do more, which is perfectly alright so long as you don't push yourself too far.

Naturally, there is more that you can do than just cardiovascular exercises, and in fact, you could really complement the results that you obtain by spending a little bit of time carrying out...

Simple Strength-Building Exercises

No one is asking you to become a professional weight lifter or bodybuilder, but that said, strengthening and toning your muscles is not a bad thing.

For one, the stronger and more toned your muscles are, the higher your metabolism rate is bound to be, simply due to the energy that those muscles spend (and calories that they burn, in other words!).

Although we did mention previously that some of these exercises could be initially counter-productive in appearance, in the long run, they're going to help out. By strengthening your abdomen muscles, you could eventually attain a much flatter stomach as they hold whatever excess fat is there in place.

Basically, timing is everything.

When you first start out exercising, you may not want to include these exercises in your routine, and instead focus more on the cardiovascular exercises that we'd just mentioned.

However, as you move on, it would be a wise move to slowly start incorporating these strength-building exercises into your workouts. Most of them take little time to carry out, so you're not going to find that they interfere too much in your daily routine.

Let's go over some places that you could start:

1. Abdomen Crunches

Definitely the most common type of abdomen-related strength-building exercise, crunches have long been used to tone and strengthen abs into the dashboard variety.

Now, there are many types of crunches, and it would do you well to remember that your abdomen area is more than just the six-pack that many people seek. In reality, there are also muscles bordering the center six, and you should vary your crunches to take these into account.

Over time, you'll notice a vast improvement in the general 'flatness' of your stomach!

2. Full Body Workouts

Although you're mostly concerned with your abs, there's no reason why strengthening your other muscles wouldn't be a good idea too.

Needless to say, they're going to contribute to your overall metabolism rate, and help establish definition throughout your body, as opposed to just around the stomach area, which will look a lot better in the long run.

Starting out a full body workout isn't the easiest thing in the world to do however, and you may need some guidance to start out with.

One method that is particularly effective is to work on the upper body muscles, and then move down to the lower body muscles. By breaking up the muscle groups into these two categories, you're less likely to miss any out!

Also, when you start out, go for the gym machines if you have access to them. Free-weights will eventually provide you with greater options, but it wouldn't be a good idea to start using them until you're sure of what you're doing.

Using available machines can help you to learn and understand the types of exercises that work specific muscle groups.

3. Stretching

Before and after any exercise routine it is vital that you stretch. But, even at other times, stretching your muscles isn't going to hurt, and could really help with their growth as well as burn some calories too.

Even something that seems simple, such as tensing your abdomen muscles here and there throughout the day, has been shown to provide decent results.

Try it out, and you'll see just how quickly your muscles adapt to all the exercise that you're doing!

Start on these muscle strengthening exercises slowly. Do not ever try to go for weights that are heavier than what you can easily manage to lift.

Pushing yourself too far, too fast, can result in some pretty serious injuries.

In the long run, unless you're really trying to bulk up on muscle, using lighter weights but with more repetitions of the exercise itself can really provide you with the 'toned' look that you're probably going for.

Of course, some bulk might not hurt, especially once you're the lean, mean, fighting machine that all our recommended exercises are going to turn you into, so once you're comfortable at a certain weight, it wouldn't hurt to up it a little, and see how you do.

Move slowly, and gradually, and never jerk your movements.

In time, you'll get to be exactly in the place that you want to be – with the trim, lean, and flat belly that you want to achieve!

Taking the Next Step Forward

Over the course of this guide, we've provided you with what amounts to the best approach possible to battling the bulge!

Now, the fate of your stomach lies in your own hands, and it is up to you to take what you know, and put it to good use. Despite the fact that we've stressed the need for easing into a gradual change, rather than rushing to do everything at once, the simple fact is that there is a huge difference between gradual change, and no change at all.

In short: Do *not* put off making the changes necessary to achieve your goals!

Just spending as little as half an hour, to an hour, every few days, is going to have you looking great, and feeling like an all round star.

Sure, toning your belly isn't a miracle cure, but the overall results that you're going to be able to obtain will help you in so many ways. Chances are, you've already thought about this yourself though, so there's probably not much need to say more on the matter.

So get out there, right now, and start changing your life, and your tummy, for the better!