

Completely Well

Monthly Wellness Briefs

February 2025



This Month

February is American Heart Month

According to the CDC “One person dies every 33 seconds in the United States from cardiovascular disease.”

High blood pressure, high blood cholesterol, and smoking are major risk factors for heart disease. Other lifestyle choices and medical conditions that put people at a higher risk for heart disease include Diabetes, overweight and obesity, unhealthy diets, physical inactivity and excessive alcohol use.

Although high blood pressure or high cholesterol may be genetic, you can improve your heart health by eating healthy, getting exercise, and managing your stress. If your health practitioner recommends it, then you should also carefully monitor and manage your blood pressure and cholesterol using health lifestyle choices and possibly medication.

Build Muscle or Burn Fat

So, which is better? To lose fat first or to build muscle first? It turns out that the decision to focus on building muscle or burning fat first depends on your specific goals and individual circumstances.

Building Muscle First:

- If your primary goal is to build muscle and increase overall muscle mass, it may be beneficial to focus on strength training and resistance exercises. Keep in mind that muscle weighs more than fat so if you are focused on building muscle mass, then you may not see a shift in your scale results.
- Increasing muscle mass can have positive effects on your metabolism. Muscle is metabolically active tissue, meaning it burns more calories at rest compared to fat. By building muscle, you can potentially increase your resting metabolic rate, which may help with long-term fat loss goals.
- Building muscle can help improve body composition by reducing body fat percentage and increasing muscle definition and tone. Your clothes may fit better, and you may look more fit.
- Remember that in order to build muscle you may need to consume more calories so that you have the necessary energy and nutrients for muscle growth.

Burning Fat First:

- If your primary goal is to lose excess body fat, focusing on fat loss first may be more appropriate. Prioritizing fat loss doesn't mean neglecting strength training. Typically, you will need to consume fewer calories than you burn. It's best to achieve this through a combination of diet and exercise.
- Losing excess body fat can have numerous health benefits, including improved insulin sensitivity, reduced risk of chronic diseases, and better cardiovascular health.
- Losing body fat also may help to make your fitness routine more comfortable for you.
- When you reduce your body fat, the muscles beneath the fat layer can become more visible. Your muscles will look defined, and you will have a leaner appearance overall.

Muscle building and fat loss can be achieved simultaneously to some extent, especially for beginners or those returning to exercise after a period of inactivity. Consulting with a fitness professional or registered dietitian can provide personalized guidance based on your specific needs and help you develop a comprehensive plan that aligns with your goals.



Feeling Overwhelmed? Try Mindful Attention to help de-stress.

If you are feeling overwhelmed, ***choose one simple task from your to-do list to focus on.***

Forget all of the rest of your list for a while, and complete your task while being mindful of the complete process that you use to finish it.

You will have one less task on your to-do list, and you should feel less overwhelmed.