

[IMAGE]

A Narrow Focus

People diet for many reasons. Maintaining sound health may be the most important reason, but many people also diet to look good, or to fit into a particular outfit. If you are simply eating less to attain this goal, you might be taking the wrong path to getting leaner.

A study released earlier this year in *Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise* investigated the response of abdominal fat related to exercise by young men. Thirty obese men (average age: 20 years) were examined before and after four months of disciplined training in the Singapore Armed Forces, and compared to another 30 men of similar age and body composition not undergoing training. Researchers also focused on overall fat mass, muscle mass and percentage of body fat based on skinfold measurements.

Besides losing an average of 26 pounds during training, the soldiers also maintained their muscle mass, which remained unchanged. Most importantly were the significant reductions observed in waist and hip circumference through fat loss, and the relationship between them. Waist circumference was reduced significantly more than hip circumference - 14% compared to 8%.

In other words, fat loss was clearly the most pronounced around the waistline due to working out. This may not be the case for weight loss from dieting alone, which can also cause the loss of some muscle mass. The most successful long-term dieters often cite one common element to their success: an ongoing exercise regimen. Be sure to combine an exercise program with your diet for not only lasting results, but also fat loss focused on your midsection.

Reference:

Mayo MJ, Grantham JR, Balasekaran G. Exercise-induced weight loss preferentially reduces abdominal fat. *Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise* 2003;35(2), pp. 207-213.

For more tips on sports and exercise, check out www.chiroweb.com/find/tellmeabout/sports.html.

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