

Bye bye belly fat

Aerobic exercise, not weight training, is your best bet when it comes to saying goodbye to that dreaded belly fat, a new study finds.

This isn't the fat that lies just under your skin and causes the unsightly muffin top. Belly or abdominal fat—known as visceral fat and liver fat—is located deep within the abdomen and fills the spaces between internal organs. It's been associated with increased risk for heart disease, diabetes, and certain kinds of cancer.

“When it comes to increased health risks, where fat is deposited in the body is more important than how much fat you have,” said Duke exercise physiologist Cris Slentz, PhD, lead author of the study in the *American Journal of Physiology*. “Our study sought to identify the most effective form of exercise to get rid of that unhealthy fat.”

The Duke study showed aerobic training greatly reduced belly fat and liver fat and improved some other risk markers for diabetes and heart disease.

Resistance (or weight) training is still effective for improving strength and increasing lean body mass. But aerobic training burned 67% more calories in the study when compared to resistance training.

Even moderation works. “What really counts is how much exercise you do, how many miles you walk, and how many calories you burn,” Dr. Slentz said. “If you choose to work at a lower aerobic intensity, it will simply take longer to burn the same amount of unhealthy fat.”

