

BODY MASS INDEX

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Each time a person hops on a scale, they receive a valuable piece of fitness information. In the big picture, however, a person's weight is only one piece of the puzzle because body weight measurements can be misleading. For instance, if two people each weigh 200 pounds, but one person is 6'5" and the other person is 5'2", their appearances and health profiles would be dramatically different.

It is therefore helpful to figure out your Body Mass Index (BMI) instead of relying on body weight alone. BMI factors in a person's height together with their weight to determine a healthy overall range. According to the U.S. Centers of Disease Control, the BMI calculation offers "one of the best methods for population assessment of overweight and obesity."

BMI Categories for Adults:

Below 18.5 = Underweight

18.5 - 24.9 = Normal

25.0 - 29.9 = Overweight

Above 30.0 = Obese

To calculate your personal BMI, use the following formula:

$$\text{BMI} = (\text{Weight} / \text{Height} \times \text{Height}) \times 703$$

If online calculators are more your style, log on to www.CDC.gov to access an automatic BMI calculator. All you need to do is punch in your height and weight to receive an instant BMI result. Like most things in life, nothing is perfect, and the Body Mass Index is no different.

Though helpful for most individuals, there are certain situations that may skew your results. For example, an overweight BMI calculation may occur in individuals with a high degree of muscle mass. Even if they have very low body fat, muscular individuals often have higher BMI readings because they tend to weigh more than what is considered "normal" for their height (muscle is more dense than fat).