



Female Fat Loss

10 Tips for You from Metabolic Effect

Yes, it's true – female physiology is different to male! Different hormone ratios for different roles coupled with years of the 'Eat Less Exercise More' weight loss diet mantra can mean that for many of us, our bodies have stubborn areas of fat that just won't shift, or even that you are struggling to shift any weight at all! Here are some thoughts on some long-term lifestyle changes to address fat loss as a female, courtesy of our friends at Metabolic Effect.

1] Lift heavy weights. You have heard it before and you still don't believe it! Women want to tone, yes? Guess what—if there is no muscle to be toned, then the whole thing is an impossibility anyway. 100 reps using a 2kg DB will only build muscular endurance, not volume nor definition. Incorporating heavier weights in your lifting regimen will not only build the lean muscle needed to see visible definition, but affect hormones like growth hormone and testosterone that can increase your fat burning potential while at rest.

2] A healthy diet is not the same as a fat loss diet. Many believe that if they eat healthily, they will lose fat. And almost anyone you ask claims they eat well. Yet so much of our population is overweight or obese, so there is an obvious discrepancy here. The easy explanation for this is that most people overestimate the healthiness of their diet, which is usually true. However, the more important distinction is that "healthy" eating and fat loss eating is not the same thing. And if you are eating healthy, you are not necessarily going to be burning fat. There are several foods and food groups that are healthy—meaning they contain high amounts of vitamins and minerals as well as healthy fiber or good fats—but will do very little to help burn fat. These foods include dairy, soy, nuts, higher GI fruits (pineapple, mango, grapes, banana), whole grains (include cereals, cereal bars), and protein bars & shakes (these are great but check their carb content - some protein bars have a surprising amount of sugar in them). Be mindful of how foods make you feel - you will have a highly individual response to foods.

3] Customize your approach—find your unique Female Fat Loss Formula. This is an extension of #2 above, and it has to do with hormones. For example, different women store fat differently. Some have lean upper bodies and cannot budge fat from hips, thighs and glutes, while others have lean arms and legs and carry almost all their fat in their middle. What's going on? There is no one-size-fits-all plan, and each woman's response to exercise and diet is completely her own. To assess your specific sensitivities, you must be in tune with your

body. The idea that food has an effect on how you feel – energetic or tired, moody or happy, cravings or satisfied, sick or healthy, etc is completely foreign to many people. In order to understand how food and activity affects you, ask yourself: what foods or activities affect my fat loss? How do I look, feel and function after eating or drinking something? Am I tired or energetic today? What did I eat or do differently that might be making me feel that way? How do I feel when I eat carbs versus protein versus fat? How do my clothes fit? Also, take a look at your schedule and figure out what 1 or 2 reasonable steps you can take to implement the fat loss lifestyle. It is all about finding what works for you—there is no “right way,” only what is effective for you.

4] Address your oestrogen to progesterone ratio. If you are someone who stores fat in your lower body and/or breasts (hour-glass+), your oestrogen to progesterone ratio may be elevated, affecting your ability to burn fat. In order to lower oestrogen relative to progesterone, increase foods that help detox oestrogen like cruciferous veggies (broccoli) and green tea. Limit non-organic coffee (or cut coffee out altogether!), limit your exposure to pesticides by incorporating more organic foods and avoid drinking out of plastic bottles/microwave cooking in plastic if possible. Also, high cortisol levels from stress may impact this ratio, so try to lower cortisol by walking, doing restorative activities like yoga and Tai Chi, and having quiet 'me' time to destress/recover. Implementing high intensity exercise like weight-training and HIIT can help lower cortisol over time, as well as increasing testosterone, a fat-burning/muscle-building hormone that women need to help burn fat. For those who suffer with choc cravings at the time of the month, try a hot cocoa drink - no milk or sugar, just water mixed with pure cocoa powder. Not quite the same as a Costa Hot Choc with marshmallows, but can address neurotransmitter imbalances & reduce cravings.

5] Get enough protein. Foods containing higher protein content slow the absorption of carbohydrate into the blood, preventing major dips in energy while also keeping you fuller for longer. Higher protein foods also utilize more calories during the digestion and absorption process (protein has a higher thermic effect of food). For women, protein means lean muscle maintenance—a huge factor for a healthy, fat-burning metabolism. I recommend trying to get 1g of protein per pound of body weight; try 5-6 small meals, each containing 20-25g of protein.

6] Coax the legs/glutes/thighs out of hiding using training techniques. Admittedly, this is not one of the easiest feats, but using training strategically can get the stubborn fat in these areas moving (along with sound nutrition). Alongside your ME session, try leg training varying the reps, sets, load, frequency of training. The underlying principle is variety. Example: Begin with 4-6 weeks of training legs very heavy 1x/week, 6-8 reps per movement, using big compound movements like barbell squats & lunges and leg presses. Then move to 2x/week with moderate weight, 8-12 reps for 4-6 weeks, using step-ups, walking lunges, split squats & single-leg movements. Finally, move to 3x/week with moderate to lighter weight, 12-15 reps incorporating plyometrics, bodyweight exercises and fast-moving circuits for 4-6 weeks. Rest completely

for 2 weeks and begin again. Systematically changing up the protocols help force the legs to respond by building lean muscle, while giving up fat stores.

7] Do intense cardio intervals 2-3x/week - yes ME fits here. No more (you know who you are!!), no less. Intense interval training or HIIT is more effective at boosting fat metabolism over longer duration moderate intensity cardio. No more reading a book while you pedal on a bike at the gym for an hour. The most effective fat-burning cardio is short & nasty (20-30 mins max). ME allows the intensity to be self-regulated and safe because you control it, so fitness level is irrelevant. The key is to use the B's & H's to (Burning muscles, Breathless, Hot (sweaty!), Heavy DBs) generate the correct effect and monitor your intensity. Take at least 1 day off in between these intense cardio sessions for best results (weight-lifting or walking on off-days is fine).

8] Keep nutrition clean 90% of time. And 10% of the time, indulge in the foods you feel like you miss or love. Save your treats for just once or twice a week - don't deprive yourself, but don't binge either. Always try to ask yourself what is "worth it" and go find that. Don't just stuff your face with cake at the office just for the sake of cheating...make a ritual of enjoying the 1 or 2 things you simply love. This method of 'reward meals' works best when you are clean on your nutrition plan 90% of the week, counting your starchy carbs. The reward meals help reset key regulatory hormones to ignite a sluggish metabolism, and the rewards also act as a psychological reminder of how bad eating crap can make you feel once you have adopted a clean, consistent nutrition plan

9] Monitor alcohol intake. Ladies, we love our beer/wine/cider/vodka (not necessarily all together....). But if you are serious about losing fat, this needs to be monitored. For all intents and purposes, much of the calories from alcohol are metabolized directly into fat storage. Not to mention, alcohol affects electrolytes and can have you retaining water for several days after a boozy night. For best results, limit alcohol intake to 1 night per week (maybe as part of your reward meal?), and TRY to keep it to a 2 drink maximum.

10] Do not starve yourself. The "eat less" diet does not work in the long run and can at best turn an overweight apple shape into a smaller apple shape. Cutting calories (i.e. the weight loss approach) does little to improve body composition and will lead to muscle burning, and a slowing of the metabolism. Eating a small protein-and-veggie-rich meal every 2-3 hours helps to preempt hunger and cravings, stabilizing blood sugar and allowing your body to easily give up its fat stores without worrying when the next meal is coming. Us ladies like to sometimes drink our cravings and hunger away using coffee, diet drinks and wine...this does not work in the long run. Next time you are hungry, eat. And eat one of your ME meals: lean protein, green veggies and your allotted number of starch bites. Don't grab a diet coke to get through the afternoon—in the end, this will have you craving sugar, fat and salt at the end of the day when our exhaustible self-control is nowhere to be found. Use preemptive eating strategies to accelerate your fat loss.