

Body Composition

Determining body composition is an important part of determining an individual's physical fitness. It tells us how much of one's body weight is made up of pure fat and can describe what stages of risk one is in and therefore their vulnerability to disease. When measuring body composition, the most acceptable and used measurement is BMI. Body mass index (kg/m^2) is the evaluation of an individual and subsequent categorization into underweight, normal, overweight or obese by manipulating height (m) and weight (kg). Its only downfall is it does not account for body composition and is therefore frowned upon by some. Skin folds are another way of measuring body composition. By using a simple caliper gun in a few key areas on the body (Biceps, Triceps, Subscapular, Iliac crest, and Medial calf – sum in mm), body fat percentage can be calculated by using a simple equation that accounts for age, gender and weight. Waist circumference is measured around the top of the hipbones with a measuring tape. This is an important measurement because excess body fat around the waist is a severe risk for heart disease and other chronic illnesses.