

Men's Health



Lose the Ab Fat

Underneath every dad bod rests a ripped six-pack just waiting to make its debut. If you're having trouble losing the weight around your abdomen, it may be more serious than stubborn belly fat.

According to the Mayo Clinic, belly fat can signify severe medical conditions and increase the chances for men to develop cardiovascular disease, colorectal cancer, sleep apnea and high blood pressure.

If you're struggling to lose belly fat, age and genetics may play a role in your need to take your diet more seriously and participate in regular physical fitness.

AGE

The Harvard Medical School suggests that as we age, the proportion of fat to body weight begins to increase. When the extra pounds start to find their way to the midsection, serious medical conditions may occur. Abdominal, or visceral, fat is especially important to avoid as it is linked to heart disease, hypertension and insulin resistance.

Once it develops, this type of fat can be challenging to get rid of because it lies deep within the abdominal cavity, where it pads the spaces between abdominal organs.

DIET AND EXERCISE

The most effective way to cut the fat around your stomach is by sticking to a rigorous diet and exercise routine. Participate in physical activity for at least 30 to 60 minutes per day to control your weight and eliminate belly fat. Keep track of the calories you burn and challenge yourself to exceed your previous goals or records.

If you're unsure how the food you eat impacts your health and weight, see a nutrition specialist to design a diet that benefits your overall well-being.

When planning your diet, make sure to analyze your portion size and the types of nutrients you consume. A good practice is to invest in a food scale so you can measure out your portions and record your caloric intake during the busy workweek.

Set aside a time on your day off to meal prep as it can help you avoid making poor nutrition decisions throughout the week.



Lessen your Heart Disease Risk

Heart disease is the leading killer of both men and women in the United States. In 2017, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that it contributed to the deaths of 347,879 men, or about one in every four male deaths.

An effective way to monitor your heart health is by participating in regular wellness checks with your preferred medical provider. Under their watchful eye, a physician may recommend more regular examinations or recommend medicine or lifestyle changes to limit your risks. Whether you're already suffering from heart disease, or are adamant about avoiding it, use these tips from the United States National Library of Medicine to improve your heart health.

QUIT SMOKING

Smoking cigarettes is a direct contributor to the development of high blood pressure. This disease is known for increasing the chances of heart attack and stroke. If you're struggling to quit a tobacco habit, check out the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services for free tips and guidance to

find local resources.

An expert can give you the support you need when addressing addiction and may recommend medication to make the process easier.

REGULAR EXERCISE

In addition to lowering your weight for a better heart function, exercising also improves circulation and strengthens your cardiovascular muscles.

You don't have to be a marathon runner to gain significant cardio benefits. In fact, the American Heart Association suggests these guidelines for adult men:

- Perform at least 150 minutes per week of moderate-intensity aerobic activity, or exercise for at least 75 minutes per week of vigorous physical movements.
- Spend less time sitting. A

light-intensity activity can lessen the risk of becoming sedentary.

- Increase the amount and intensity of your workouts over time.

MANAGE STRESS

An intense feeling of stress can be a crucial trigger for a heart attack as it can raise a man's blood pressure. It is also associated with participating

in coping behavior that causes damage to our heart like heavy drinking, overeating or smoking. Find the stress management that works best for you by trying different exercises, mediation or simply finding time for yourself.

If you can't overcome the stress or anxiety that is inhibiting your life, don't hesitate to reach out to an expert in your area for therapy or assistance.



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Caffeine's Effects on Men

Many American men rely on the mental and physical boost they receive from caffeine. Whether it's consumed through coffee, energy drinks or pre-workout mixes, the potent stimulant helps maintain focus and increase alertness throughout the day.

The Food and Drug Administration estimates that 80 percent of adults ingest some form of caffeine every day.

According to The Harvard Medical School, the effects of caffeine can impact the central nervous system instantly and peak within an hour of consumption. The body ultimately eliminates half of it within four to six hours.

Since reactions can vary dramatically between people, studying its exact risks is challenging to medical and scientific experts. However, there are several factual statistics that provide a better perspective on the effects that caffeine has on men.

HEART FACTS

The Journal of the American Heart Association states that high doses of the natural stimulant can temporarily raise your heart and blood pres-



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sure, which is dangerous to those suffering from heart disease. On the contrary, regular consumption for those with healthy cardiovascular systems, won't disrupt the heart's rhythm enough to cause events like irregular patterns.

MEMORY

Experts have found that consuming caffeine can pro-

tect against dementia. In a study of adults aged 65 and older, the Journals of Gerontology: Series, found that those who ingested two to three eight-ounce cups of coffee for 10 years, reported fewer dementia symptoms. Those who ingested about a half-cup of coffee said that they experienced more signs of memory loss.

MANAGE YOUR INTAKE

If you rely on caffeine to propel you through your hectic schedule, you can gain peace of mind that it's safe by visiting your physician. Discuss your intake and ensure that it is not creating detrimental damage to your heart or body.

When consuming caffeine, it's essential to limit the sources you use for the stimulant.

Drinks like black coffee and numerous teas can provide health benefits, but you should limit how much cream or sugar you add to sweeten the taste. A study by the Journal of the American Medical Association suggests avoiding energy drinks, as too much can cause abnormal electrocardiograms after only two hours from consumption.

Skin Cancer

While melanoma and most skin cancers have a high success rate for a cure, men face more significant health risks than women, when it isn't treated early.

The Skin Cancer Foundation reports that males under the age of 49 have a higher probability of developing melanoma than any other cancer.

A particular age group at the most risk are men ages 15 to 39. The foundation suggests that of this group, American males are 55% more likely to die from melanoma than women in the same age group. Fortunately, the disease is highly preventable when you take the proper steps before spending time in the sun.

BY THE NUMBERS

To understand the dangerous link between men and skin cancer, check out these statistics reported by the American Academy of Dermatology.

- By the age of 50, men are more likely to develop melanoma than women.
- Men's skin contains more collagen and elastin, which makes UV rays more dangerous.
- A 2016 study showed that men were less educated about the dangers of the sun.



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PREVENTION

Regular wellness examinations are your best bet for discovering and treating skin cancer at an early stage.

You should also practice prevention when going outdoors. If you can't avoid the sun entirely, make sure to cover your exposed skin with a

broad-spectrum sunscreen with an SPF 15 or higher. If you are spending time in the water, use protection that provides a resistant barrier, even when wet.

You can also create more protection by wearing a broad-brimmed hat and UV-blocking sunglasses.

A GENETIC FACTOR

The most common form of skin cancer is called basal cell carcinoma, or BCC. The National Cancer Institute states that a family history of BCC can be a strong predictor of its development. When discussing your health concerns with a physician, be honest about the

history of cancer in your bloodline. They can create a protection strategy or insist on more frequent screenings.

Aside from a genetic association, those with a personal history of the cancer have about a 20% chance of the disease returning within the first year of a diagnosis.

Benefits of Yoga for Men

Of the 20.4 million people who participate in yoga, only 18% are men, according to a study by the Yoga Journal. Participating in the workout, however, offers numerous health benefits for men and women alike.

Mixing up your routines with a few yoga classes can significantly improve your body and mind.

If you're used to intense workouts that involve weightlifting or long-distance running, yoga can be a beneficial complement to release tightness that develops in your muscles.

The increased tension relief will enhance your fitness potential by creating a greater range of motion. Find a personal trainer in your area who specializes in yoga or sign up for a local class to learn how to unlock your true athletic form.

IMPROVES BREATHING

According to the American Lung Association, yoga involves breathing-based exercises that promote lung health and capacity. Many movements made during a yoga workout stretch and strengthen the muscles around the upper torso. In



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turn, these poses support the respiratory system by keeping the associated tissue strong and flexible.

Keep in mind, if you suffer from breathing problems like asthma or COPD, you should check with your physician before beginning a routine.

BALANCE YOUR MIND

Experts at Mental Health America state that yoga is

beneficial to the mind, especially for those who suffer from depression, anxiety or post-traumatic stress disorder. Researchers credit the relaxation response as the practice that leads to better physical and mental health.

Psychology Today reports that relaxing yourself deeply into a yoga pose changes the firing pattern of the body's nerve and chemical makeup.

When concentrating on our posture and alignment, adrenaline development halts, and our body stops releasing fatty acids and sugar into the bloodstream. The result of the change of nerve firing causes relaxation in the brain, heart and muscles.

PHYSICAL BENEFITS

When practicing yoga, the body also receives numerous

health benefits. Check out the physical changes you can feel, as reported by the American Osteopathic Association.

- Increased muscle strength and tone.
- Maintaining a balanced metabolism.
- Less chronic back pain, arthritis and headaches.
- Lower blood pressure and less insomnia.

Men's Health Month

Mark your calendar for June to celebrate Men's Health Month and plan to change your life with healthier behaviors.

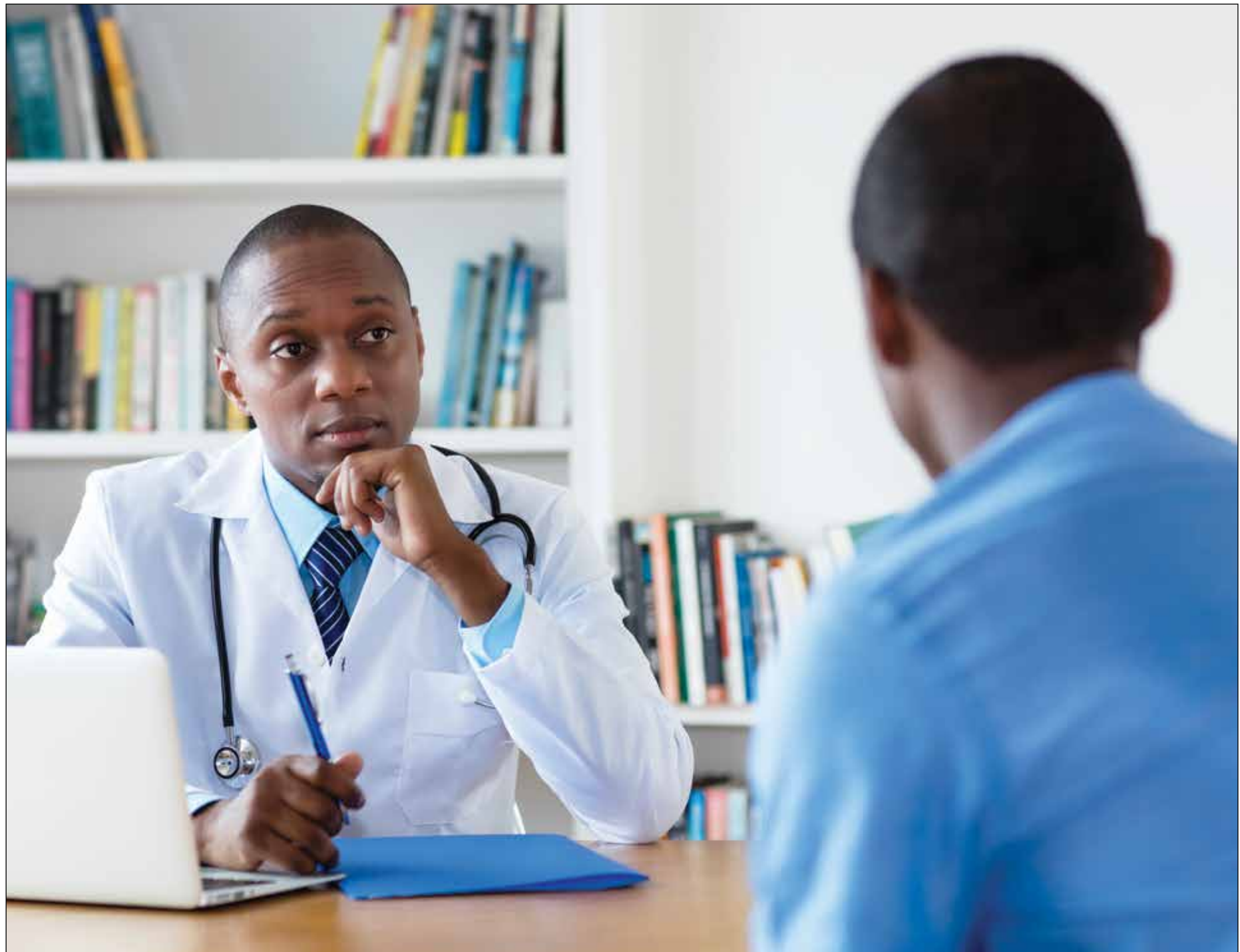
The purpose of the month-long celebration is to heighten the awareness of preventable health problems and encourage early detection of disease among men and boys.

If you have been putting off health screenings, make 2020 the year that you begin an annual physical routine. The types of tests that should be conducted will vary depending on your age and family medical history. If you don't currently have a practicing physician, Men's Health Month is an opportune time to get serious about a healthier lifestyle.

CHOOSING A PHYSICIAN

When searching for a primary care doctor, there are numerous factors for you to consider. For instance, you will want to select a physician who practices in an area that is convenient for you to visit. Since they are responsible for your everyday care, it's essential that the office is located near places you frequent, like the home or office.

You should also ask your potential caregivers if they accept your current health insurance provider. By choosing a doctor who is outside of your plan's network, you may



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incur additional expenses.

It's also imperative that you feel comfortable in the presence of your physician. Conversations about health concerns can be incredibly personal and difficult to discuss. It's easier to have an open and honest discussion with a healthcare expert once

you've built a comforting relationship.

AGE-SPECIFIC SCREENINGS FOR MEN

Annual wellness exams are crucial to catching and resolving issues before they become dangerous.

The United States National

Library of Medicine states that suggests that the necessary screenings can vary drastically based on age and your family's medical history.

Here are some age-specific screenings you should expect. **Ages 18-39:** blood-pressure, cholesterol, diabetes, testicular exam. **Ages 40-64:** colorec-

tal cancer, osteoporosis, prostate cancer, lung cancer.

As you age, the need for different types of screenings increases. Based on the current state of your health, your health care provider will determine the frequency and need for various kinds of examinations.

Health and your Career

If you're struggling to find happiness in your career, the condition of your health can be a significant factor that's holding you back.

The National Career Development Association reports a direct connection that healthy lifestyle habits impact work behavior with better posture, stress levels, attitude and energy.

Whether you are trying to break into a new industry or flourish in your current career path, taking your health seriously will significantly improve your performance.

JOB SEEKERS

For those who are seeking employment, practicing healthy behaviors is incredibly important. Improving your physical fitness can change the perception of your self-image, giving you confidence when meeting with different hiring managers. Make sure to incorporate beneficial sleeping habits to ensure you're well-rested before tackling each day's job-hunting challenges.

CURRENT EMPLOYEES

Since the connection between health and productivity is becoming more relevant, it's likely your workplace offers advantages through wellness programs.

Check with your human



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resources department for plans like discounted gym memberships, incentives to lose weight or quit smoking and healthy eating challenges.

Participating in opportunities presented by your employer shows a commitment to perform at your best for the overall wellness of the company. Engaging in these programs can also allow you to

network with other employees and introduce opportunities to socialize with managers and leaders.

HEALTHY HABITS BEGIN AT HOME

To put your best foot forward in the workplace, building a healthy lifestyle at home is a significant first step. Follow these tips from the

NCDA to boost your overall health and impact your work performance.

Eat fresh. When grocery shopping, stick to the perimeter of the store. That's generally where you will find fresh meat, fruits and vegetables and non-processed lunch meats.

Use body weight. If you can't afford a gym member-

ship, use your own body to create resistance during your workout. Moves like pushups, planks, burpees and sit-ups can target muscles and increase your heart rate.

Participate in work gatherings. Your stress levels at the office can be lowered by attending counseling and career development activities outside of the office.