

Volunteer Leaders Training Guide

Are You an Apple or Pear?

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Introduction

Did you know that you can predict your own health future just by looking in the mirror? Well, you can. All you have to do is determine how your body is storing fat.

There are two standard body types. The apple body shape is larger around the midsection with thinner limbs. The pear body shape has a defined waist and heavier bottom, thighs and legs. Other shapes are just variations of one of these two body types. Many research studies conclude that people with apple-shaped patterns of body fat are more likely than those with pear-shaped figures to develop high blood pressure, excess cholesterol and high blood sugar.

Target Audience

- EHC leaders
- Adult audiences

Objectives

- Participants will learn that fat distribution in the body can be linked to serious medical conditions, depending on the shape of the body.
- Participants will learn the different body shapes.
- Participants will learn types of exercises appropriate for the different body shapes.

Handouts

- Handout 1: Your Body Shape
- Handout 2: Are You an *Apple* or Pear?
- Handout 3: Are You an Apple or *Pear*?

Suggestions for Teaching

- Review the lesson introduction and study the major teaching points.
- Make copies of :
 - Handout 1: Your Body Shape
 - Handout 2: Are You an *Apple* or Pear?
 - Handout 3: Are You an Apple or *Pear*?

What Is Your Body Type?

Have you ever noticed that your body shape is quite different from that of your best friend, sister or coworker? Have you been wondering why some people have that hourglass figure, while others are more pear-like in appearance? Well, this is because every man and woman is born with a specific body type and body shape. Depending upon your genetics, exercise routine and diet, your body shape may be quite different from those around you. Not everyone likes the body type or shape they are born with, but there are ways to make the most of what you have.

Everyone is born with a different body type. This is why every man and woman has a different body shape and develops different levels of body fat and muscle mass. Your body type is completely determined by genetics. You will probably share the same body type as one of your parents or your sister or brother. Because body type is a genetic trait, it is usually very difficult or impossible to change body types.

Three Body Types

- **Endomorphs:** Endomorphs tend to have bigger bones than the other body types. These men and women usually have round faces with larger thighs and hips. Endomorphs have arms and legs that tend to be short and tapering, giving them a stocky appearance. Most endomorphs have comparatively small hands and feet and a high waist. Additionally, endomorphs have higher levels of body fat than the other body types, but they can also build muscle and lean mass easily. Weight loss is most difficult for the endomorph body type.
- **Mesomorphs:** Mesomorphs are usually described as having an athletic build. They often have an hourglass or ruler shape and gain muscle mass easily. The majority of mesomorphs have broad shoulders and a narrow waist. They have a fast metabolism and can lose weight more easily than endomorphs.
- **Ectomorphs:** Ectomorphs have a thin, linear appearance. Most ectomorphs look like rulers, with narrow waists, hips and shoulders. Ectomorphs can lose weight easily and tend to have low levels of body fat. However, they also have a harder time gaining lean muscle mass.

Few people actually fall distinctly into one category. Instead, it is much more likely that you will be a combination of the body types. Common combinations include ecto-mesomorph and endo-mesomorph.

What Is Body Shape?

In addition to your body type, you will also find that you have a distinct body shape. Your body shape is based upon the size of your physical features and the overall balance of your body. Men and women tend to have different body shapes. Men are often described as having a rectangular shape or a cone shape. Women are typically described as having hourglass, pear, apple or ruler body shapes.

Four Body Shapes

- **Hourglass:** Women with an hourglass shape are often envied by all of their friends. Simply because hourglass figures have well-proportioned upper and lower bodies with a distinctively narrow waist. However, if you are an hourglass, you may find that you tend to gain weight all over your body, particularly in your hips and chest area. Hourglass figures tend to be endomorphs or mesomorphs.

- **Pear:** Pear-shaped women tend to have larger lower bodies and smaller upper bodies. If you are a pear, you will find that your hips are slightly wider than your shoulders and that you tend to gain weight below your waist. Pears usually have small chests and flat stomachs. Most pears are mesomorphs.
- **Apple:** Apples are generally bigger on the top half of their bodies than on the bottom half. They commonly have slim hips and a large chest and stomach. Apples tend to gain weight above the waist or along the backside. The majority of apples are mesomorphs or endomorphs.
- **Ruler:** Women with a ruler shape tend to be waif-like and slim. Rulers have no large differences between the size of their hips, waists and shoulders. Rulers tend to put on weight in their stomach and backside while maintaining slender arms and legs. Most rulers are ectomorphs.

Making the Most of Your Shape

Though you may not be 100 percent satisfied with your body type or shape, there are ways that you can help make the most of your body's characteristics. Here are some exercises you can perform that will aid in toning your body, whatever your shape.

If you are an **Hourglass**, you should focus on both cardio and resistance exercises. Cardio will assist in keeping your weight in check, while resistance exercises will help maintain balance between your upper and lower body. Vary your repetitions and keep your resistance weights light to avoid building too much muscle mass. Here are some great exercises to try:

- Jogging slow
- Stationary biking (with light resistance)
- Jumping jacks
- Swimming
- Bicep curls, shoulder presses
- Squats
- Jumping rope with a speed or peg rope
- Fast walking with little to no incline
- Elliptical machines with no resistance
- Upper body routine with a 4-pound aerobic bar, doing push-outs, behind-the-neck presses, front presses, upright-rows, triceps' kickbacks
- Leg extensions and leg curls with light and high weight repetitions

If you are a **Pear**, you should focus on exercises that will balance out the top half of your body with the bottom half of your body. You will also want to try to thin down your lower half. To achieve this, focus on aerobic activities that work your lower body and resistance exercises that build your upper body. Use light weights and perform high repetitions of exercises. Here are some great exercises to try:

- Walking
- Cycling (with low resistance)
- Elliptical training
- Jumping rope
- Leg lifts and dips
- Push ups, chin ups and shoulder presses

If you are an **Apple**, you should focus on aerobic training in order to slim down and lose body fat. By working on the lower half of your body, you can help balance out your chest and shoulders. Look to perform exercises that are low resistance and involve low repetitions. Here are some great exercises to try:

- Stair climbing
- Walking on an incline
- Running
- Leg squats
- Leg presses
- Dead lifts

If you are a **Ruler**, you are able to perform any type of activity. Perform cardio activities to help lose weight in problem areas, such as the buttocks and stomach. You will especially want to build muscle mass through resistance exercise. To ensure that you build a symmetrical body shape, all of the muscle groups should be emphasized and routinely given a workout. Here are some great exercises to try:

- Stretching
- Sit-ups
- Step classes
- Spinning
- Walking or jogging on an incline
- Squats
- Bench presses and shoulder presses

Body Measurements

Your Body Mass Index (BMI)

Body mass index (BMI) goes beyond the traditional height and weight chart to reveal the proportion of fat to muscle and bone in your body. According to the National Institutes of Health (NIH), individuals with a BMI of 25 to 29.9 are considered overweight, while individuals with a BMI of 30 or more are considered obese.

It is important to remember that BMI measurements may be misleading for certain people. Since muscle weighs more than fat, athletes and body builders may have high BMIs. BMI is not intended for pregnant or lactating women, growing children or frail and sedentary seniors.

Your Waist Size

A second indicator of your body's fat level and pattern is your waist size. To accurately measure the circumference of your waist, you will need a flexible measuring tape with inch markings.

First, locate your waistline by looking in a full length mirror. Your waistline is between your navel and the bottom of your rib cage, where your midsection is at its narrowest point. Holding the end of the tape at the center of your waistline, pull it all the way around and back to the

starting point. The tape should be parallel to the floor and not too tight. The number that lines up with the tape's leading edge is your waist size in inches.

According to the National Institute of Health (NIH), a waist size of 35 inches or more in women and 40 inches or more in men increases your risk of developing cancer, heart disease and diabetes.

Your Waist-to-Hip Ratio (WHR)

While you have that measuring tape handy, locate the point below your waist where your hips are at their widest point. Hold the tape's starting tab at the center of your hipline and wrap the tape around your hips and buttocks, keeping the tape parallel to the floor. The number that lines up with the starting point of the measuring tape is your hip measurement.

To calculate your waist-to-hip ratio (WHR), divide your waist measurement by your hip measurement. For both women and men, a WHR of 1.0 or higher is considered "at risk" for developing health complications associated with being overweight or obese. A healthy target for women is a WHR of 0.8 or less and for men 0.9 or less.

Lowering Your Health Risk

If you are concerned about these indicators of body fat levels and fat distribution, you may be motivated to make some healthy changes in your eating and exercise habits. A good place to start is to consult with your physician. He or she can help you figure out a weight loss plan, as well as give you tips on healthy eating and exercise. Even modest weight reduction will help reduce your chances of developing a chronic health condition that could compromise your quality of life.

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