



I woke up like this.

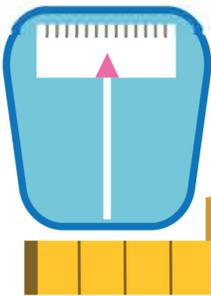
Weight management over age 50

Do you have the creep? You know: the middle-age weight gain that creeps up on you and turns your scale from friend to foe. If so, you are not alone. According to the National Institutes of Health, the average young adult gains 30 pounds by the time he or she turns 50.

Why, Oh Why, Do We Gain Weight as We Age?

For starters, your metabolism really does change, so you don't need to eat quite as much as you used to. You burn fewer calories with the same amount of activity (ouch!). You also lose lean muscle mass, which helps burn fat, and your body breaks down food differently as you age. Hormones, genetic factors and lifestyle factors (for example, too little physical activity) may also play a role.

Tips for Battling the Bulge



It's frustrating for sure, and while middle-aged spread is common, it's not inevitable or permanent. Even if you've already added a few extra pounds, you CAN do something about it.

Determine what a healthy weight is for YOU.

Your doctor can help you determine if you are overweight or obese and what you should target as a healthy weight. An online BMI calculator can also help. BMI—body mass index—is a measurement of body fat that compares your height to your weight. A normal BMI is 18.5 to 24.9.



Establish healthy eating habits.

According to the Mayo Clinic, you may need about 200 fewer daily calories in your fifties than you did when you were younger. The quickest way to eliminate unnecessary calories is to give up (or reduce your intake of) sugary drinks, such as soda, fruit juice or energy drinks.

Eating healthy is not a diet; it's a lifelong way of eating that embraces lots of different kinds of foods. Once you have a target healthy weight, you can determine how many calories you should consume to maintain your current weight or to lose weight. In general, men and women over 50 should consume 2,000 or 1,600 calories per day, respectively, if they are not very active, and up to 2,800 or 2,200 if they are very active.

Not sure how many calories you are consuming? Keep track of all the food you eat for a week. You'll quickly see if you're eating more than you should be. Make small incremental changes in your diet. For example, add a few more vegetables and eat slightly smaller portions. Over time, these changes will add up.

Move more. You knew this was coming. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends adults get about two and a half hours per week of moderate-intensity aerobic activity or 75 minutes of vigorous activity and strength-training exercises twice a week. You don't have to run a marathon. Brisk walking is great exercise, and you can do it with a partner. Remember: It's never too late to start moving.



Grab a partner.

Do you have a partner who's also gained a few extra pounds? Join forces. You're more likely to go for a walk on your lunch break or pass on that slice of cake if you know you're accountable to someone else—and they to you. Having a partner can provide an extra boost of motivation and support to help you both lose weight and—more importantly—set a new course for health and wellness.

Maintaining a Healthy Weight Can Help You Prevent or Control Many Diseases, Including:

- ♥ Heart disease
- ♥ High blood pressure
- ♥ Type 2 diabetes
- ♥ Gallstones
- ♥ Breathing problems
- ♥ Certain cancers



ACTION ITEMS

Ready to conquer the creep? Start by talking to your doctor, especially if you haven't been physically active. Your physician can give you a target weight, make recommendations for safely increasing your activity levels and refer you to a nutritionist to develop a sustainable, healthy eating program.