



Basal Metabolic Rate

You've probably heard people talk about having a fast or slow metabolism — but what does that mean exactly?

It's true that your metabolism is linked to weight. But, contrary to common belief, a slow metabolism is rarely the cause of excess weight gain.

Calculating the Harris-Benedict BMR

BMR =	
Men	$(10 \times \text{weight in kg})$ $+ (6.25 \times \text{height in cm})$ $- (5 \times \text{age in years}) + 5$
Women	$(10 \times \text{weight in kg})$ $+ (6.25 \times \text{height in cm})$ $- (5 \times \text{age in years}) - 161$

What is Basal Metabolic Rate?

Your body converts what you eat and drink into energy. The calories in food and beverages are combined with oxygen to release the energy your body needs to perform your body's most basic (basal) functions like breathing and cell production.

Even when you're at rest, your body needs energy for all of its "hidden" functions, such as breathing, circulating blood, adjusting hormone levels, and growing and repairing cells. The number of calories your body needs to carry out these basic functions is known as your basal metabolic rate (BMR).

How your body burns calories

Your BMR helps the body burn calories. The other way you can burn calories is through movement and exercise. And, by monitoring what you eat and not consuming too many or too little calories, you can prevent unwanted weight gain and weight loss.

Measure your BMR

The Harris-Benedict equation (also called the Harris-Benedict principle) is a method used to estimate your BMR and daily kilocalorie requirements. The estimated BMR value is multiplied by a number that corresponds to your activity level.

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Determine recommended intake

The following table will help you calculate your recommended daily intake to maintain your current weight.

	Daily kilocalories needed
Little to no exercise	BMR × 1.2
Light exercise (1 – 3 days per week)	BMR × 1.375
Moderate exercise (3 – 5 days per week)	BMR × 1.55
Heavy exercise (6 – 7 days per week)	BMR × 1.725
Very heavy exercise (twice per day, extra heavy workouts)	BMR × 2

Get smart about your calories — get on the path to a healthier you.

Sources: BMI Calculator. Available at www.bmi-calculator.net/bmr-calculator/harris-benedict-equation. Accessed 1 May 2017.

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