



## Get Rid of Those Problem Areas!

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Are you trying to lose weight and finding it really hard to get rid of that one specific area? If so, you're not alone. There are definitely areas of the body where fat seems to want to stick around forever.

It's important to know that when you lose body weight, you lose it from all over your body in layers, kind of like an onion. So it makes sense that the place with the most body fat takes the longest to get down to where you want it. For example, you might see your arms and legs looking pretty fit before you see the abdominals shaping up.

It's also important to remember that weight loss is hard to judge objectively in the mirror. Taking measurements is a good way to get some hard evidence as to whether you're making progress or not. I take measurements with my personal training clients regularly. They know they're on track when they see the measurements going the right direction. Optical illusions aside, when fat isn't budging it's easy to wonder if there's something you're missing, or something you're doing wrong.

I'm going to answer this dilemma with an exercise physiology fact: Exercise is a physiological demand placed on the body. Whenever you increase the demands on your body to perform physically, your body will change and adapt. These changes are things like stronger muscles, a healthier heart and blood vessels, and less body fat.

When people first start to work out they generally see results quickly. That's because they've just raised the bar - they went from doing nothing, to doing something! In order for the body to be able to do *something* rather than nothing, it's going to have to change in some way: by getting stronger, or faster, or leaner or... *something!*

Once you've been doing the same thing for a while, you may find that your body is no longer changing. Most likely, that's because your body has grown as much muscle and is burning as much fat as it needs, to do those exercises well. (This stage is often referred to as a "plateau".) In order to inspire your body to go to the next level you've got to raise the bar again. Do something that's harder, so that your body needs to change in order to be able to handle the challenge you're giving it.

I know this sounds like I'm saying the fitter we get, the harder we have to work. Well, it's true, but it's not as bad as it sounds! People at different fitness levels need different types of challenges. If you challenge yourself at your own pace, the next thing you know you'll be doing things you wouldn't have been able to do when you began. At that time, something that would have been pretty intimidating for you in the beginning will simply be "raising the bar" because you're at a different fitness level. The bottom line with getting at those problem areas is this: Challenge yourself, and there will be change.

*It's recommended that you talk to your doctor before starting to workout. This is basic exercise information for the general public. If you have injuries or other physical limitations, this exercise may not be appropriate. A good rule of thumb: If it doesn't feel good- don't do it!*

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