

10 TIPS TO LOSE WEIGHT, GET LEAN AND GET TONED



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Introduction

If you're reading this, then you probably want to lose weight and get leaner and more toned! Perhaps you want to tone up your legs, your stomach, or your arms.

If you're like most people, you've tried dieting and learned the hard way that it doesn't work. You've been working out hard, but despite your best efforts, you haven't got the results you wanted and your body looks the same. You just haven't been able to achieve the lean, toned body you want. To make matters worse, surrounding you are ads for "miracle fat-burning supplements", "diet pills" and the like - plus celebrities endorsing the latest fitness product. "You can get a sculpted body in just 10 days with this fancy exercise gadget!" (For the right amount of money or advertising dollars people will say or promote just about anything). Then there's the magazine stories about the latest star who seemed to get back into shape within weeks after birth. It's frustrating and it's ridiculous.

This is a no-nonsense guide that has been written to help you de-bunk many of the myths and misinformation around weight loss and toning, and to help you understand how to lose weight and get toned in a healthy manner. To help you know what is fact and what is fiction. To help you to understand what is possible and what isn't. Most importantly, this guide will give you some key nutrition and exercise tips around HOW you can lose weight and get leaner and more toned.

This guide isn't full of tips, tricks and quick-fix secrets. Instead it is full of sensible, practical and scientifically proven advice that is implementable and will actually work if you're committed - so you can lose weight and get lean and toned like you want to.

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STARTING with the facts

There's no such thing as toning exercises - no particular exercise or combination of sets and reps can directly cause tone. No style or type of training that in itself allows you to tone up a specific area of your body (or your entire body for that matter). There's no magical method or workout that you can do. And no machines, products or supplements that can make you toned (despite the claims of the multi-billion dollar weight-loss and fitness industry).

You see, nothing tones or defines a muscle because nothing directly targets the fat covering the muscle you are training. Nothing can burn fat from one specific area of your body (spot reduction). Why? Because the human body is only capable of losing fat from the entire body as a whole. ^{1 2}

Certainly men and women are built differently and where men and women store and metabolise fat is different. Men tend to be naturally larger and have more muscle mass, whereas women are smaller and must maintain higher percentages of body fat to stay healthy and protect reproductive organs. Men tend to store fat (predominantly visceral fat – fat that collects around your organs) on their upper body and bellies. On the other hand, women tend to store fat (predominantly subcutaneous fat – fat directly under the skin) in the hips, butt and legs. But we're both made with the same basic building blocks and this means that it is not possible to target fat reduction in a specific area. Even though your body tends to deposit fat in certain areas, burning it off doesn't work the same way. This in turn means that **there is no such thing as losing fat from, and hence, toning a specific area. Sorry!**



WHAT is a toned muscle?

Everyone seems to have a different definition of what actually constitutes "toned". Most often when we use the word "toned" we just mean a state of body leanness (low body fat percentage). Noticeable muscle definition or shape. So Cameron Diaz, David Beckham, Fay Hokulani or Allan Wu are considered toned, but a sumo wrestler, weightlifter or american football linebacker aren't. They would be considered strong or muscular, but not necessarily toned.

Tone is just a matter of having some amount of muscle and then having a low body fat percentage so that muscle can be seen.

The more muscle you have and the less fat you have covering it, the more "toned" or "defined" or "cut" you will appear to be.

Conversely, the more fat covering your muscle, the less visible it will be and the less "toned" you will appear. (This is the main reason a person isn't as toned as they would like to be).



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THE SIMPLE ANSWER of how to get lean and toned

With the knowledge above, I hope you can now appreciate that when most people say they want to “tone-up”, what they’re actually saying is that they want to be able to see their muscle better than they currently do.

To do this you always need to do one or both of the following:

- Build (some) muscle
- Lose the fat that is covering your muscles so it can be seen (i.e. decrease your body fat percentage)

Muscle + less fat = tone. Simple.

The “muscle” portion of that equation comes from designing a proper weight training program like we do at Active8me. This concentrates on proper exercise selection and an ideal balance of frequency, intensity and volume that progressively and safely overloads the muscles.

The “less fat” portion comes from fat-burning exercises (cardio activity) and good nutrition – which is what Active8me’s exercise programs and meal plans provide.



WHY many women never get toned

When you're trying to lose weight there's nothing you want to see more than the number on the scales going down week after week. It's a gratifying sign that your persistence and hard work are paying off. However, a lot of women (and men too) try to starve themselves into weight loss. They focus so much on "calories in" (nutrition) and "calories out" (exercise) that they fail to appreciate how their bodies use calories.

You see it is your lean body mass (the muscles underneath your body fat) that burns calories 24/7. Our muscle tissue is very metabolically active (more active than fat tissue) which means that it requires a lot of energy (calories) for our bodies to maintain - more calories than fat requires. **So more muscle means you burn more calories, which then increases your metabolism** in the short and long term. This then helps you to continue burning more calories.

If you lose weight because you lose muscle you have not improved your body composition and you are setting yourself up for long-term failure. You are lighter without being leaner. You weigh less, but along the way you've lost much of the muscle mass you already had by not challenging your muscles. As a result your body might still be flabby because you still have more fat than muscle – "skinny fat" as some refer to it. With less muscle mass than you used to have, your metabolism is then going to slow and you're not automatically burning as many calories. It then becomes easier to put on body fat if you overeat just a little bit. This is the mistake made by a lot of people who are trying to lose weight and get toned.

There is a difference between losing weight and losing fat. If your objective in losing weight is generally to look better – to look lean and toned, then you're better off focusing on losing body fat (as opposed to just losing weight). This means you should actually aim to preserve or increase your lean muscle tissue at the same time as losing body fat. **Remember, muscle + less fat = tone.**

To help you do this (lose body fat and preserve or increase your muscle tissue) you should do some resistance/weight training. This type of training forces the body to maintain its muscle tissue, thereby burning more calories, as well as helping you to maintain a higher metabolism. This is the case even if you reduce your calorie intake with controlled nutrition. If you do this you're now burning more calories and

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eating less calories. You're losing body fat and maintaining or building your muscle. Remember - muscle + less fat = tone.

So if weight/resistance training is what women should be doing, why aren't they?

The reason is because most women fear getting too "big and bulky" or "muscly". It's a mistake to think like this and it is one of the most common misconceptions. Lifting weights or doing resistance exercises will NOT make you "get big or bulky" or look like one of those muscle-clad women on the cover of a body-building magazine – not even close! (Those masculine looking girls are often taking steroids and/or spending hours and hours in the gym everyday). Why? Because it is really difficult for a woman to develop muscles to look like that.

A further problem is that many women who do in fact do some resistance training often waste a lot of their time doing exercises that aren't actually helping them get toned. Because they're still worried about looking too "big and muscly" they'll do "light reps for high reps". Think about it. Is doing "light weights for high reps" helping you directly target the fat covering your muscles? No – fat-burning cardio exercise will do this (along with good nutrition of course). Or are you providing the type of training stimulus needed to actually build muscle in the first place? No. You are doing neither of the things that need to be done in order to get toned. (Beware - the same can often be said for yoga and pilates. They certainly have a place, but by themselves will not be the answer). Remember - muscle + less fat = tone.



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So if you've been avoiding doing any weights or resistance training then you're missing out on your body's most efficient fat-burner – muscle! Remember muscle burns more calories and helps you to maintain a higher metabolism. Not to mention, because muscle is denser it takes up less space than fat (take a look below). For example, two people may be the same height and weight, but the person with a higher body fat percentage will wear a larger clothing size.



Can you now see why many women's best intentions fail to deliver the results they want?

Whether you're looking to lose weight or get lean and toned (or both), then lean muscle is your friend. Don't lose weight by losing muscle as it will set you up for long-term failure. Make weight/resistance exercises a part of your training along with your fat-burning cardio-based workouts. Complement that with good nutrition and you will get the results you want.

To help you do that, here are 10 tips on nutrition and exercise to follow.



5 NUTRITION TIPS – to lose weight, get lean and toned

Here's some more guidelines for you to help you make those good choices. What not to do and what to avoid.

Nutrition Tip	Comment
<p>1. How much you eat matters</p>	<p>Nutrition is the most important thing in losing weight and decreasing your body fat percentage. This is because weight loss and reducing your body fat percentage is a very simple equation – calories in versus calories out. Or how many calories you eat compared with how many calories you burn. If you eat more calories than you burn, your body will store these excess calories and you'll gain weight.</p> <p>Because food occupies a much larger part of our lives than exercise, our weight loss is much more about nutrition and what we put in our mouths. (It is why people say weight loss is 80% nutrition and 20% exercise and why there's the saying "you can't outrun a bad diet").</p> <p>So how much you eat matters and you therefore need to pay attention to how much you are putting on your plate. You can use calorie trackers to do this accurately eg MyFitnessPal, or you can use some broad guidelines. At Active8me we have some very handy tips for you on how to do this.</p> <p>As a basic guide, one quarter of your plate should comprise lean protein, another quarter low-GI carbohydrates and the remaining half should be filled with vegetables or salad.</p> <p>So be conscious of your portion sizes to control your calorie intake.</p>

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2. What you eat matters

Not only does how much you eat matter, what you eat matters. If you want to look good and at the same time support your optimum health you need to focus on what you put in your mouth. That means choosing to get back to basics and eat clean by eating healthy whole foods in their most natural and unprocessed state.

Whole foods are the best source of complete nutrition for your body and contain less GMOs (genetically-modified organisms), preservatives and additives which promote weight gain. You see, just thinking about the number of calories you eat is not the entire picture. The quality of calories is just as important. For example, if one person ate 2000 calories worth of vegetables and other wholefoods every day for a month, and another person ate 2000 calories of sweets every day for a month, even though they both ate the same exact number of calories, there will most certainly be a difference in how much weight they gain over that period.

So nourish your body with the right fuel because what you eat matters.

3. Eat regularly

For many people this next tip is counter-intuitive and contrary to the misinformation they've read and what they've tried. Eating regularly though and not skipping meals is actually very important for supporting your weight loss and toning. This is because:

- Eating regularly keeps your metabolism high which promotes fat burning. This is because your body knows that more food is on the way and is more likely to burn the calories you consume rather than store them as fat.
- If you skip meals you tend to binge more. The longer you wait between meals, the lower your blood sugar drops and as a result the hungrier you get. This means it's more likely that you will then overeat as you grab whatever you can to refuel.

So eat smaller meals more regularly. And eat more during the day, when you most need it, and less at night, when you need less energy.



4. Drink up

The amount of water in the human body ranges from 50-75%. So is it any surprise that we should drink lots of water? You only need to observe a plant before and after watering and relate these benefits to your body and brain to appreciate this.

For weight loss and toning specifically, drinking lots of water is especially helpful because water has no fat, calories, sugar or carbs. This is in contrast to all other types of drinks that have lots of calories - sports drinks, fruit juice.

Water will also curb your thirst and appetite naturally. In fact, often we confuse being hungry with being thirsty. We think we're hungry, but actually we're just dehydrated. So drinking water is not only good for making sure we don't eat too much - it is the best way to do that naturally. Our bodies need it to rid the body of waste (by binding with soluble fibre to clean out your digestive track and then carrying it out in urine).



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5. Avoid most refined food and try and eliminate added sugars

Eating right is about choosing simple, unrefined and unprocessed food. Refined and processed foods are usually high in chemical additives, trans fats, salts and refined sugars. They make the food last longer and look pretty, however they don't give the body the nutrients it craves and are harder for the body to digest.

More importantly, for weight loss and toning, these added sugars (sucrose) spike your blood sugar levels (insulin spike) giving you that 'sugar high' followed by a sudden dip. The insulin spike tells the body's fat burning process to shut down so that the sugar that has just been ingested can be immediately used for energy. As soon as the body's energy stores are full, (which is easy to do with high sugar content foods) the excess sugars are converted by the liver into fatty acids (that's right - fat!) and returned to the bloodstream, where it is taken throughout your body and stored (that's right - as fat!)

But wait, there's more. The insulin spike is then followed by a dip. As your blood sugar levels fall it causes an immediate increase in appetite with can lead to overeating and more fat gain; and the stress hormone Cortisol is triggered so the liver can release stored sugar to bring blood sugar levels back up.

The combination of the initial sugar spike, the dip that follows (which could lead to over-eating from an appetite increase), and then the sugars released to bring the blood sugar levels back up to normal ... all contribute to fat storage and decreasing your metabolism cycle.

The takeaway for you - avoid most refined food and try and eliminate added sugars.

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5 EXERCISE TIPS – to lose weight, get lean and toned

Here are five tips around your exercise to help you build some (more) muscle and to stay motivated to do this over the long term:

Exercise Tip	Comment
Losing weight is a science - the calorie equation	<p>As stated previously, whether you're trying to lose weight or gain weight, it comes down to a simple equation - calories in vs calories out - how many calories you eat compared to how many calories you burn. If you burn more calories than you eat, you'll lose weight and vice versa. (There may be other minor factors that come into play, but this is the key point you need to know).</p> <p>It's this combination between exercise and nutrition that is the key. On the nutrition side we know that we want to eat good quality, calorie dense foods that give us the most nutrients for the fewest number of calories. Fresh wholefoods and not processed food with artificial ingredients and refined sugars is what you're looking for!</p> <p>On the exercise side, it might surprise you just how much exercise you have to do to burn off some common things – a glass of wine, a pastry or a bowl of chendol. Did you know that even three scoops of plain vanilla icecream contains approximately 300 calories which would require you to jog for 30 minutes to burn it off (when you jog you burn roughly 10 calories per minute)?</p> <p>So calories in versus calories out. Remember that exercise alone is not enough. You could workout all day every day, but if you overeat and make poor food choices, you'll remain overweight and untoned.</p>





Workout in the morning

Here are 5 reasons for working out in the morning:

1. Avoid being interrupted – most people who exercise regularly do it in the morning when there is less chance of things getting in the way to de-rail their workout.
2. Burn more fat – it has been shown that working out in the morning burns a higher percentage of fat than at any other time during the day. Jumpstart your metabolism in the morning so it stays elevated for longer and burns more calories throughout the day.
3. You can accomplish absolutely nothing else the rest of the day and still feel accomplished.
4. You're more likely to eat a better and healthier breakfast after a morning workout. And we know how important eating breakfast is! (Please note you should always eat something before you work out even if it is first thing in the morning).
5. Feel better – start your day in a great mood after the endorphin boost you'll get from your workout. You'll feel more energized, less stressed and more positive.

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Do weight/resistance training

To help you preserve or increase your lean muscle you should do some resistance/weight training. Muscle is your body's most efficient fat burner. Muscle burns more calories than fat which then increases your metabolism in the short and long term. This higher basal metabolic rate (BMR) then helps you continue to burn more calories ongoing. (Interestingly your BMR is the single highest component - upwards of 60% - of your total energy burned each day. Breathing, blinking, circulating blood, growing new cells, contracting muscles, supporting brain activity is hard work!)

Don't believe the common misconception that you'll get too "big and bulky" or "muscly". Weight training is your friend and a vital part of your overall program to lose weight and get lean and toned. (The other components are fat-burning cardio-based workouts and good nutrition).

Remember muscle + less fat = toned.

Do compound exercises

Design your workouts around compound exercises (exercises that involve multiple joints/muscles) rather than isolated exercises (exercises that work only one muscle/muscle group/joint at a time). This is because compound exercises demand that more muscles be used at the same time. As they recruit more muscle fibres throughout your entire body, they exert more systemic stress (the good kind of stress) throughout the target muscles and neighboring areas, thus producing a system-wide, or total-body effect. Your body responds by producing a flood of fat-burning hormones. Some examples of compound exercises include squats, chin-ups into burpees, lunges, deadlifts, bench press, bent over row, dips.

Isolated exercises (eg bicep curls, hamstring curls etc) simply can't accomplish the same level of results because they only work one muscle group at a time and can't recruit the same amount of muscle fibres. (Remember, spot fat reduction is not possible so if you're doing isolated exercises for this reason then you're wasting your time. Even though the body tends to deposit more fat in certain areas as opposed to others, burning it off does not work in the same way!)

So not only are compound exercises your biggest metabolic boosters, they have other additional benefits. They will help you save time; will help develop your stabilizer muscles; and tend to be more functional and practical because they more closely mimic the way our body moves and does daily activities. (Our body works as a whole, not in isolation).

Active8me workout programs are designed with all this in mind.



Do high-intensity interval cardio to burn fat

While all exercise will burn fat, not all exercise activities/intensities are created equal when it comes to burning fat. So just because an exercise burns calories doesn't mean it is the best way of lowering your body fat percentage to achieve the toned look you may be after.

For example, despite the claims of many in the fitness industry, long and low to moderate intensity cardio is not the most effective way to lose fat. While the science is technical and complicated, the answer is essentially the difference between percentages and absolute totals of fat burned.

At lower intensity levels, it is true that a higher percentage of your energy comes from fat during exercise. (This is because your body uses the "aerobic" manner in which to produce energy – it uses oxygen in the process). This does not mean, though, that doing this form of exercise necessarily uses as much total fat as does higher intensity exercise.

In contrast, higher intensity exercise (eg interval cardio - short bursts of high-intensity activity followed by a less intense period or rest) will skyrocket your heart rate and trigger your anaerobic metabolism. And importantly higher intensity exercise does this without eating away your muscle tone which we know is important as keeping your lean muscle allows you to burn more fat and calories throughout the day.

The physiological process which is triggered following high intensity bouts of exercise is referred to as EPOC (Excess Post Exercise Oxygen Consumption). This is better known as "afterburn". It occurs after an intense bout of exercise when your body is forced to go into oxygen debt because your body is actually using more energy than it can either produce or sustain. This in turn forces your body to expend more energy to make up for the metabolic deficit (energy is required to replace glycogen stores in the muscles and replenish the ACP/CP stores etc). This extra energy that is required to return your body back to its pre exercise condition is provided by your body fat and significantly it occurs post exercise.

You're effectively using your own body fat as the fuel to increase your own metabolism. The end result - you are burning more calories throughout the day. This is important because it is not just how many calories you burn during your actual workout. It is how many calories you burn throughout the day.

Remember, fitness is intensity dependent - NOT time dependent. And there are lots of ways to change your workout intensity - the



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amount of rest between exercises or intervals, the speed at which you perform those exercises, the amount of weight you use, the type of exercises you do (eg sprints versus slow jogging) and so on. Famous professional NFL player Deion Sanders once stated “I’ve seen plenty of fat joggers, but I’ve never seen a fat sprinter”. Food for thought!

So high intensity interval cardio training is your best way to burn fat. Combined with resistance/weight training to maintain or increase your lean muscle, you have the two building blocks for your exercise to help you maximize the calories you are burning. Remember the calorie equation – calories in (consumed) versus calories out (expended).



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Conclusion

At Active8me we get as frustrated as you with the myths, misconceptions and misinformation around weight loss and toning. So we hope this no-nonsense and practical guide will help you to navigate through all that frustrating nonsense and know what to do so that your great intentions and actions can result in getting the body you want.

We're not saying it is easy. It takes hard work, discipline and commitment. It takes changing some of your habits and changing your thinking.

But it is worth it! Not only can you look fantastic and feel more confident, but you will be healthier. At Active8me we believe that your health is something that is priceless as without your health you have very little. You can't buy it and you can't live life to the full without it! A wise person once said "Those who think they have no time for bodily exercise will sooner or later have to find time for illness".

So good luck on your journey. We hope that Active8me can be part of that journey and help you along the way.

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