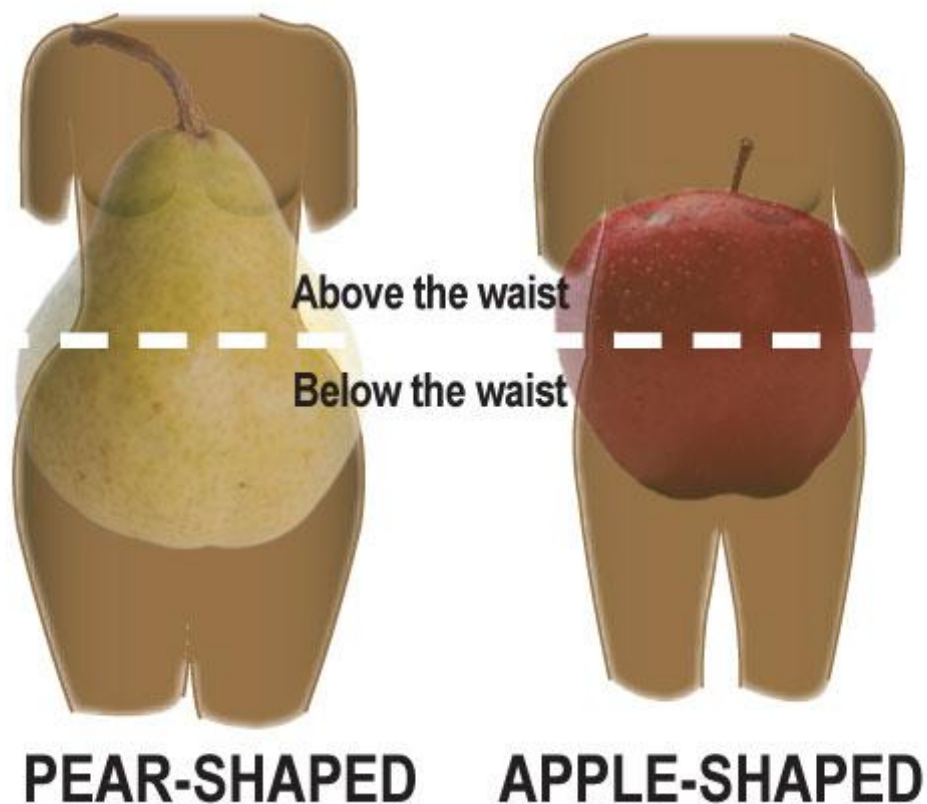


Apples Versus Pears

A common body type comparison that may predict overall health risk relates those that have body shapes similar to an apple with those that have shapes similar to a pear. Anyone with an apple shape, where the measurement around their belly is greater than their hips, is likely experiencing insulin-resistance related metabolic problems. This physical characteristic is related to a disproportionately increased amount of visceral fat. This is most commonly caused by genetics, diet, and lifestyle. The person with this shape is at greater immediate risk for having or developing the following: *high blood pressure, elevated triglycerides and cholesterol, heart disease, and diabetes.*

Those people with a pear shape, where the measurement around their hips is greater than their waist, have less overall health risks associated with being overweight compared to those with an apple shape. The pear shaped person has their fat distributed more in their hips and periphery with less fat stored in their abdomen.



Apples Versus Pears

It is important to note that being overweight, or more accurately, over-fat, in general is a problem for many reasons. However, the apple shape type of fat distribution is a more significant health risk than that of a pear-shaped fat distribution.

In either case, weight (fat) loss caused by dietary modification and physical conditioning will do wonders to improve the overall state of health.

A diet that contributes to this problem is one that is high in saturated fats, processed foods, simple sugars, and alcohol. Avoiding these substances and changing the diet to one that uses mono and poly-unsaturated fats, fresh vegetables, fruits, nuts & seeds, whole grains, legumes, fish, free-range meats, and products that come from these sources will do wonders.

Exercise, particularly dynamic full-body type activities, will have the quickest and most significant impact in changing the body. This type of exercise will use the most calories in the shortest period of time, and also increase the sensitivity and number of the insulin receptors on cells. This is important for many reasons, with the following two being at or near the top of the list. One reason is because using excess stored calories will decrease the fat cell size and decrease the overall fat mass being carried around. The second reason is because improving insulin receptor sensitivity and number means that less insulin is needed to be produced by the pancreas to get the nutrients that are in the blood stream (fats – triglycerides and fatty acids, sugars – glucose, and proteins – amino acids) into the cells where they can be used. This will lower the elevated blood triglyceride, cholesterol, and sugar levels and diminish the harm they may cause.

While we may not be able to control our genetics and whether or not we tend to have an apple or pear shape, we do have a say in our diet and lifestyle.

Therefore, as a result of consuming a proper diet and regularly performing dynamic full-body type activities, fat loss and improved insulin function will occur, improving our health.