

ask the EXPERTS

Our team explains the best oils for cooking, how to tone up the thigh area and the science of body fat.

health

What exactly happens to the fat in our body when we lose weight? I'm getting smaller, so where is all the fat going?

Natalie Schaffer, via email



Allan Bolton
Men's consultant

First up, fat and carbohydrate are to the body what petrol is to a car: fuel we need to do work. When we eat more fuel than our bodies need to cover the biochemical cost of life (better known as metabolism), we store it for later use. We store excess energy as body fat, which is made up of billions of fat cells called adipocytes. Although their main function

is energy storage, fat cells are important organs that produce a range of hormones. Lean adults have approximately 35 billion fat cells, whereas an obese adult can have four times that amount. Fat cells contain fat droplets, which expand during weight gain and contract with weight loss, although the number of fat cells remains the same. When billions of individual fat cells shrink, so do we. Congratulations on getting healthy and slimming down. Keep it up.

FITNESS



Martha
Lourey-Bird
Fitness editor

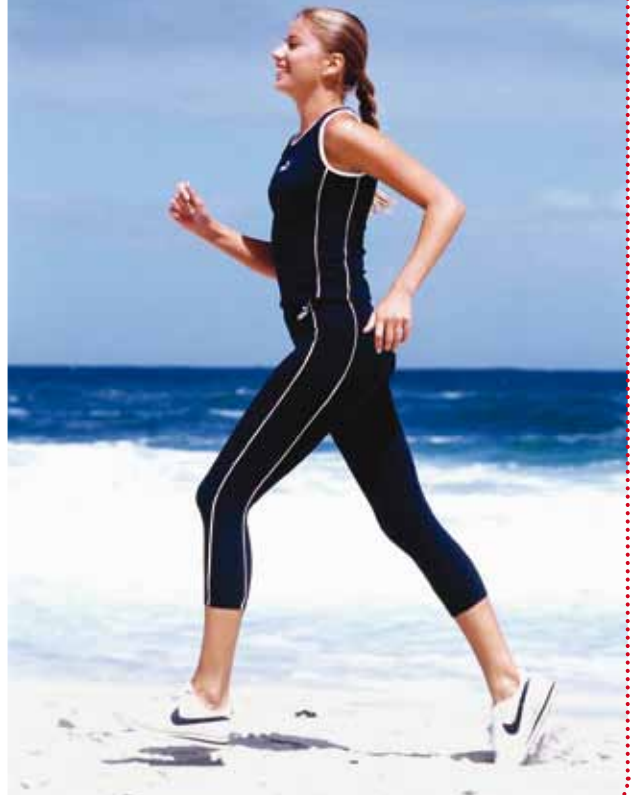
If your lower half is your trouble area, you're not alone. For many women, it's where they put the weight on first and lose it last. But no matter where on the body you're trying to slim down and tone up, you unfortunately can't spot-reduce fat from one place only. For best results you need to both reduce the layer of fat over the top and tone the muscles lying under the fat. You can achieve this by burning up your fat stores through cardio exercise – walking, swimming, cycling or jogging – and following a healthy eating plan. To target the muscles that lie underneath the fat, try specific lower-body exercises to tone legs, bottom and thighs, such as squats, lunges and leg presses. Focus on high repetitions three times a week for the ultimate toning workout.

If your letter to Martha is published, you'll win a pair of women's sport shoes from Rykå. Don't forget to tell us your correct shoe size when you write in.



I carry excess weight on my legs, bottom and thighs. What's the best way to tackle it?

Virginia Kalota, Darling Heights, Queensland



nutrition

Which is the healthier option – wholemeal bread or multigrain? I always thought it was multigrain.

Helena Davidson, via email



Emma Stirling
Nutrition editor

The explosion of niche breads onto the market in recent years has made choosing your daily loaf much harder.

Rye, ciabatta, pita, soy and linseed, chia, muesli... now there's a bread for every occasion. Compelling research on heart health and cancer protection suggests we should all increase our wholegrain intake. To this end, the Australian body GoGrains (www.gograins.com.au) has set a daily target of 48g per day. Wholegrain foods contain all three layers of the grain and are rich in nutrients and protective antioxidants, such as vitamin E.

Multigrain and wholemeal breads both contain wholegrains, but the percentage varies, so check on the pack. Multigrain bread tends to be on a white flour base, whereas many heavier, wholegrain breads use a wholemeal flour. Wholegrains are milled to make wholemeal bread and flour. You can't see the grains, but all three layers of the grain are present.

I'd advise a dense, high-fibre bread with lots of visible grains to keep you feeling fuller for longer. Bread itself is not fattening – it's what is spread on top that counts.

Got a question? Email us at editor@weightwatchers.com.au or write to us at *Ask the Experts*, Locked Bag 2020, Broadway, NSW 2007, Australia.

cooking

I'm confused about all the different cooking oils. Which oil should I use for what cooking job?

Belinda Leedham, via email



Lucy Kelly
Senior food editor

I use extra virgin olive oil for most meals. It has a wonderful, full-fruit flavour and is delicious for roasting meat and vegetables, pan-frying lean meats, and making marinades and salad dressings. Other oils, such as rice bran, sunflower or safflower oil, are good for stir-fries because their flavour is milder and they have a high smoke point; ideal for a stir-fry or curry where extra virgin olive oil would be a waste. Other oils, like flavoured olive oils with herbs, garlic or lemon, are great for something different on your salad. Flaxseed oil can't be used to cook with and must be kept in the fridge, but has a great nutty flavour and is delicious drizzled over salads. It's also an excellent source of omega-3. I love avocado, grape seed, macadamia and other nut oils for dressings and marinades. Variety is the spice of life, so buy a few different oils and experiment. Make sure you store them in a dark cupboard as light reduces their shelf life.



If your letter to Lucy is published, you will win a TiVo digital recorder, which records, pauses and rewinds live TV, as well as Season Passes every episode in a series. Visit mytivo.com.au for more information.