

THE COST OF GETTING LEAN: IS IT REALLY WORTH THE TRADE-OFF?

**SIX-PACK ABS. TIGHT BUTTS.
LEAN, VIBRANT, FLAWLESS HEALTH.
THAT'S THE IMAGE THE FITNESS INDUSTRY IS SELLING.**

But have you ever wondered what it really costs to achieve that cover model look? What you have to do more of? What you have to give up?

Make no mistake, there are real trade-offs. Let's talk about what they are.

UNHEALTHY

Athletes at this level of body fat

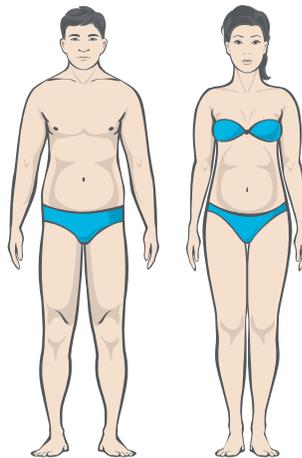
Almost none.

Benefits

Easy fallback for some folks.
Does not require much thought or work.

Tradeoffs

Poor health.
Low energy levels.
Poorer life expectancy.
Risks of metabolic syndrome.
May need medications to manage various conditions.



>20%

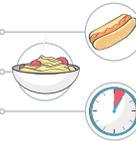
>30%

↑ DO MORE

Eat processed foods.

Eat big portions.

Eat quickly.



↓ DO LESS

Exercise of any kind.

Eat fewer whole foods.

Sleep less.



VERY EASY TRANSITION

HEALTHY

Athletes at this level of body fat

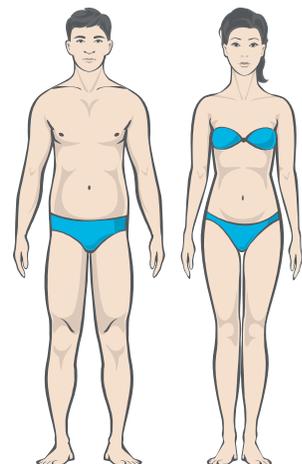
College aged athletes.
Off-season elite bodybuilders.
Olympic shot putters.

Benefits

Improved health & energy.
Improved sleep.
Exercise is easy and enjoyable.

Tradeoffs

Requires some thought and planning.
You'll look good but not super lean.



15-20%

25-30%

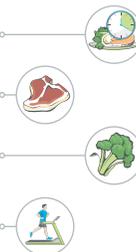
↑ DO MORE

Eat slowly until satisfied at 60% of your meals.

Include 1-2 palms of protein dense foods in 1-2 meals per day.

Include 1-2 fists of vegetables in 1-2 meals per day.

Exercise 3-5 times per week, any activity you enjoy, any intensity level.



↓ DO LESS

Eat fewer desserts and processed foods.

Drink fewer caloric beverages.



EASY TRANSITION

HEALTHY

Athletes at this level of body fat

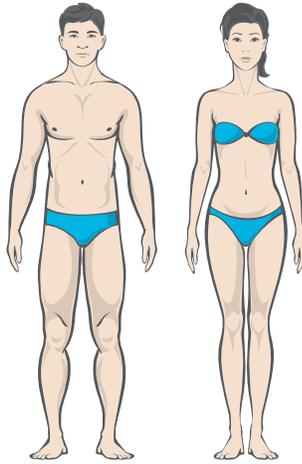
Olympic canoe and kayak athletes.
Professional baseball players.
Professional softball players.

Benefits

Fairly easy to maintain.
Energy levels will continue to improve.
Will probably be able to reduce or eliminate many medications.

Tradeoffs

Requires some planning and may require minor social sacrifices, e.g. exercising instead of hanging out with friends at a bar.
May require effort and attention to maintain this much sleep.
May require some increased food prep skills and effort.



13-15%

23-25%

↑ DO MORE

- Eat slowly until satisfied at 75% of your meals.
- Include 1-2 palms of protein dense foods in 2-3 meals per day.
- Include 1-2 fists of vegetables in 2-3 meals per day.
- Exercise 30-45 minutes daily, with 1-2 sessions breaking a sweat.
- Sleep at least 7 hours per night.



↓ DO LESS

- Eat desserts / processed foods 3-5 times per week, within reason.
- Drink up to 3-5 caloric beverages per week.



MEDIUM TRANSITION

HEALTHY

Athletes at this level of body fat

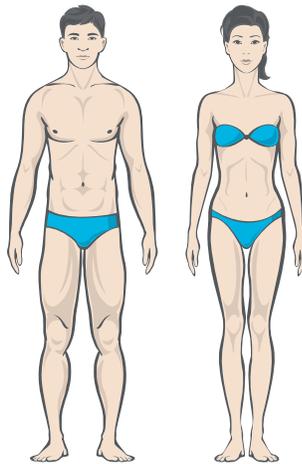
Olympic swimmers.
Professional hockey players.
Olympic volleyball players.

Benefits

Fit appearance and good overall health.
Fewer food cravings due to balanced diet and exercise regime.
Relatively easy to maintain once practices become habitual.

Tradeoffs

Requires more planning and greater overall attention to diet.
Requires a greater time commitment for the more consistent exercise regime.
May need assistance or coaching to achieve this amount of consistency.



10-12%

20-22%

↑ DO MORE

- Eat slowly until satisfied at 90% of your meals.
- Include 1-2 palms of protein dense foods in each meal.
- Include 1-2 fists of vegetables in each meal.
- Include 1-2 thumbs of healthy fats and 1-2 cupped handfuls of quality carbs at most meals.
- Exercise 45-60 minutes daily, with 3-4 sessions breaking a sweat.
- Sleep at least 7-8 hours per night.



↓ DO LESS

- Eat desserts / processed foods 1-2 times per week, within reason.
- Drink up to 1-2 caloric beverages per week.



HARD TRANSITION

HEALTHY

Athletes at this level of body fat

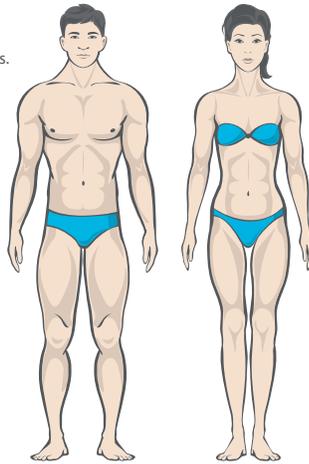
Olympic level boxers and wrestlers.
 Olympic sprinters (100-400 meters).
 Olympic level gymnasts.

Benefits

Will probably look extremely lean; will have that six-pack.
 Overall health will probably be good due to carefully balanced and minimally processed diet.
 Will likely have high work capacity and good stamina.

Tradeoffs

May struggle in social situations, especially those involving food.
 May not have time for social opportunities outside of exercise.
 May have to give up other hobbies and interests outside fitness.



6-9%

16-19%

↑ DO MORE

- Eat slowly until satisfied at 95% of your meals.
- Include 1-2 palms of protein dense foods in each meal.
- Include 1-2 fists of fibrous vegetables in each meal.
- Include 1-2 thumbs of healthy fats in each meal.
- Exercise 60-75 minutes daily, with 4-5 sessions breaking a sweat.
- Sleep at least 8 hours per night.

↓ DO LESS

- Limit carbs to post-workout or designated higher carb days.
- Eat desserts / processed foods once every 1-2 weeks, within reason.
- Drink a caloric beverage once every 1-2 weeks.

VERY HARD TRANSITION

UNHEALTHY

Athletes at this level of body fat

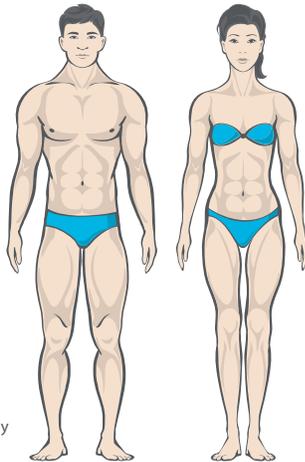
Elite bodybuilders on contest day.
 Fitness models on the day of the photoshoot.

Benefits

May feel pride at achieving an athletic goal.

Tradeoffs

Will have difficulty socializing in most typical situations where food is involved.
 May miss out on fun events with family and friends.
 Big time commitment to measure, weigh, and track all foods.
 Hyper focus on diet and exercise may contribute to disordered eating.
 Time required for exercise may crowd out all other pursuits and interests.



<6%

<16%

↑ DO MORE

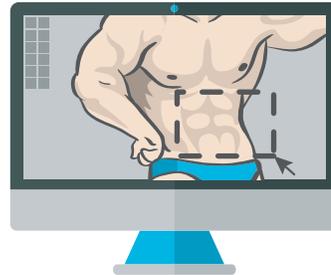
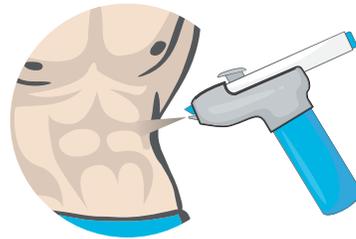
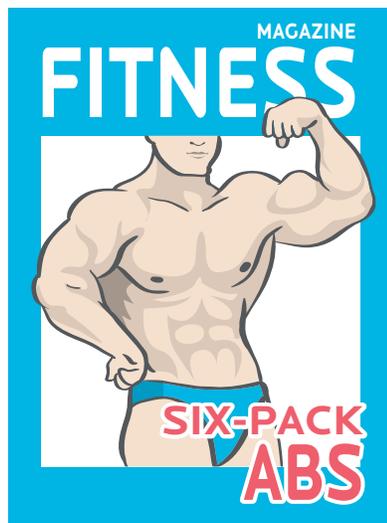
- Eat slowly until satisfied at 99.9% of your meals.
- Incorporate calorie/carb cycling.
- Follow meal plan with predetermined foods and amounts, and measure food specifically.
- Include exact amount of lean proteins, fibrous veggies, and healthy fats in each meal.
- Exercise 45-75 minutes, twice daily, with 6-7 sessions breaking a sweat.
- Sleep at least 8-9 hours per night.

↓ DO LESS

- Limit carbs to post-workout or designated higher carb days.
- Eat desserts / processed foods once every 10-12 weeks.
- Avoid caloric beverages.

SIX-PACK ABS: A LOOK BEHIND THE SCENES

Aside from the heavy airbrushing and photoshop done in most magazines, cover models often diet strictly for photo shoots. This means they only look "cover-ready" for a short time. The rest of the time they're much less "ripped".



THE LEVELS OF LEANNESS SEEN ON COVER MODELS ISN'T NECESSARILY HEALTHY.

In fact, the type of severe dieting they often use can lead to:

- ❗ LOSS OF SEX DRIVE
- ❗ DISORDERED EATING
- ❗ SOCIAL ISOLATION
- ❗ AMENORRHEA (IN WOMEN)
- ❗ LOW TESTOSTERONE (IN MEN)
- ❗ AN UNBALANCED LIFE

HEALTHY, ATHLETICALLY LEAN, OR SUPER LEAN? IT ALL DEPENDS ON YOUR PRIORITIES AND GOALS.



FIRST, FIGURE THEM OUT.

If you don't know what your priorities are, now's a great time to explore that.



NEXT, DECIDE WHAT YOU'RE WILLING TO DO.

What will you do to serve those goals and priorities? Why?



NEXT, DECIDE FREQUENCY.

How often, how consistently, and how precisely, are you willing to do those things?



NEXT, DECIDE WHAT YOU'RE NOT WILLING TO DO.

What are you unwilling to do? To trade off? To give up?

Now you can make better decisions, leading to the body you really want,
while living the life you really enjoy.

For the full article explaining this infographic:
www.precisionnutrition.com/cost-of-getting-lean

 Precision Nutrition