

AN INSIDE LOOK

A DEXA SCAN CAN GIVE YOU A DETAILED LOOK AT YOUR BODY COMPOSITION

When you're trying to strip fat and gain muscle, you want to know that your program is working. That's why a regular DEXA scan is a great idea for anyone looking to make big gains. It can show you where you're getting it right – and where you're getting it wrong.

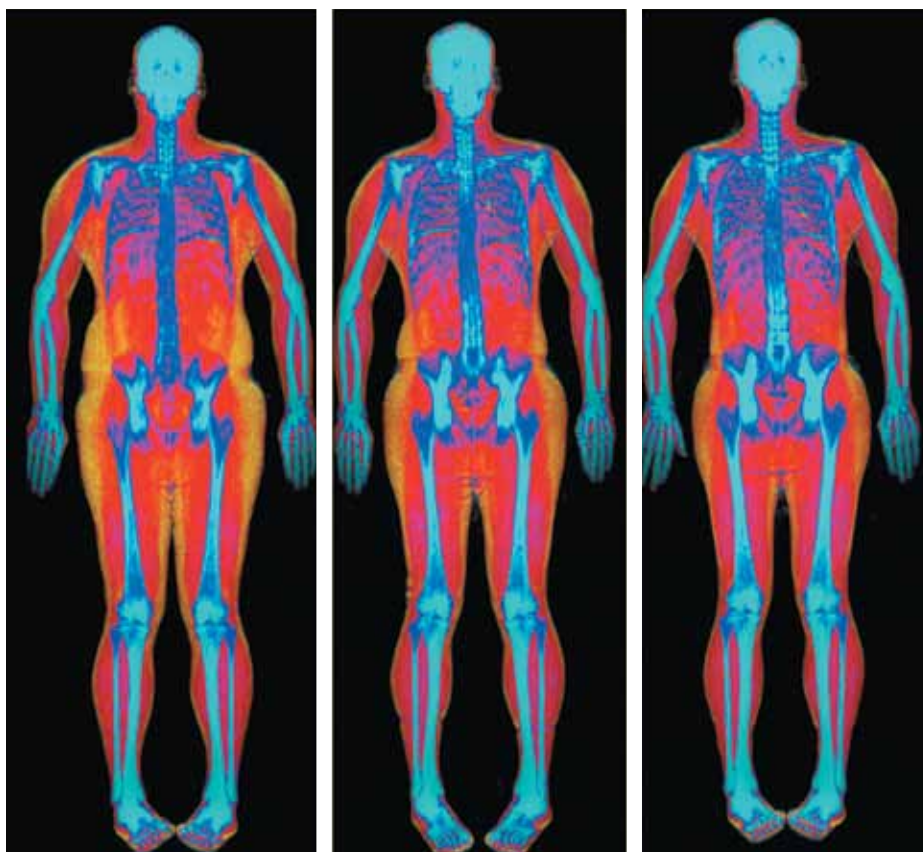
A DEXA (dual-energy X-ray absorptiometry) scan is a very low energy X-ray that specifically measures muscle, bone and fat – right down to one-tenth of a gram.

"It's not the sort of X-ray that produces a diagnostic image. It's a measurement tool," says Dr Jarrod Meerkin, an exercise physiologist from MeasureUp, who offer scans around the country. "The DEXA works by passing two different energies of X-ray through your body – one looks at hard tissue or bone and the other looks at soft tissue. It determines the different types of tissue by its density and gives that a unit in mass. First and foremost it's a tool to diagnose osteoporosis; its secondary use is as a total body scan."

For a regular fit bloke, Dr Meerkin estimates a body fat percentage of around eight to 10 per cent. But for someone who competes or wants to compete, you need to get that figure a little lower.

"We recently had Calum von Moger (Mr Universe) come in for a scan," Dr Meerkin says. "He's in his off season, but keeps in constant good shape. He was around the seven per cent range. Those guys who are coming in for their diet phase or just prior to competition are usually hitting around six to seven per cent." The lowest body fat recording MeasureUp have seen had in a pro body builder is 5.6 per cent.

"For someone who is competing, a scan around once every three months is ideal," says Dr Meerkin. Not just for body fat percentages, but to make sure there are no muscle imbalances. "The scan can also help if you are seeking greater symmetry. That's quite important if you have plans on competing, as it's one of the judging criteria."



From left to right: before, during and after scans following a weight-loss program (yellow is fat).

A DEXA SCAN IS A USEFUL TOOL FOR TRACKING YOUR PROGRESS

If you're embarking on a new program, a scan before and after can give you a fantastic idea of whether the program has worked.

"Some hypertrophy programs might be less than others, 10, 12, 14 weeks," says Dr Meerkin. "It

depends. But a DEXA is a very useful tool for tracking progress. If your diet's spot on and the program doesn't work, you don't want to keep repeating that program for the sake of it. You want to try something different."

HOW DO I GET A DEXA SCAN?

Measure up offer scans around Australia through their mobile scanning fleet, and they have a head office in Sydney's Pitt Street. An initial scan costs \$90 – follow-up scans cost less. Head to measureup.com.au to find out more, or follow them on Facebook ([facebook.com/measureup](https://www.facebook.com/measureup)) to find out where they'll be scanning next.