

Increasing Program Participation Rates In Health Promotion Programs

Percent body fat is a good way to track changes in body composition due to physical activity and/or dieting. Percent fat can be easily measured using a bioelectric impedance assessment (BIA). Another method requiring more training and practice for accuracy is taking skin-fold measurements. Results with a BIA are usually accurate to within plus or minus 3% if you carefully follow the testing guidelines below.

TEST PROCEDURE

Equipment

BIA Testing Equipment

Results for _____

Test Date	% Fat	BMI	Your Rating

The following instructions are for using a BIA instrument. See instructions in the Fitness Test Manual for taking skinfold measurements.

For most accurate results using BIA testing:

- Take the test at least 1-2 hours after eating.
- Don't test soon after exercise, getting out of a hot tub or shower, drinking alcohol, or drinking a large amount of water.
- If hands are cold, warm them first before testing (warm room or warm water).
- If hands are very dry, slightly moisten hands with a damp towel.
- When doing repeat testing, take measurements at a similar time of the day.
- Follow good technique as described in the manual that came with the equipment (arms fully extended and level in front of you, grip easily with fingers around grips, thumbs on top of instrument, stand quietly until measurement is completed).
- Record test results and interpret using norms below.

PERCENT BODY FAT NORMS¹

	Gender/ Age Percentile	Men 20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	Women 20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69
Excellent	80-100	5-10	6-14	7-16	8-17.9	10-18	12-17	14-18	16-21	18-25	18-25
Good	60-79	10.1-14	14.1-18	16.1-20	18-21	18.1-22	17.1-21	18.1-22	21.1-25	25.1-29	25.1-29
Average	40-59	14-17	18.1-21	20.1-23	21.1-24	22.1-25	21.1-24	22.1-25	25.1-28	29.1-32	29.1-33
High	20-39	17.1-22	21.1-24	23.1-26	24.1-28	25.1-29	24.1-28	25.1-29	28.1-32	32.1-36	33.1-37
Obese	0-19	>22	>24	>26	>28	>29	>28	>29	>32	>36	>37

Reference: 1. American College of Sports Medicine, Guidelines for Exercise Testing and Prescription, Sixth Edition, 2000.