

Muscle doesn't weigh more than fat—a pound is a pound

August 17 2018



Credit: CC0 Public Domain

The reassuring phrase 'muscle weighs more than fat' can be heard reverberating in gyms across the country, but how much truth is there to it? A registered dietitian at Baylor College of Medicine says not much.

"The simple answer is, it's false. One pound is 16 ounces regardless of what the tissue type or product is," said Roberta Anding, a registered dietitian, sports dietitian and assistant professor in the Joseph Barnhart Department of Orthopedic Surgery at Baylor. "So, for example, a pound of marshmallows will occupy more space than a pound of raisins, but each weighs a pound."

The key is that the way you look is going to be influenced by the type of tissue in your body, Anding said. Muscle is more compact than fat, so if you gain lean body mass, it is firm and occupies less space than fat.

Lean body mass is gained by consuming a diet adequate in [protein](#), with protein distributed throughout the day at each meal, she said.

Examples of good sources of protein include:

- Breakfast: eggs, yogurt, a glass of milk
- Lunch: beans, lean protein meats, cheese
- Dinner: Fish, quinoa, tofu, soymilk

In addition to eating adequate protein, Anding said that [resistance training](#) is the other important part of the equation.

"Training hard enough to fatigue the [muscle](#) signals the muscle to adapt and get stronger," she said.

For examples of good resistance training workouts, Anding recommends consulting with a trainer who can teach you the proper mechanics of resistance training exercises.

Anding said that it can be frustrating when the numbers on the scale does not move.

"Let's say you are reducing your calories, eating adequate protein throughout the day and strength [training](#). You can lose 10 pounds of fat and gain 10 pounds of muscle and the scale shows no change. If your goal is to lose body fat and get stronger, a traditional scale may not be your friend. Advanced body composition tools that determine the percentages of fat, muscle, bone and water in your body can give you a better assessment of [body](#) composition changes," Anding said.

At the end of the day, Anding said that focusing on consistency with diet and exercise will lead to success.

Provided by Baylor College of Medicine

Citation: Muscle doesn't weigh more than fat—a pound is a pound (2018, August 17) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2018-08-muscle-doesnt-fata-pound.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--