

The Cellulite Solution

How to
Build Firm,
Healthy Hips
and Thighs

Where's your stubborn bodyfat?

If you're a guy, chances are, it's right above your belt line.

If you're a gal, I'd bet the farm your "problem area" is below the belt.

Regardless of where it's located, stubborn bodyfat can cause embarrassment, chip away at your self-esteem, and trying to lose it can be downright frustrating.

You see, nature didn't necessarily design the human body to look perfect in a swimsuit—it's built for survival, and how and where it stores bodyfat serves a very specific purpose. Quite literally, when you wage war against that ornery adipose tissue, you're picking a fight with Mother Nature—a fight that is not easily won. (A fact you may be able to confirm through firsthand experience!)

To win the battle of the "stubborn bulge," you need to employ strategic forces such as regular exercise, proper nutrition, and a healthy lifestyle. That's the foundation of any successful fat-loss program; however, sometimes even that's not enough, especially when dealing with the ultra stubborn, typically female problem known as *cellulite*.

In this article, we'll take a look at the facts and fallacies about this frustrating form of fat and review strategies which might help eliminate this formidable foe.

(Gals, pay close attention to this article. Guys, some of this information may not apply to you directly, but it's the type of info you may want to pass along to a significant other of the opposite sex [wife, mother, sister, friend, etc.] who has a passion for building a better body.)

Take the Cellulite Test

You probably already know if you have cellulite just from looking in the mirror, but there is a simple test: squeeze the skin on your hips, buttocks, or thighs between your thumb and index finger. If you have it, your skin will ripple and look like an orange peel, dimples and all.^{7,8} If you don't, your skin will appear firm and smooth. If you don't have cellulite, you can do a lot to prevent getting it. And if you do have it, take heart; there really is something you can do about it.

The Skinny on Cellulite

When it comes down to the precise cause of cellulite, there are conflicting beliefs: those who say it's just fat and those who say it's a medical syndrome resulting from a variety of factors.

The syndrome theory originated in the early '70's with Nicole Ronsard, a French-born woman who popularized the term "cellulite" in America. Ronsard maintains that cellulite

results from a combination of factors, including: poor eating habits, lack of exercise, yo-yo dieting, stress, poor circulation, ineffective lymph drainage, and age. She says cellulite isn't simply fat and reminds her critics that even some rail-thin women struggle with the telltale lumps, bumps, and bulges.^{7,8}

However, several years after Ronsard published her first book, *Cellulite*, in 1973, the *Journal of the American Medical Association* declared cellulite a hoax perpetrated against desperate women willing to cough up big bucks for miracle cures. Many of Ronsard's critics say if you lose the fat, you'll lose the cellulite.³

Despite the controversy, many of Ronsard's suggestions may be helpful. Because the pockets of cellulite directly under the skin become more pronounced as skin becomes less elastic, improving skin health may make cellulite less noticeable. And there's no doubt her program supports overall wellness. In addition to exercise and a lower fat diet, Ronsard suggests eating lots of antioxidant-rich fresh fruits and vegetables, which may help improve connective tissue.

Ronsard also suggests self-massage to stimulate circulation and lymph drainage, which may improve the health of the skin. She also recommends stress management because stress and anxiety affect all major functions of your body, including your adrenal glands and skin. Stress and anxiety also exert a major influence over your eating habits^{7,8} (which is why some of us binge under pressure).

The Facts on Excess Fat Storage

Within each cell are fat-storing receptors (alpha₂ receptors) and fat-releasing receptors (beta₁ receptors). The cellulite problem for women

Firm Results With Lunges and Squats!

A leisurely walk in the park won't put your lower body fat problems behind you. Even a brisk jog won't do it! Research shows the gluteus maximus (a.k.a. your butt) doesn't exactly strain itself during walking. And, running and many types of cycling won't do it either. To see results, you definitely need to isolate your lower body and work hard.¹¹

With this in mind, here are two great glute and thigh exercises you can incorporate into your full-body exercise program:

The Lunge

Starting position: Position your feet about shoulder width apart, with your feet pointing straight ahead. Pick up a pair of dumbbells, bending at your knees to make sure you don't strain your back.

The exercise: Step your left foot forward, keeping your forward leg centered over your ankle. Make sure your knee doesn't go beyond your toes or you'll place extreme tension on the tendons of your knee. To help maintain balance, remember to push off your heel and not your toes. When coming back to the starting position, focus on straightening your knee and hip. Stay focused on your front leg even if you start to feel tension in your back leg. Think of your back leg as the balancer and your front leg as the primary mover. You'll feel this one in your butt and quad of your front leg.

Do either 3 or 4 sets of 10 to 12 reps, or do one set to failure at the end of your leg routine to really feel the burn. Work one leg at a time rather than alternating between one leg and the other. Stick with a tempo of about 2-0-2 (that's lowering your body for two seconds, no pause, and then taking two seconds to stand back up).



may arise because we have more alpha₂ receptors in our hips and thighs. In fact, we have significantly more fat-storing receptors for every fat-releasing receptor in those areas, while our upper bodies have the reverse. So our lower bodies become “fat magnets.” That’s why we lose fat on the top of our bodies easier than on the bottom. (In comparison, men have extra fat-storing receptors around their bellies.²) But, biology isn’t necessarily destiny.

Attacking Cellulite

Scientific research shows you may be able to do more to battle cellulite than simply lose fat. A study at Brussels University showed that women with cellulite suffer from deficient lymph systems.² Although this may simply reflect that lymph drainage is deficient in people with a high percentage of bodyfat, it suggests improving the lymph system through massage may be an effective component of an anti-cellulite program. Because lymph is circulated by the pull of gravity or by muscle contractions, massage seems to give it the “push” it needs to enter the bloodstream up to 25% faster.⁹

Elisabeth Dancey, M.D., also believes poor lymph drainage sets the stage for cellulite along with poor microcirculation and excess fat storage. She says cellulite consists of abnormal fibers and water retention in fatty subcutaneous (under the skin) tissue.² In other words, it’s damaged fat. Related research suggests excess water in cellulite may be due to its higher concentrations of “glycosaminoglycans”(natural substances produced in the body that attract and hold water in the tissue) compared to “normal” skin.⁵ To support her view that cellulite is damaged fat, Dancey points to ultrasound,

thermal imaging, and other techniques which show how the tissue becomes damaged and how it progresses.

Understanding Poor Lymph Drainage

Lymph, a protein-rich fluid, supplies nutrients and oxygen to your cells. If the lymph doesn’t drain from the cells properly, it can exert pressure on the tissue around it. Eventually, the proteins separate from the lymph, causing a backlog. Then this backlog of lymph thickens. But things get worse, because the abnormally slow lymph can’t supply surrounding cells that make collagen and elastin fibers (key components of connective tissue) with the nutrients and oxygen they need.

Deprived of nutrients and oxygen, these specialized cells, called “fibroblasts,” create thick, abnormal fibers. Compounding the problem, fibroblasts rely on lymph fibers as a base to make collagen and elastin, so their raw materials are defective right from the start. Finally, the lymph fibers thicken even more due to the actions of the surrounding fibroblasts until they form a honeycomb

The Squat

Starting position: Position yourself under the bar, placing it on the upper portion of your trapezius (the triangular muscle below your neck). Squeeze your shoulders together slightly, and place your hands on the bar. Tighten your abs, and lift the weight off the rack and step back. Choose a comfortable stance with your feet about shoulder width apart or slightly wider. A wider stance allows you to squat deeper without bending too far forward and straining your lower back. Keep your chest up, head straight, and shoulders back.

The exercise: Slowly squat as low as you can, stopping right before your hips begin to roll forward. Once you reach the bottom, slowly press the weight up. Your knees and hips will move back in line with one another simultaneously as you move upwards. Straighten your legs as much as possible without locking your knees. Your knees shouldn’t wobble as you squat down and up. If they do, you’re using too much weight.

Perform 3 or 4 sets of 10 to 15 reps at a 3-0-3 tempo, and take about 3 minutes to fully recuperate between sets if you’re really working out hard.





around the fat cells. That's the look of cellulite. Dr. Dancey suggests a form of massage called "manual lymph drainage" to improve lymph flow and reduce this honeycomb appearance of the skin.²

Manual Lymph Drainage (MLD) is a form of connective-tissue massage practiced widely in clinics and hospitals in Europe. In fact, it's the third most prescribed physical therapy in Germany. MLD is used to inhibit pain reflexes, decongest lymphatic pathways, maintain adequate levels of oxygen and nutrients in tissue, accelerate the removal of toxins from the tissue, and reduce edema, a condition in which the tissue contains excess water.¹⁰ MLD was formally introduced in America in 1982, but there aren't exactly MLD massage therapists on every corner. You can, however, call the American Massage Therapy Association at 1-847-864-0123 or write to 820 Davis Street, Suite 100, Evanston, Illinois 60201-4444 to see if there's a certified practitioner in your area.

Poor Microcirculation, the Vein of Cellulite's Existence

Poor circulation means poor blood supply to the tissues, and this can result in a kind of "tissue starvation." According to Dr. Dancey, this can lead to an unhealthy buildup of toxins which can cause the release of a tissue-damaging substance called arachidonic acid. But the trouble

doesn't end there. Metabolic toxins can cause "leaky" veins that create even more tissue damage. Eventually, this leads to so much pressure you may end up with swollen, broken, or varicose veins no longer capable of removing blood from the tissue. Dancey believes this begins a vicious cycle leading to the formation of cellulite.²

Not everyone agrees cellulite results from a buildup of toxins, but there is agreement that improving circulation can improve the health and appearance of your skin. And healthier, more elastic skin can reduce the appearance of cellulite.

If You've Got It, Get Rid of It

Okay, so what if poor microcirculation, poor lymph drainage, and excess fat storage really do contribute to those unsightly lumps and bumps? What next? A lower fat diet and exercise program is the answer! Muscle-building exercises are especially effective because muscle is metabolically more active than fat. So the added muscle boosts your metabolic rate and helps you lose even more fat. You may not be able to completely eliminate cellulite, but you can significantly reduce it!

Nutritional Solutions

Because cellulite is most common in areas that store excessive amounts of fat, nutrition can play a powerful role in supporting an effective anti-cellulite program. A lot of women are convinced they have to starve themselves to lose fat. It's hard to convince them they need to *feed* their bodies to get results. When you starve yourself, you're working against your body—it fights back by slowing the metabolic rate, so it's even harder to lose fat. It's not that hard to follow a healthy nutrition program. You just eat a small meal (made up of primarily protein and carbohydrates) every few hours throughout the day and drink plenty of water.

Conclusion

As you can see, there really is a solution to the problem of stubborn lower body fat—a solution that does not include starvation diets nor hours and hours of boring aerobic exercise. The right way to build a better lower body is through a complete program of proper weight training and optimal nutrition. It sounds simple, but it really works. In fact, if you put these techniques to work for you, before long, you'll truly hope for an endless summer.

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