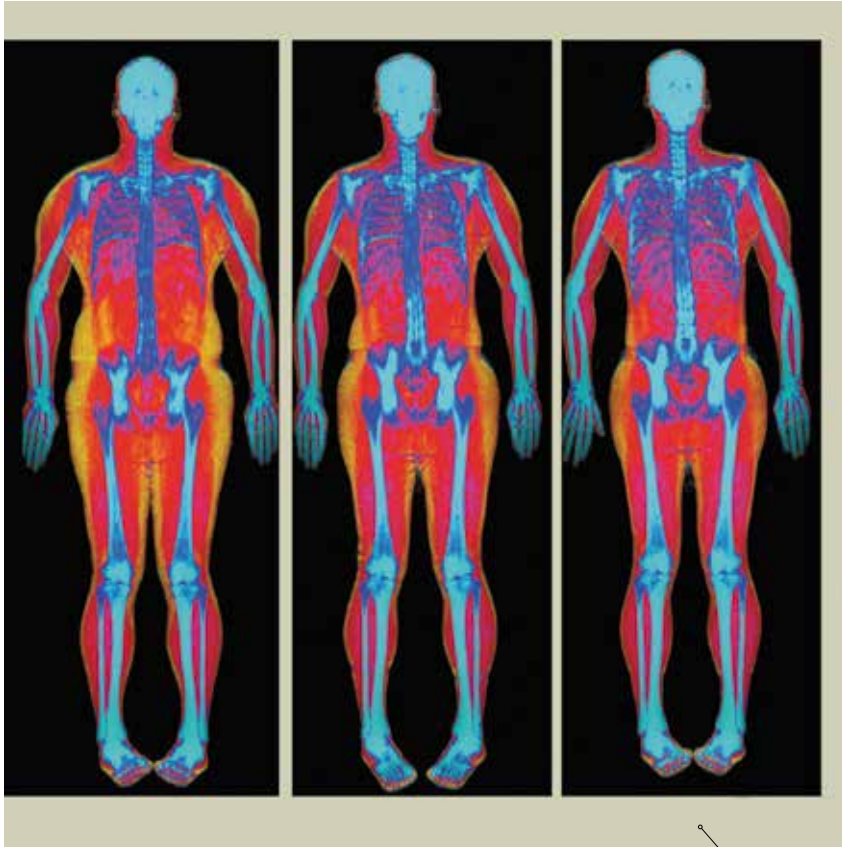


Do you measure up?

A DEXA scan is the gold standard in body composition analysis. This is how it works – and why you should get one now if you're serious about your fitness and health goals.



A series of DEXA scans showing a decrease in body fat (yellow).

It's a familiar scenario: you're trying to lose weight and the scales record a drop. Naturally, you're stoked. But how do you know those kilos you've lost are solely fat. You don't. And what portion is muscle?

That's where a DEXA scan can be very helpful. Utilised by NRL, Super Rugby and AFL clubs to monitor players' bone density, body fat and lean muscle, it is the most advanced body

composition technology on the planet, with a reported 99.7% accuracy.

A DEXA scan is not only an invaluable tool for sportsmen. It can also be used by every-day guys to track fitness and health, and measure body fat percentage and muscle density. For example, a scan can pinpoint visceral and trunk fat, which are predictors of type-2 diabetes and other diseases. It can also show the early onset of osteoporosis.

How it works

A DEXA scan – a Dual-Energy X-ray Absorptiometry scan – is a low energy X-ray that measures muscle, bone and fat to one-tenth of a gram. "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, says Dr Jarrod Meerkin, an exercise physiologist from Measure Up, which offer scans around the country.

Why you need one

"Ideally you would come in once a year – that would mean that you have reached your goal, you're satisfied with your health and fitness and the way you look, and you are just making sure you're on track year after year and you're comfortable where you are," Meerkin says. "It provides valuable data on how you're progressing over time with your program."

Why older guys need one, too

Studies show men experience a 6% decline in muscle mass per decade from the age of 30. This decline, called sarcopenia, is thought to be a result of ageing, but research shows it could be due to illness, poor nutrition and inactivity. "The DEXA is a useful tool for older men to monitor their muscle mass so they know they're maintaining it," Meerkin says. Tracking sarcopenia with a DEXA scan means fitness and nutrition programs can be adjusted to help halt its progress.

What do the results mean?

DEXA scan results will show you your body fat and lean muscle mass percentages and where they're distributed throughout your body. "You want to make sure the fat loss is coming from those

areas where you're at greatest risk of type-2 diabetes and heart disease, which is the trunk," Meerkin says. A DEXA can also provide an estimation of visceral fat – the hidden, dangerous fat around your organs.

What's a good body fat percentage?

The average body fat percentage for a regular bloke is between about 10% and 20%. "The advisable range is eight to 20% for men under 40; 11% to 21% for men over 40," Meerkin says.

How important is bone density?

Very. One in three men are at risk of developing osteoporosis. "There is definitely a relationship between bone strength and muscle mass," Meerkin says. "For males who have less than 50kg of lean tissue, we are finding quite a high incidence of low bone density and osteoporosis."

How do I get a DEXA?

Measure Up offer scans around Australia through their mobile scanning fleet, and have a head office in Sydney. An initial scan costs \$90. Head to measureup.com.au or follow them on Facebook ([facebook.com/MeasureUp](https://www.facebook.com/MeasureUp/)) to find out where they're scanning next. Mention Men's Fitness for a discount. ■

DEXA scan results will accurately reveal your body fat and lean muscle mass percentages as well as bone density.