
Fitness Tips

by Cari Draft Elliott, BS, CPT - ACE-Certified Personal Trainer

How can I get rid of belly fat?

Question: *I am overweight and I am working out everyday for an hour. I am getting rid of fat all over my body but my tummy is taking forever to show any difference. What is the best way to lose fat around my waist?*

Answer: You'll hear this over and over: You can't spot reduce. What you need is cardio, cardio, cardio. This helps you with the simple philosophy behind fat loss: Burn more calories than you take in. If your goal is fat loss, incorporate at least 6, 30-to-60-minute sessions per week into your schedule!

What's the best exercise and intensity to burn maximal fat? Researchers say that jogging at about 70% of your maximal heart rate, or MHR (subtract your age from 220 and multiply by 0.7 for your heart rate in beats per minute), was optimal, burning about 40 grams of fat per hour of exercise. Going above or below this intensity burned significantly less fat.

If you can stomach getting up earlier, do your cardio before your first meal of the day. Your body is most likely to use fat as the first energy source because your glycogen stores are depleted. If you're concerned with muscle loss, eat 10–20 grams of protein before your session.

Try your next outdoor run on sand, grass or dirt, which is more difficult than running on pavement, yet easier on the joints. Running on grass is also a welcome relief to joints and arches. Also try varying your cardio. Whether you're lifting weights or doing cardio, the trick is to keep your body from adapting to what you're doing. Regularly changing your cardio mode is the best way to keep your body responding to your efforts.

The best way to improve your aerobic fitness and burn fat is with intervals. That is, you alternate very intense periods of work with lower-intensity sessions in which you recover.

Try any or all of the above and you should see a significant improvement in the body fat collecting around your middle, as long as you're making healthy eating choices too!

Cari Draft Elliott is an ACE-Certified Personal Trainer who makes "house calls"! Please check out her website at www.oneononefitgirl.com and email your questions to cari@oneononefitgirl.com.
