

## **AR 600-9, The Army Weight Control Program**

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

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

A: The Department of Defense Instruction (DODI) 1308.3, DOD Physical Fitness and Body Fat Programs Procedures (5 Nov 02), 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 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 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 military-unique jobs that require combat readiness.

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

A: The screening weight tables were revised to ensure the Army was in compliance with the DODI 1308.3, DOD Physical Fitness and Body Fat Programs Procedures (5 Nov 02). This instruction directed that each Service's body fat calculations include an assessment of abdominal fat and be no more stringent than those described 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 for a known risk factor (increased abdominal girth) for chronic health problems.

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

A: No. There is no exemption from weight standards while deployed, or upon return from deployment, except in the case of pregnancy and medical conditions as outlined in AR 600-9.

**Q: Are deployed Soldiers exempt from taking the APFT?**

A: See ALARACT 163/2003, released 17 Dec 03.

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**Q: 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?**

A: The following formula is the DOD body fat equation from DODI 1308.3, DOD Physical Fitness and Body Fat Programs Procedures (5 Nov 02). Insert the Soldier's 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*).

**NOTE:** All measurements must be in inches

**SAMPLE (WOMEN):** Neck = 15 in; Waist = 42 in; Hip = 44 in; Height = 64 in)

The equation for women is:

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

- A. Solve:  $[163.205 \times (\text{Log } [71])]$ . Take the  $\text{Log } [71] = 1.85$  (when using a calculator, be careful not to use LN (natural Log). Instead, enter 71 and press the LOG key.
- B. Solve  $[97.684 \times (\text{Log } [64])]$ . Take the  $\text{Log } [64] = 1.81$  (when using a calculator, be careful not to use the LN (natural log). Instead, enter 64 and press the LOG key.
- C. Solve the equation:  
 $\% \text{ body fat} = [163.205 \times 1.85 - [97.684 \times 1.81 - 78.387]$   
 $= [301.93] - [176.81 - 78.387]$   
 $= 47\%$  (actual number is 46.73%; round to the nearest whole %)

**SAMPLE (MEN):** Neck = 16 in; Waist = 49 in; Height = 69 in

The equation for men is:

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

- A. Solve:  $[86.010 \times \text{Log}_{10} (33)]$ . Take the  $\text{Log}_{10} (33) = 1.52$  (when using a calculator, be careful not to use LN (natural Log). Instead, enter 33 and press the LOG key.
- B. Solve  $[70.041 \times (\text{Log}_{10} (69))]$ . Take the  $\text{Log}_{10} (69) = 1.84$  (when using a calculator, be careful not to use the LN (natural Log). Instead, enter 69 and press the LOG key.
- C. Solve the equation:  
 $\% \text{ body fat} = [86.010 \times 1.521] - [70.041 \times 1.841 + 36.76]$   
 $= [130.74] - [128.88] + 36.76$   
 $= 39\%$  (actual number is 38.62%; round to the nearest whole %).

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

A: No. Acceptable tape measures are made of nonstretchable material. The Gulick tape has a spring loaded end that may 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.

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**Q: Are “love handles” measured when you obtain abdominal circumference?**

A: No. AR 600-9 describes the abdominal circumference site as being at the level of the “belly button”. 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.

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 appropriate nor fair to change the location of the tape based on a person’s body shape.

**Q: 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: 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 his/her healthcare provider. However, the Soldier is expected to be in compliance with AR 600-9 effective the ending date of that prescribed period. If not, he/she will be enrolled in the Army Weight Control Program and flagged.

**Q: If a Soldier is taking a prescribed medication that may cause weight gain, is he/she exempt from the standards of AR 600-9?**

A: 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.

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

A: Pregnant Soldiers are exempt from the standards of AR 600-9 for the duration of pregnancy plus six months. When initially informed of the pregnancy, the Soldier shall continue her physical fitness program under the supervision of medical authority. The U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and preventive Medicine (USACHPPM) has developed a scientifically based program that has proven useful. Information about the USACHPPM program may be found at <http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil/>.

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

A: The DOD Directive 1308.1 (30 Jun 04), 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 six months after pregnancy termination. In accordance with AR 40-501, convalescent leave after a termination of pregnancy (for example, miscarriage) will be determined on an individual basis by the attending physician.

**Q: When will a Soldier be flagged for being overweight?**

A: A Soldier who exceeds the body fat standard will be informed by his/her 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.

**Q: Are medical evaluations required before a Soldier is flagged?**

A: No. However, a medical evaluation will be completed when the Soldier has a medical limitation, 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 exiting the Service. 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 outlined in AR 600-9.

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

A: No. The Deputy Chief of Staff, G-1, Human Resources, is the proponent for the Army Weight Control Program (AWCP). Commanders must provide counseling to Soldiers to establish a personal weight goal and implement the AWCP. Healthcare 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.

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

A: 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 healthcare

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provider. This information is then forwarded to the Office of the Surgeon General, who reviews and renders a medical opinion. Forward requests via fax to 703-601-6052 or mail to:

Deputy Chief of Staff, G-1  
ATTN: DAPE-HRI  
1225 Clark Street, Suite 208  
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