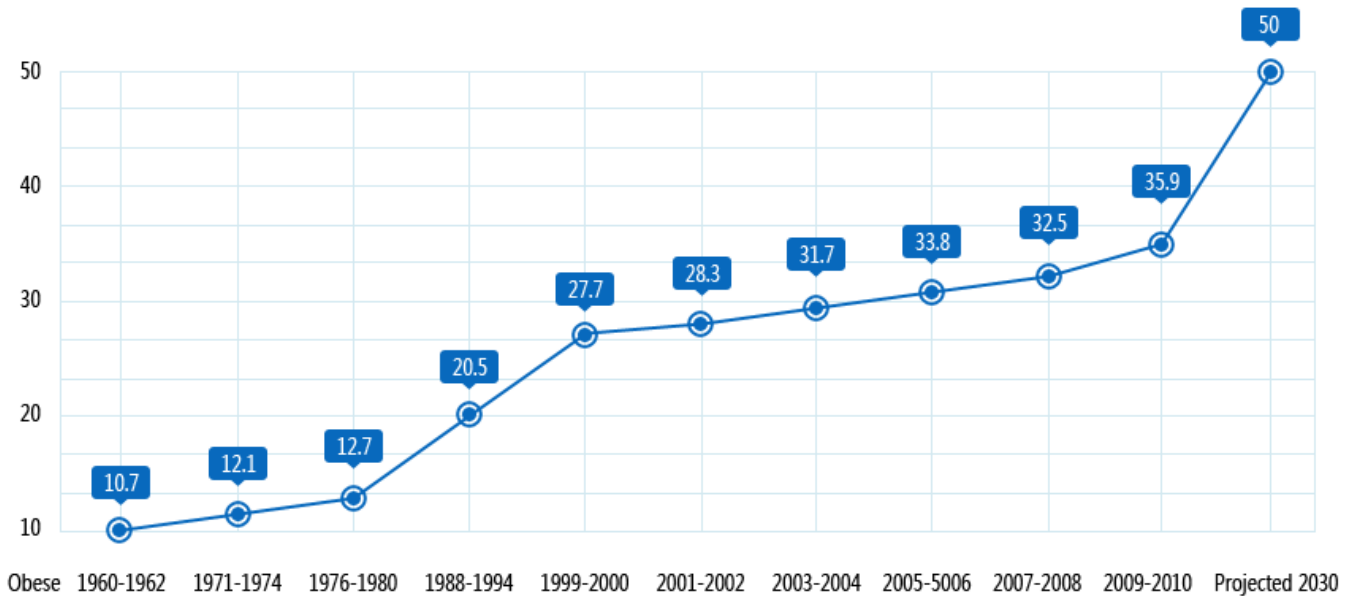


## Prevalence of Obesity Among U.S. Adults Aged 20-74



Derived from NHANES data ([http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/hestat/obesity\\_adult\\_09\\_10/obesity\\_adult\\_09\\_10.html#table1](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/hestat/obesity_adult_09_10/obesity_adult_09_10.html#table1))

## Americans Are Now Fatter Than Ever

The obesity epidemic shows no signs of slowing, and Americans are now fatter than ever. When looked at in terms of body fat rather than body mass index (BMI), the numbers become astronomical. No use sugarcoating this.

### Obesity rate hits a new high

[America's obesity rate has hit a new high](#), with nearly 40% of adults obese.



Obesity, it's important to note, is just a stronger form of being overweight. When you add the figure for being overweight, some 71% of adult Americans are overweight/obese. As the above figure shows, the numbers are projected to get worse.

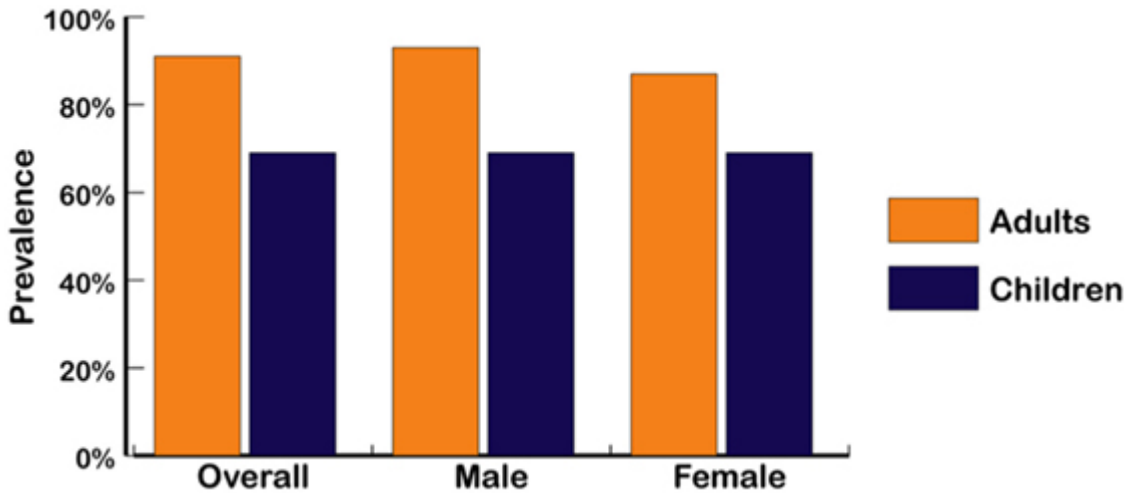
Body mass index (BMI), however, is not the best measure of the health consequences of being overweight. BMI can both overestimate and underestimate obesity. Overestimation is less common, mostly being confined to power and strength athletes, whose muscle mass makes them appear too heavy for their height, when in fact they're in better metabolic health. There aren't too many of those as a percentage of the population.

Underestimation is more common. Many people with a "normal" BMI in reality carry too much body fat. These have been designated as "[normal weight obese](#)", otherwise known as [skinny-fat](#). When we look at excess body fat alone, the figures for overweight/obesity soar.

# Overfat

Overfat is the condition of having more body fat than is good for health.

When the figures for people with too high body fat but normal weight are added to the figures for overweight/obesity, [91% of adult Americans are overfat](#). The figure for children is 69%. Chart below.



The percentage of body fat that can cause health problems, especially cardiometabolic risk, is surprisingly low.

Lohman's criteria of suggested cutoffs  $>17.6\%$  for males and  $>31.6\%$  for females is widely accepted in body composition research. However, measurable health impairments associated with  $\geq 2$  cardiometabolic abnormalities were found at DXA-derived body fat levels  $>15.3\%$  in men and  $>29.8\%$  in women.

A man with more than 15.3% body fat, and a woman with more than 29.8%, are at higher health risk and are overfat.

Below are some examples of what different body fat percentages look like.



## Body fat, health, and aging

It should be clear that the health consequences of excess body fat lie on a continuum, which is why body fat percentages that are not even terribly high are associated with health risks.

So, one of the requirements for being healthy and for living as long as possible are to stay lean.

You don't see many fat centenarians, and that's no coincidence.

## Why are Americans getting fatter?

Americans are getting fatter for two reasons.

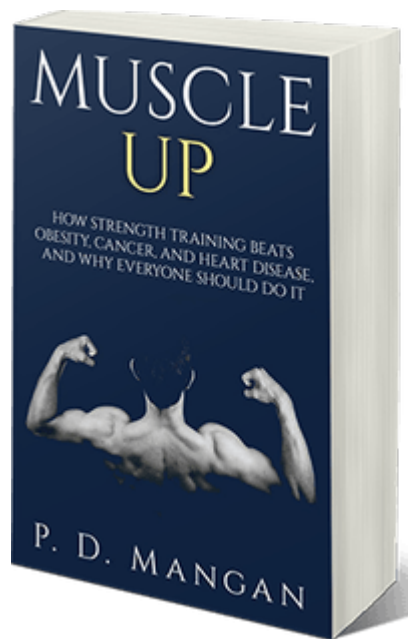
1. The advice they get is terrible.
2. Many want to make no sacrifices or exert much effort.

The advice to eat low-fat, to graze (eat all the time), to consume “healthy whole grains”, to count calories, or to exercise to “burn” calories is all bad advice that has been repeatedly shown not to work.

[The best diet for weight loss is one that the mainstream condemns.](#) As for exercise, [the notion of burning excess calories is next to nonsensical.](#)

As for sacrifices, even when people do get good advice – not often, admittedly – many won’t take it. They like their carbs and junk food and consider it an imposition to give them up. Complacency rules. While it may be true that nobody wants to be fat, how much they dislike it seems debatable.

**PS: For more on how staying lean and muscular is important to long life, see my book, [Muscle Up](#).**



**PPS: [Check out my Supplements Buying Guide for Men.](#)**