AR 600-9 Army Weight Control Program
FAQ's

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**Why is the current tape test method the Army standard for measuring body fat?**

The Department of Defense Instruction (DODI) 1308.3, DoD Physical Fitness and Body Fat Programs Procedures, 5 November 2002, provides physical and body fat procedures to ensure the Services’ weight control programs are consistent and scientifically current. Specifically, the DoDI established percent body fat standards using the circumference-based method (body fat calculation equations, measurement sites, and measurement techniques). These equations rely heavily on assessment of abdominal fat, the region of greatest interest to meet military fitness objectives and public health experts. These equations were developed through analysis of population samples for relationships between measures of various body sites and the percentage of body fat. The purpose of the body fat calculation is to ensure that those with extra weight due to lean muscle mass are not unfairly required to leave the military. Lean body mass is critical to successfully perform militarily unique jobs that require combat readiness.

**What was the reason for revising the female Soldier screening weight table?**

The screening weight tables were revised to ensure the Army was in compliance with the Department of Defense Instruction, 1308.3, DoD Physical Fitness and Body Fat Programs Procedures, 5 November 2002. This instruction directed that each Service’s body fat calculations include an assessment of abdominal fat and be no more stringent than those prescribed by DoD. As a result, Army researchers determined that female Soldiers were indeed being held to a more stringent weight screen than necessary and the female screening weight table was justly revised. This actually reduced the number of women unnecessarily measured for body fat. Overall, this change increases the efficiency and fairness of body fat assessments for female Soldiers, while also monitoring all Soldiers for a known risk factor (increased abdominal girth) for chronic health problems.

**If a Soldier has an underlying medical condition and is being treated by a healthcare provider for that condition, is he/she exempt from AR 600-9?**

A Soldier found to have a temporary underlying medical condition as determined by a healthcare provider may be temporarily exempt from enrollment into the Army Weight Control Program and will not be flagged during a period of time as determined by the healthcare provider. However, the Soldier is expected to be in compliance with AR 600-9 effective the ending date of the prescribed period. If not, he/she will be enrolled in the Army Weight Control Program and flagged.
If a Soldier is taking a prescribed medication that may cause weight gain is he/she exempt from the standards of AR 600-9?

No. The use of certain medications to treat an underlying medical disorder or the inability to perform aerobic events may contribute to weight gain, but neither is generally considered sufficient medical rationale to exempt a Soldier from AR 600-9.

When and for how long is a pregnant Soldier exempt from AR 600-9?

Pregnant Soldiers are exempt from the standards of AR 600-9 for the duration of pregnancy plus 6 months following pregnancy termination. When initially informed of the pregnancy, the Soldier shall continue her physical fitness program under the supervision of medical authority. It is recommended that the Services offer a pregnancy postpartum physical training program at each installation. Information about the U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine’s program may be found at: http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil/.

If a Soldier miscarries her baby, what is the guidance in regards to her APFT and weigh-in?

The Department of Defense Directive 1308.1, 20 July 1995, Physical Fitness and Body Fat Program, states pregnant service members shall not be held to the standards of fitness and body fat testing until at least 6 months after pregnancy termination. In accordance with AR 40-501 Chapters 7-10, convalescent leave after a termination of pregnancy (for example, miscarriage) will be determined on an individual basis by the attending physician.

Are deployed Soldiers exempt from meeting weight standards per AR 600-9?

No. There is no exemption from weight standards while deployed, or upon return from deployment.

When will a Soldier be flagged for being overweight?

In accordance with AR 600-9, paragraph 3-2b, a Soldier who exceeds the body fat standard will be informed by his/her unit Commander that he/she has been entered into the Army Weight Control Program (AWCP). The date on which that counseling occurs is the effective date he/she is enrolled in the AWCP and flagged under the provisions of AR 600-8-2. Prior to or shortly after enrollment into the AWCP, that Soldier will also be provided dietary education or nutrition counseling by healthcare personnel, exercise guidance, and assistance in behavioral modification, as appropriate, to help him/her meet Army requirements.

Are medical evaluations required before a Soldier is flagged?

No. However, in accordance with AR 600-9, paragraph 3-2d, a medical evaluation will be completed when the Soldier has a medical limitation, or is pregnant, or
when requested by the unit commander. A medical evaluation is also required for Soldiers being considered for separation as a result of failing to make satisfactory progress in a weight control program, or who are within six months of ETS. It is recommended that all Soldiers who are enrolled in a weight control program receive a medical evaluation. However, a medical evaluation does not exclude the Soldier from meeting body fat standards per AR 600-9.

**Can the commander or attending physician approve exemptions to AR 600-9?**

No. The Deputy Chief of Staff, G-1, Human Resources, is the proponent for the Army Weight Control Program (AWCP). All exemptions to AR 600-9 must be forwarded to: Deputy Chief of Staff, G-1 (ATTN: DAPE-HRI), 300 Pentagon, Washington, DC 20310. Commanders must provide counseling to Soldiers to establish a personal weight goal and implement the AWCP. Health care personnel assist commanders and supervisors by providing weight reduction counseling, identification of pathological conditions that require medical treatment, and evaluating Soldiers with medical limitations. The DA Form 3349, Physical Profile form, will not be used to excuse Soldiers from the provisions of AR 600-9. AR 600-9 contains a standard memorandum for completion by a physician if there is an underlying or associated disease process that is the cause of the overweight condition.

**What is the process to request a waiver to AR 600-9?**

All waiver requests must be endorsed by your commander or senior leader and forwarded through your higher headquarters to the Army G-1. Your request must be accompanied by pertinent medical documentation from your physician. This information is then forwarded to the Office of the Surgeon General who reviews and renders a medical opinion. Forward requests along with supporting medical documentation (including any treatment received) from your primary healthcare provider via email to: Karen.whitman@hqda.army.mil; or fax (703) 695-6988 (please call first); or mail documents to:

Deputy Chief of Staff, G-1  
ATTN: DAPE-HRI  
300 Army Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20310

**Is the Gulick tape authorized to use to measure body fat?**

No. AR 600-9, Appendix B-1.d states that acceptable tape measures are made of nonstretchable material. The Gulick tape has a spring loaded end that may be used to ensure that the same amount of pressure is exerted on the tape (and hence the measurement site) when measuring body fat. Unfortunately, this spring can get stretched over time thereby making measurements inaccurate. The preferred method to ensure that the tape is applied correctly is to view the site that is being measured. The tape should make contact with the skin, conform to the body surface being measured, and not compress the underlying soft tissue (fat).
How do you calculate a female/male Soldier’s body fat percentage if her/his measurements are not on the tables in AR 600-9?

The following formula is the DoD body fat equation from the Department of Defense Instruction 1308.3, "DoD Physical Fitness and Body Fat Programs Procedures", 5 November 2002. Insert the Soldiers’ circumferences and height.

**NOTE:** You will need to use a scientific calculator, which you will find on your computer. (Pull up calculator from programs and then click on VIEW and choose “Scientific”.)

**WOMEN:** The equation* for women is:

\[
\% \text{ body fat} = \left[163.205 \times \log (\text{waist} + \text{hip} - \text{neck})\right] - \left[97.684 \times \log (\text{height})\right] - 78.387
\]

*Circumference and height measurements must be in inches.

**SAMPLE:** Neck = 15.0"; Waist = 42"; Hip = 44"; Height = 64"

\[
\% \text{ body fat} = \left[163.205 \times \log (42 + 44 -15)\right] - \left[97.684 \times \log (64)\right] - 78.387
\]

A. Solve: \[163.205 \times (\log (71))\]. Take the \(\log (71) = 1.85\) (when using a calculator be careful not to use LN (natural log). Instead, enter 71 and press the LOG key.

B. Solve \[97.684 \times (\log (64))\]. Take the \(\log (64) = 1.81\) (when using a calculator be careful not to use LN (natural log). Instead, enter 64 and press the LOG key.

C. Solve the equation:

\[
\% \text{ body fat} = \left[163.205 \times 1.85\right] - \left[97.684 \times 1.81\right] - 78.387
\]

\[
= \left[301.93\right] - \left[176.81\right] - 78.387
\]

\[
= 47\% \quad (\text{actual number is } 46.73\%; \text{round to the nearest whole } \%)
\]

**MEN:** The equation* for men is:

\[
\% \text{ body fat} = \left[86.010 \times \log (\text{waist} - \text{neck})\right] - \left[70.041 \times \log (\text{height})\right] + 36.76
\]

*Circumference and height measurements must be in inches.

**SAMPLE:** Neck = 16"; Waist = 49"; Height = 69"

\[
\% \text{ body fat} = \left[86.010 \times \log (49 -16)\right] - \left[70.041 \times \log (69)\right] + 36.76
\]

A. Solve \[86.010 \times \log (33)\]. Take the \(\log (33) = 1.52\) (when using a calculator be careful not to use LN (natural log). Instead, enter 33 and press the LOG key.

B. Solve \[70.041 \times \log (69)\]. Take the \(\log (69) = 1.84\) (when using a calculator be careful not to use LN (natural log). Instead, enter 69 and press the LOG key.

C. Solve the equation:

\[
\% \text{ body fat} = \left[86.010 \times 1.52\right] - \left[70.041 \times 1.84\right] + 36.76
\]

\[
= \left[130.74\right] - \left[128.88\right] + 36.76
\]

\[
= 39\% \quad (\text{actual number is } 38.62\%; \text{round to the nearest whole } \%)
\]
Are “love handles” measured when you obtain abdominal circumference?
No. AR 600-9 describes the abdominal circumference site as being at the level of the "belly button". Body circumference measurements must always be done exactly as described in AR 600-9 to ensure consistency and fairness each time a Soldier is measured. The locations to measure the various body circumferences are based on standard body sites determined by scientists who studied how best to measure body fat in males and females. That said, moving the tape up or down when measuring the waist to ensure that the tape includes the “love handles” is not a good practice as this clearly deviates from the scientific recommendations. It is neither fair nor appropriate to change the location of the tape based on a person’s body shape. Consistency in measurement is an important aspect of doing the tape test correctly. Deviation from the prescribed techniques may lead to incorrect body fat measurements and an incorrect assessment on whether a Soldier is making progress in losing body fat.

Are deployed Soldiers exempt from taking the APFT?
See ALARACT 163/2003, released 17 Dec 2003:

HIGHLIGHTS of Recent Changes to AR 600-9 (27 November 2006)

- Revised height and weight table increasing maximum allowable weight for females in table 3-1.
- Revised circumference measurement sites for females are the neck, abdomen, and hip.
- Incorporates DOD standards of measurements to the nearest .50 changed from .25 standards.
- New instructions to round up to the nearest .50 when measuring the neck for both genders.
- New instructions to round down to the nearest .50 when measuring the abdomen for both genders.
- New instructions to round down to the nearest .50 when measuring the hips for females.
- New DA Forms 5500/5501, Body Fat Content worksheets (male/female).