

How long do you have to workout to lose belly fat?

—An expert weighs in

If you want to reduce the amount of belly fat you have, you may be wondering what you need to do when it comes to your exercise routine.

Contrary to popular belief, spot fat reduction doesn't work, and there isn't one perfect workout, exercise, or diet that will help you lose belly fat, according to Leanna Ross, PhD, exercise scientist at Duke University.

"There's not a one-size-fits-all program for everybody and it's going to depend on what your outcome of interest is going to be," Dr. Ross said. Fitness is complex, and when it comes to changing your body composition, there isn't a simple calculation that will get you closer to achieving your goals, she explained. "Yes, you want to try to eat a more balanced meal — the timing of those meals is going to be important — and your exercise patterns are going to be important, but I can't give a specific prescription for a bunch of different people that's going to work the same on everybody," Dr. Ross said.

Generally speaking, Dr. Ross recommends beginning with the goal of being physically active three days a week for those who are currently sedentary. Once you've become consistent with physical activity three days a week, Dr. Ross recommends working up to training five days a week

and following the [2018 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans](#).

These guidelines suggest adults do at least 150 to 300 minutes of moderate-intensity activity or 75 to 150 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic activity per week. This is anywhere from three to five days of aerobic activity, such as running, riding a bike, and swimming, Dr. Ross explained. "Trying to incorporate muscle-strengthening or resistance exercises at least twice a week, too, is an excellent goal to try to work toward," she added.

These recommendations promote being more physically active and "emphasize moving more and sitting less," the article in the Journal of the American Medical Association states. Consider walking to work, going on a bike ride, running, or doing yoga.

Workouts That May Help You Lose Belly Fat

Most experts agree that the "best" workout to lose belly fat is one you enjoy and are willing to stick to.

Specifically speaking, cardio workouts may help you burn belly fat because they tend to burn more calories than strength training, explained Jason Machowsky, RD, CSCS, a board-certified sports dietician and exercise

physiologist at the Hospital for Special Surgery's Tisch Sports Performance Center.

Strength training is also important because it can help you build muscle and improve your resting metabolic rate (how much calories/energy your body burns at rest) as a result. Because of this "You'll essentially be burning more calories, and that can potentially lead to overall weight loss, which includes fat as well," Rondel King, MS, CSCS, an exercise physiologist at NYU Langone's Sports Performance Center explains.

It is important to note that you may not see results in a few days or a few weeks, but that doesn't mean that you should get frustrated or give up. "even if you are not immediately seeing weight loss, your body is still undergoing these amazing changes and adapting to these new exercise habits," Dr. Leanna Ross said. "Exercise can be so beneficial for so many things even if you're not seeing an immediate drop in your body weight," she added.

*Information for this flyer was gathered from an article on popsugar.com <https://www.popsugar.com/fitness/photo-gallery/46561186/immune/46563448/Other-Factors-to-Consider-When-Trying-to-Lose-Belly-Fat>