

What is obesity?

Overweight and obesity are characterised by excess body weight and excessive balance of energy intake vs energy expenditure with Body Mass Index (BMI) commonly used as the criterion to define these conditions. A BMI over 25 is classified as overweight, whereas obesity is measured as a BMI over 30. The formula is $BMI = \frac{kg}{m^2}$ where kg is a person's weight in kilograms and m² is their height in metres squared.

Being overweight and obese is linked to numerous chronic diseases, including CVD, diabetes, many forms of cancer, and numerous musculoskeletal problems.

How does exercise help with obesity?

Diet and exercise both play a part in helping a person to achieve a healthy weight. A weight loss of 5% to 10% provides significant health benefits, and these benefits are more likely to be sustained through the maintenance of weight loss and/or participation in habitual physical activity.

For adults who are overweight or obese an individualised approach to increasing physical activity is best achieved through exercise supervised by a professional.

Tertiary-trained exercise professionals, such as Accredited Exercise Physiologists are best suited to assist those with obesity, by prescribing and delivering exercise consistent with best practice.

Things to remember

Individuals who are overweight or obese may have chronic muscle or joint pain and have a reduced range of motion. They could also be at risk of developing lower back pain or arthritis. This needs to be considered before engaging in physical activity, however should not discourage anyone from exercising right for their uniqueness.

What type of exercise is best for obesity?

Primary mode of exercises should include a combination of [aerobic](#) and [resistance training](#). The format of these session should be based on exercising at the right intensity and duration to maximise energy expenditure during exercise.

Exercise Right recommends exercises such as water activities (e.g. hydrotherapy), sitting aerobics and stationary cycling.



Always seek professional advice from an Accredited Exercise Physiologist. Find one here: www.essa.org.au/find-aep