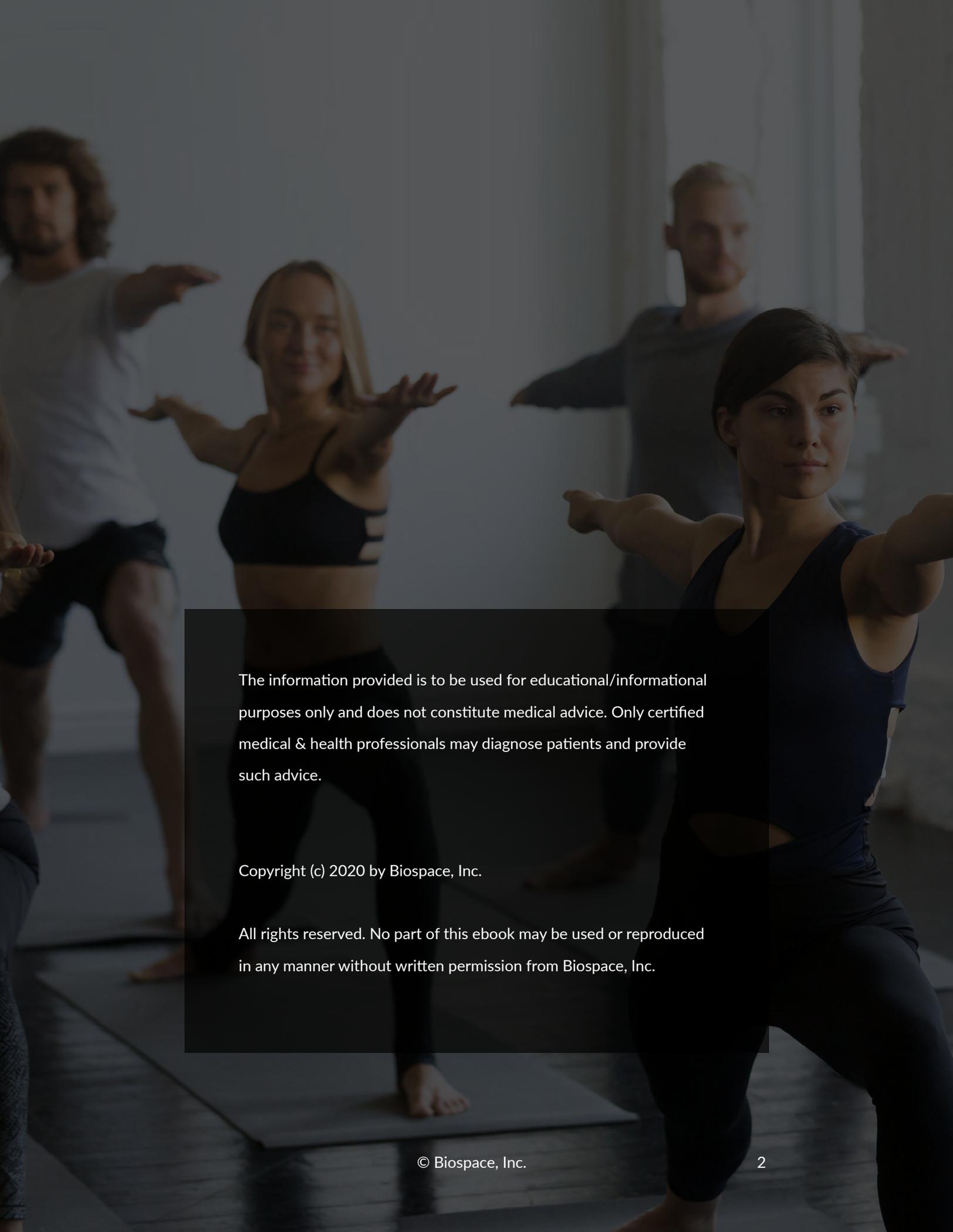


InBody

————— What is —————
Body Composition?
—————



A group of people, including men and women of various ethnicities, are practicing Tai Chi in a bright, minimalist studio. They are in a similar pose, with arms extended horizontally. The background is a plain, light-colored wall with large windows. The overall atmosphere is calm and focused.

The information provided is to be used for educational/informational purposes only and does not constitute medical advice. Only certified medical & health professionals may diagnose patients and provide such advice.

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Body composition is a vital tool for accurately and precisely measuring your body weight and overall health. It can show you the components that make up your body weight for a more in-depth snapshot of your physical health than simple body weight scales.

We created this ebook for anyone who wants to learn more about body composition. Over the next several pages, you will learn about:

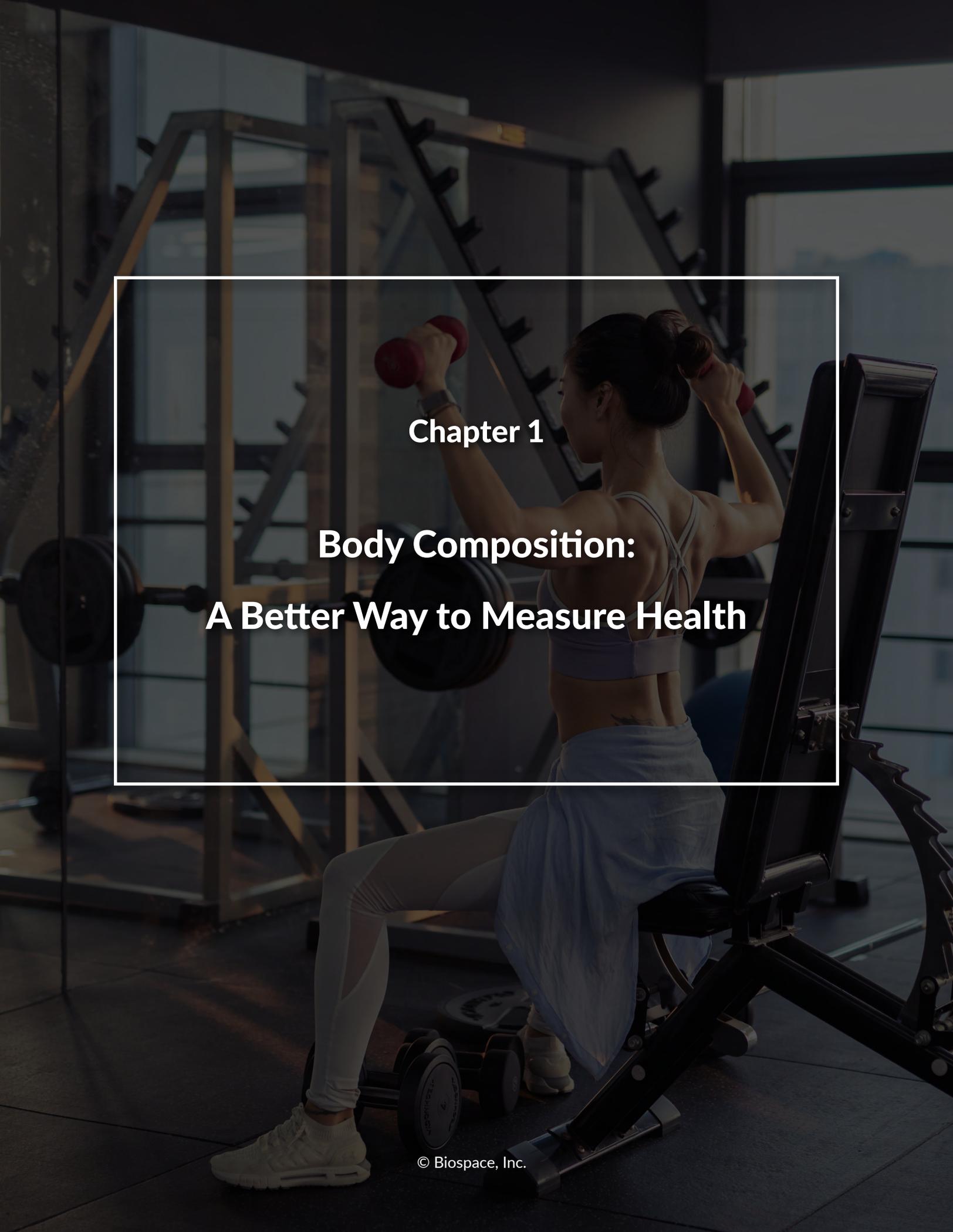
- Why body composition is a better way to measure your weight and health than traditional methods like scales
- Why a healthy fat and muscle balance is key to good health
- Why you should know your body composition
- How to use body composition to set realistic health and fitness goals, track your progress, and make more educated decisions about your diet, exercise, and lifestyle
- Where you can have your body composition analyzed

If, after reading this ebook, you would like to learn more about body composition and other related health and fitness topics, click below to subscribe to the InBody Blog.

[SUBSCRIBE](#)

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- Chapter 2: Why Muscle and Fat Balance Matters
- Chapter 3: Why You Should Know Your Body Composition
- Chapter 4: What Should You Be Tracking?
- Chapter 5: Wrap-up and Next Steps

A woman with her hair in a bun is seated on a gym machine, performing a shoulder press with two red dumbbells. She is wearing a light purple sports bra and white leggings. The gym background is dimly lit with various exercise machines visible.

Chapter 1

Body Composition: A Better Way to Measure Health

Limitations of BMI and Body Scales

Most people tend to measure their weight and overall health by weighing themselves on a scale or calculating their Body Mass Index (BMI).

But this is limited for several reasons:

- Scales only gives you a rudimentary number for your weight
- BMI is simply a value derived from your weight and height
- Both give you a single weight value that fails to differentiate between fat, muscle, and water
- [Both do not tell you where the fat is distributed,](#) which may carry potentially harmful implications
- Both may oversimplify health risks and ignore important factors that contribute to good health

If a single number like BMI is flawed, then why do so many physicians, fitness professionals, and other trusted health authorities still rely on it to assess overall health?

Simply put, BMI is so widely used because it is inexpensive, easy to calculate, and an effective method of screening people for weight categories (underweight, healthy, overweight, obese, extremely obese).

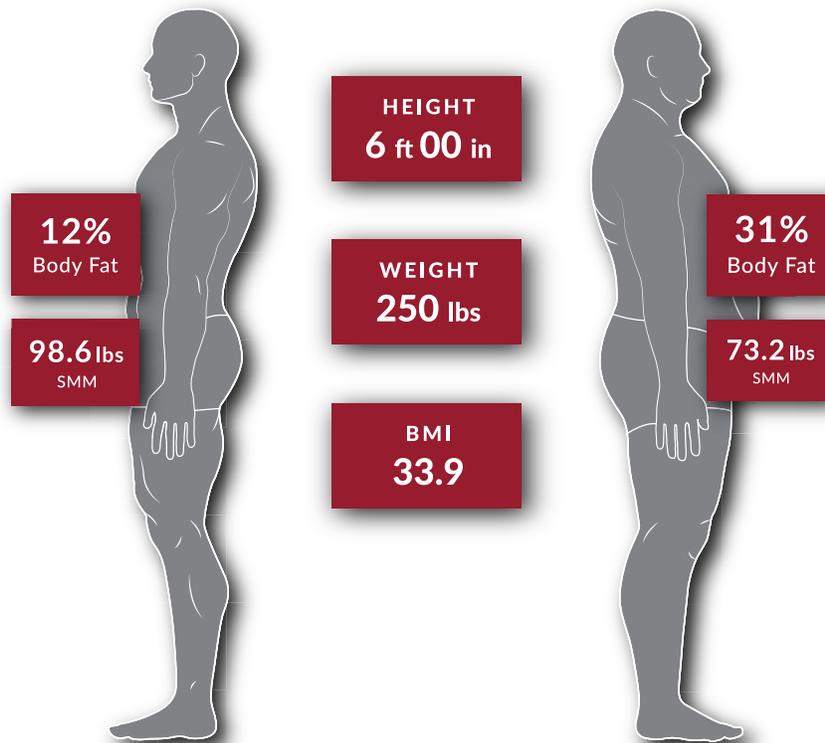
BMI may be convenient, but it is far from a [“one-size-fits-all” method of weight measurement.](#)

Continued



Limitations of BMI and Body Scales

Picture two people with the same height and weight, and therefore BMI—



Since they both have the same BMI, they will both be categorized as overweight even though the person on the left has a low amount of body fat and a high amount of muscle mass!

Continued



Limitations of BMI and Body Scales



Scales and BMI are poor tools for not just assessing health risks, but also tracking diet and exercise progress because there is no way to identify if the weight changes are in fat, muscle, or water.

This makes setting and achieving your health goals extremely difficult because you never know what you are losing or gaining.

Whether you want to lose, gain, or maintain, body composition is a more accurate, in-depth method of measuring your weight and overall health.

What Exactly is Body Composition?

Body composition is a [method of describing what your body is made of](#), including fat, muscle, and body water.

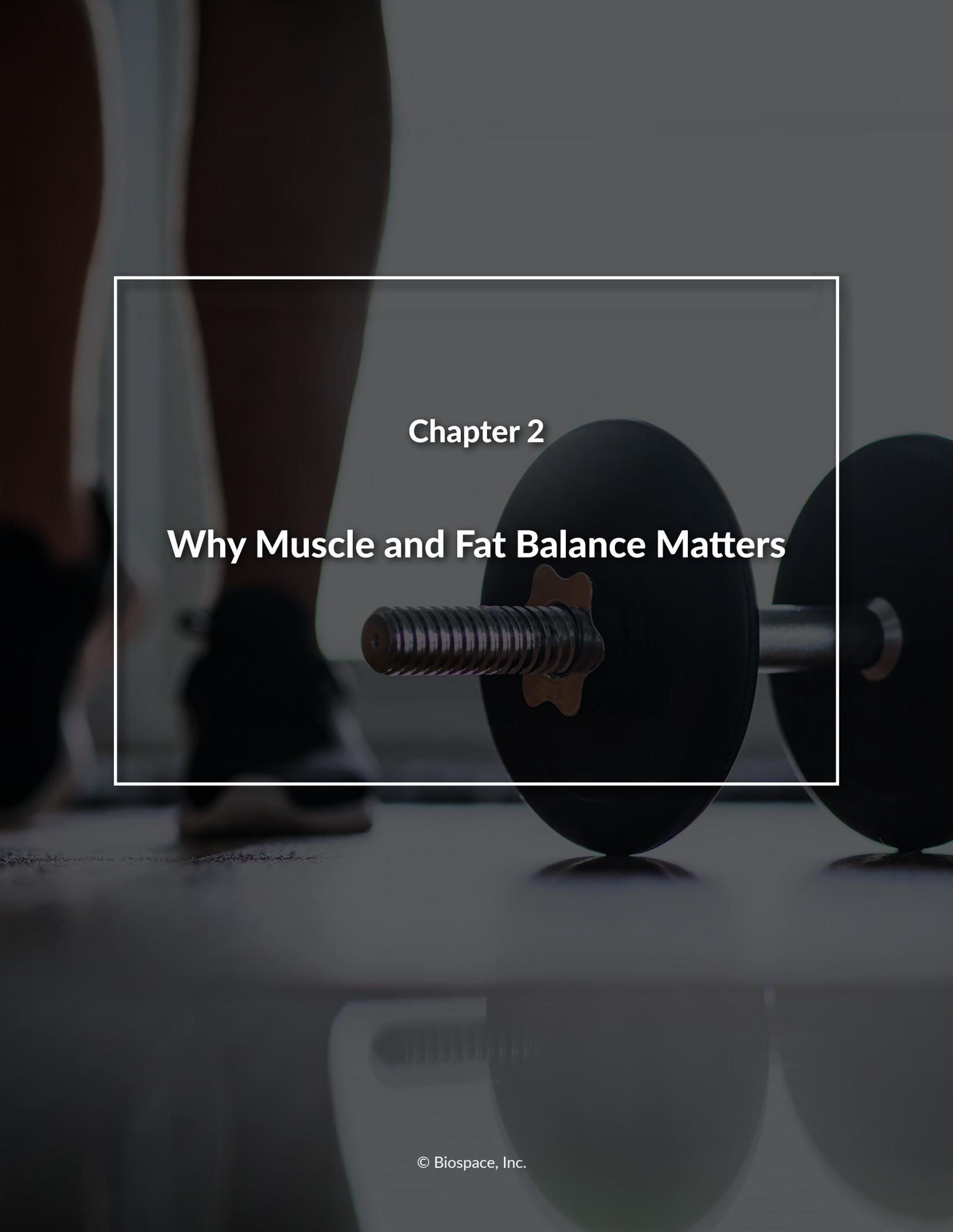
Body composition differentiates between fat and muscle to provide a more precise snapshot of your overall health than limited methods like BMI.



In the next chapter, we will explore the importance of differentiating between fat and muscle, weight and fat loss, and types of body fat.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- > [5 Reasons to Stop Weighing Yourself Everyday](#)
- > [BMI's Fat Secret](#)
- > [Body Composition 101 - The Beginners Guide](#)



Chapter 2

Why Muscle and Fat Balance Matters

Body Composition: An Invaluable Tracking Tool

Have you ever quit a weight loss diet because you did not see any progress when you weighed yourself on a scale or looked in a mirror?

You were not being impatient—you just had no way to measure if you had lost, gained, or maintained fat, muscle, and body water.

A [healthy balance of fat and muscle](#) is a key component of long-term health, but as previously mentioned, BMI does not tell you how your weight is divided into fat and muscle.

With body composition, you know where and how much fat and muscle you have so you can hone your diet and exercise regimen to achieve your health goals.



Understanding the Difference Between Weight and Fat Loss

All too often, people use [“weight loss” and “fat loss” interchangeably](#), but they are two separate concepts.

Losing weight is relatively easy—you can shed a few pounds (albeit water weight) by spending some time in a sauna. On the other hand, losing fat is considerably harder and takes longer than you think.

Consider the following points:

When you lose weight, you lose more than just fat

When you drop a few pounds, you may also lose some muscle and water weight. Remember that it is far easier to lose water weight than it is to lose fat.

It takes longer to lose fat than overall weight

While you may lose 10 pounds in a week, most of that weight loss will likely be muscle and water. Maintaining or increasing lean body mass is critical to your long-term health, so expect to lose no more than 1 to 2 pounds of fat per week. Focus on resistance training and eat a healthy, balanced diet to maintain or increase your muscle mass and decrease your fat mass.

If you simply measure your weight with a scale, the single value representing your weight does not tell you if your weight loss is the result of fat, muscle, or water loss.

Continued



Understanding the Difference Between Weight and Fat Loss

Alternatively, you may stay the same weight and think you did not lose fat, but you may have lost fat and replaced it with muscle mass—a crucial indicator of progress!

With body composition, you know precisely what you lose so you stay motivated to continue your diet and exercise program for more successful long-term results.

Before you start any fat loss program, an important thing to keep in mind is that:

Skinny does not always equal healthy!

Many people assume that a person who has a weight and/or BMI within the normal range and appears thin is automatically healthy. However, this person could be [“skinny fat”](#) and have the same elevated health risks as an obese person!

Continued





What is “skinny fat”?

Skinny fat refers to someone who has a weight and BMI that is normal for their height but has too much fat and not enough muscle mass recommended for optimal health.

How does one become skinny fat?

You can become skinny fat if you lose too much muscle mass and not enough percent body fat from an ineffective diet and exercise regimen.

If you severely restrict your caloric intake and adhere to an exercise routine with an excessive amount of cardio workouts but minimal strength training, your body will eventually start metabolizing muscle because it needs the energy once all other options are exhausted. In time, you will lose weight at the expense of both fat and muscle, which will do very little to improve your body fat percentage and become less skinny fat.

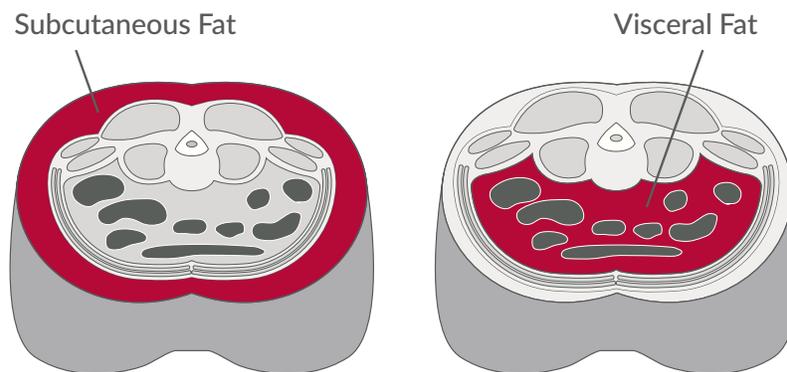
On the surface, skinny fat people may look thin and healthy because they have a healthy amount of subcutaneous fat—the type of fat stored just under the skin—but have increased health risks due to an excessive amount of visceral fat.

Continued



What is visceral fat and why is it potentially harmful?

Visceral fat is a type of internal body fat that develops in your abdominal cavity and surrounds your organs. Too much visceral fat may lead to a multitude of health issues like certain types of cancer, diabetes, and stroke.

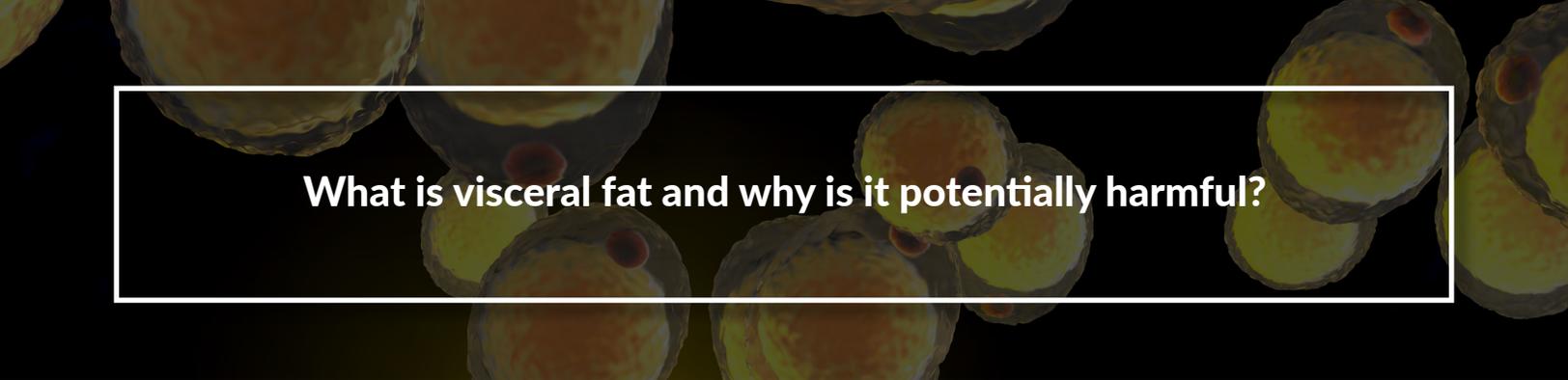


A skinny fat person may look healthy on the exterior, but they can carry an excessive amount of visceral fat that places them at risk of developing health problems.

Skinny fat people are usually oblivious to their elevated health risks because, unlike subcutaneous fat, you cannot measure visceral fat with BMI and scales so it goes undetected.

Continued





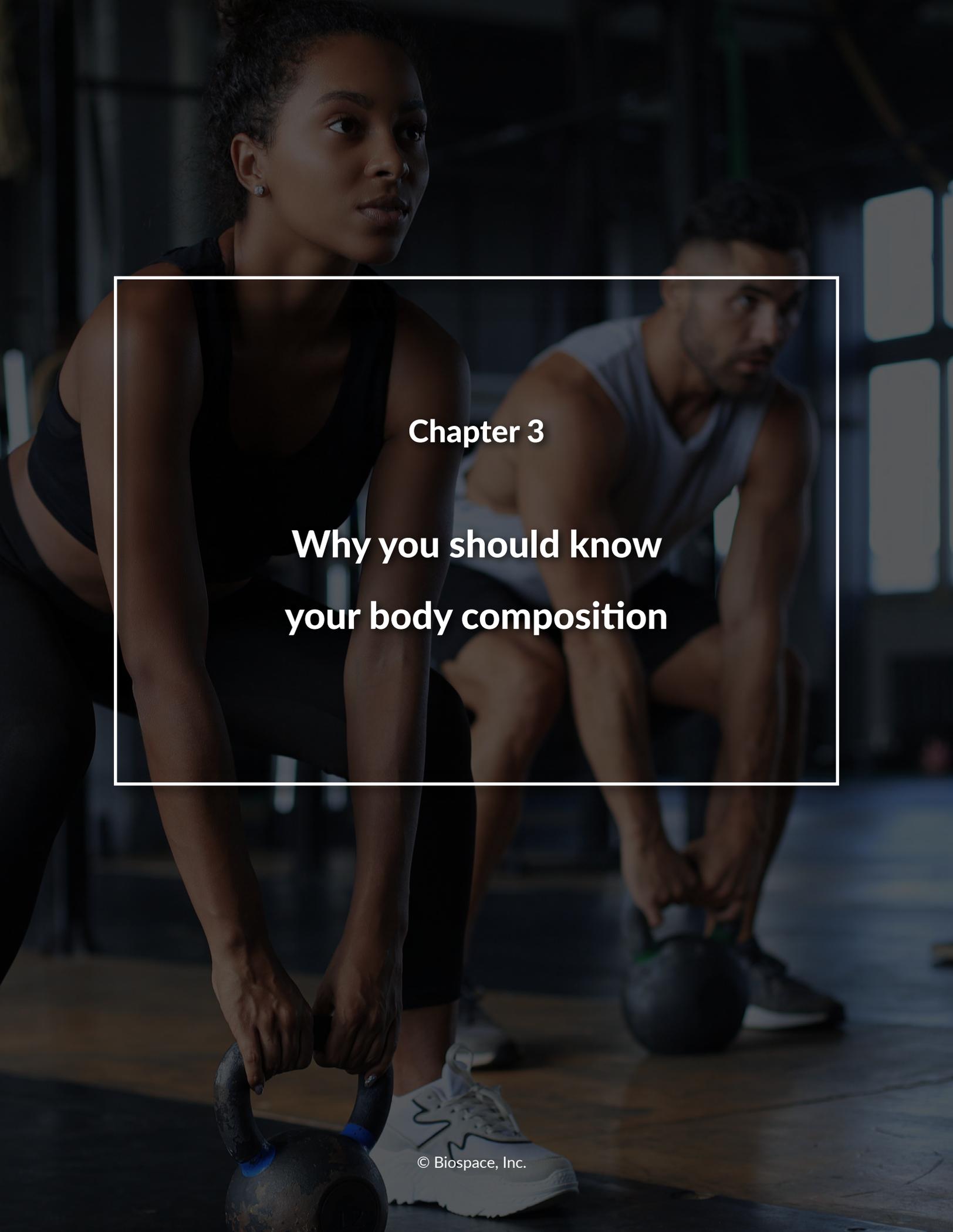
What is visceral fat and why is it potentially harmful?

Body composition analysis can help you accurately assess fat and muscle mass throughout your body so you can make educated decisions to improve your long-term health.

In the next chapter, we will break down the many benefits of knowing your body composition.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- > [5 Things You Didn't Know About Muscle and Fat](#)
- > [Weight Loss vs Fat Loss](#)
- > [Your Body and You: A Guide to Body Fat](#)



Chapter 3

**Why you should know
your body composition**

What Are the Benefits of Knowing Your Body Composition?

Body composition gives you a more in-depth, accurate, and precise snapshot of your overall health. Here are just a few key benefits of knowing your body composition:



Find Your Baseline

Body composition reveals how much of your total body weight is composed of muscle, fat, and water so you can find your baseline and know exactly what you need to lose, gain, or maintain.



Assess Your Percent Body Fat

[Percent Body Fat is a better health indicator](#) as it compares your fat levels to your weight. Using PBF as a guideline, you can improve your health by focusing on fat loss, not just weight loss.



Maximize Your Workout Routine

Body composition analysis shows you how many pounds of lean mass you have in each body segment and how well developed it is. Spot any insufficiencies or imbalances and optimize your exercises to achieve adequate lean mass in each part of your body.



Calculate Your Caloric Needs

Basal Metabolic Rate is the minimum calories you need to support basic function at rest. Use BMR to calculate your caloric needs and [create a personalized nutritional plan](#) to help you meet your health and fitness goals.

Continued



What Are the Benefits of Knowing Your Body Composition?



Set Goals & Track Progress

Once you establish your baseline through body composition, you have a clear snapshot of your current fat and muscle levels so you can [set achievable health goals](#). It is recommended to have your body composition retested every 2 to 4 weeks to track your progress and make any changes needed to help you achieve your goals.



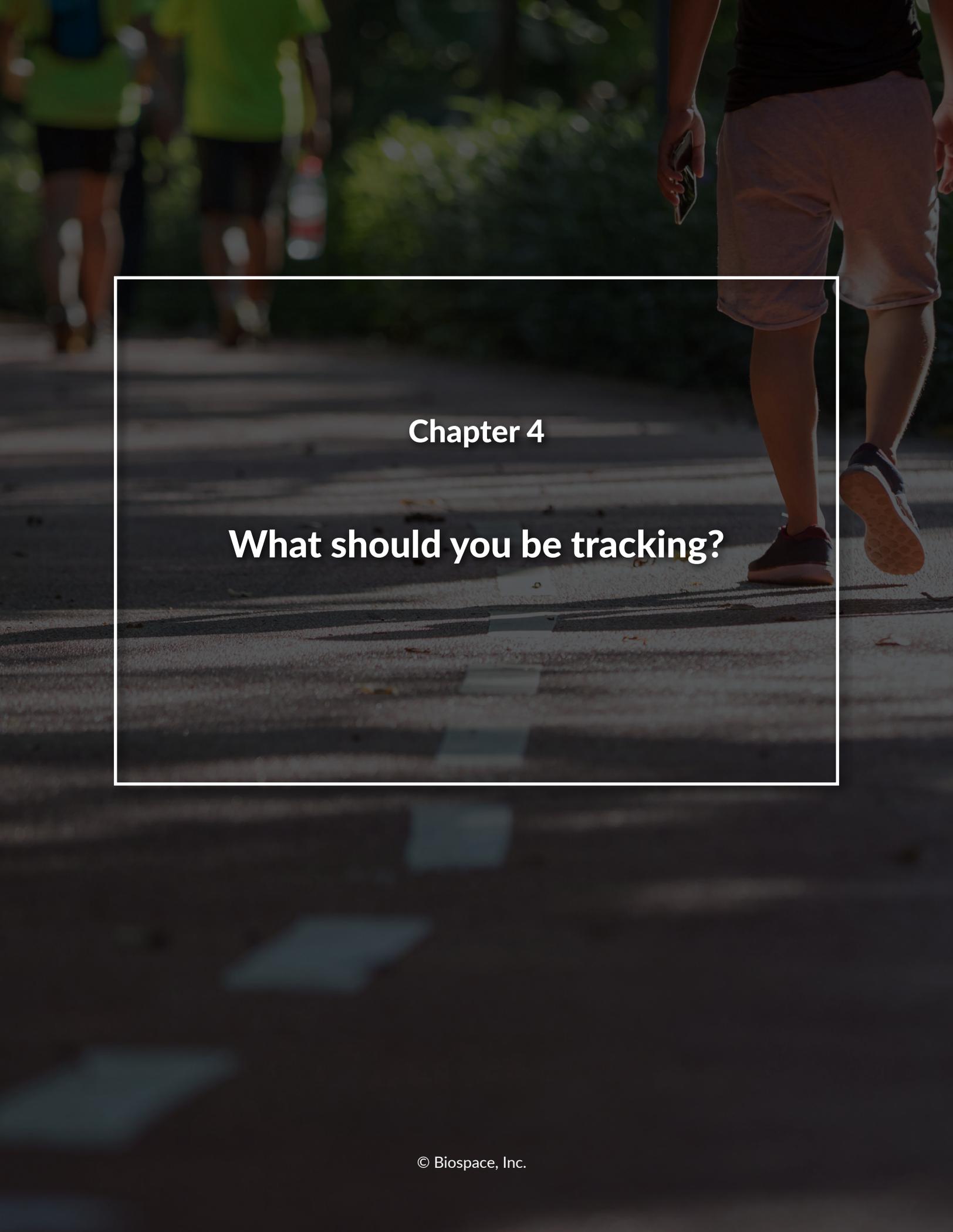
Make Healthier Decisions

Knowing your body composition makes you aware of any potential complications you may have as a result of having too much fat, too little fat, or too little muscle. With this knowledge, you can make educated decisions that will have [lifelong benefits](#).

In the next chapter, we will highlight key metrics of body composition that you should know to track your progress and keep you focused on achieving your goals.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [How to Set a Body Composition Goal That's Right For You](#)
- [How to Use BMR to Hack Your Diet](#)
- [The Fountain of Youth You've Always Had: Your Muscle](#)

A person is walking on a paved path, holding a smartphone in their right hand. They are wearing a black t-shirt, light-colored shorts, and dark sneakers. In the background, other people are visible, some wearing bright green shirts. The scene is outdoors with trees and foliage.

Chapter 4

What should you be tracking?

What Body Composition Outputs Should I Focus On?

There are several key body composition metrics that you should use to track your progress over time:



Percent Body Fat (PBF)

Percent Body Fat is a more accurate indicator of your health than your body weight or BMI because it tells you exactly how much fat makes up your total body weight. A higher Percent Body Fat puts you at risk of developing health issues like cardiac heart disease, diabetes, and hypertension.



Skeletal Muscle Mass (SMM)

Skeletal Muscle Mass is important for mobility, posture, and strong immunity for optimal long-term health. Body composition analysis shows you precisely [how much Skeletal Muscle Mass](#) you have in your entire body, so you can tailor your strength training to ensure you have a healthy muscle mass balance.



Body Water

Your Total Body Water (TBW) is divided into two groups: extracellular water (ECW), which is the water located outside your cells, and intracellular water (ICW), which is the water located within your cells. [A healthy balance of body water](#) is important for good health. With body composition analysis, you can see your body water balance and track any changes to ensure that you maintain a healthy balance over time.

Continued



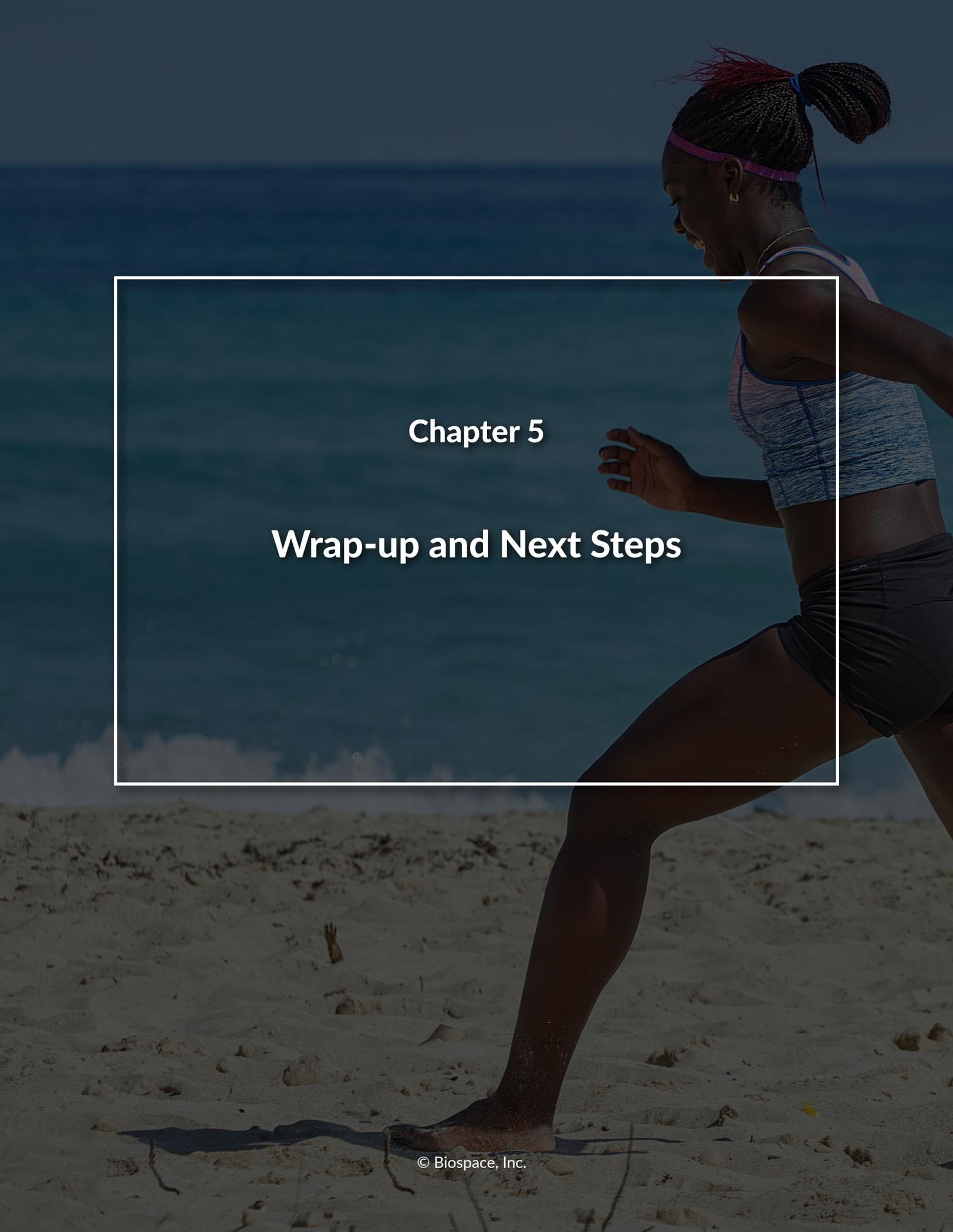


What Body Composition Outputs Should I Focus On?

Percent body fat, skeletal muscle mass, and body water help you track the effectiveness of your diet and/or exercise regimen. Over time, you can make any adjustments to help you stay focused on long-term success and achieve maximum results.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Unpacking Body Composition Lingo](#)
- [Lean Body Mass and Muscle Mass: What's the Difference](#)
- [What You Need to Know About Hydration and Your Body](#)



Chapter 5

Wrap-up and Next Steps

Next Step: Take A Body Composition Test

The problem with basing your health on limited methods like body weight scales and BMI is that you only receive a rudimentary value for your weight and cannot accurately assess how much of it is made up of fat, muscle, and water.

Understanding and developing a healthy balance between fat, muscle, and water is crucial for good health and wellness throughout your life. Body composition analysis helps you establish your baseline, set achievable health goals, and track your progress.

Now that you know why body composition is a better way to assess your weight and health, you may be curious about different methods of body composition measurement.

There are many methods of body composition measurement:



DEXA



skin fold method
(pinch test)



BIA

Each method has advantages and drawbacks as well as offer different metrics. The right option for you depends on your priorities, which may include accuracy, affordability, or convenience.

Resources

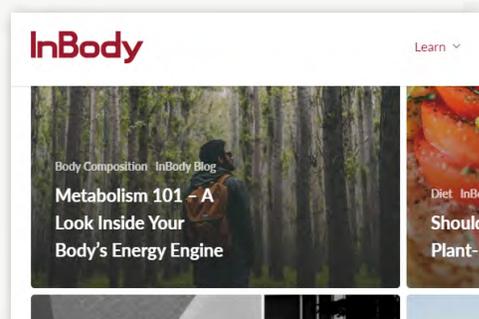
Congrats! You're now well-educated about the ins-and-outs of body composition. We hope you find this knowledge useful in your journey for better health.

Below, you will find helpful resources, including nearby testing locations and InBody Blogs brimming with insightful health, fitness, and nutrition articles.

FIND YOUR NEAREST
BODY COMPOSITION
TESTING LOCATION



CHECK OUT OUR
INBODY BLOG



Do you have any questions, concerns, or would like to leave us feedback?
Reach out to us and we'll help you out with anything you need.



Get in Touch