

# Waist-watchers' challenge

MISSION VERY POSSIBLE!

How many times have you woken up on a Monday morning ready to start your new diet, only to give up by lunchtime when the birthday cakes come round the office? We spend over 60% of our waking hours at work. This means that for, those wanting to make healthy choices about the foods they eat, the workplace can strongly influence our choices, both positively and negatively.

**This challenge is designed to help workplaces support those aiming to reach a healthier weight and stay there!** But the challenge does not focus on weight. Instead it uses waist measurements as the focus for monitoring progress.

**Waist measurement, sometimes referred to as waist circumference, is a good indicator of how your weight might be influencing your health.**

Men tend to carry extra weight in the abdominal area. This is known as central obesity and is commonly referred to as an 'apple' shape. Having an apple shape increases your risk of developing heart disease and diabetes.

**Strict, short-term changes to diet in order to see rapid weight loss are not the answer to losing weight.** For most people, excess weight is gained over many months or years, so it is best to set long-term weight loss goals and make small changes to your diet so that you lose weight over a longer period of time.

## Getting started

On the first day of the challenge, take a waist measurement for each participant. If possible, use a tape measure that indicates the health risk associated with waist measurement. Measure the waist by finding the mid-point between the top of the hipbone and bottom of the ribs. Ask the person to hold one end of the tape measure at this point, and then walk round them holding the other end until you come back to your starting place. This is much easier than trying to wrap your arms round a large waist. Make a note of the measurement.

Please be sensitive when taking measurements of this kind in the workplace, as some people may be sensitive about their weight. You will need to find a suitable area to take measurements and somewhere to keep the information provided confidential.

# Waist-watchers' challenge

MISSION VERY POSSIBLE!

## THE CHALLENGE


Either as individuals, or collectively in teams, the challenge is to achieve the largest percentage waist loss.

- Remember that any weight loss programme should focus on longer-term lifestyle changes rather than dramatic, short-term weight loss. Always encourage colleagues to set realistic short-term targets with a maximum weekly weight loss of no more than 0.5 to 1kg (1 to 2 pounds).
- Setting a team challenge is a great incentive for colleagues to help each other out and can make people feel less self-conscious.

- Encourage colleagues to adopt a balanced healthy eating approach, combined with an increase in physical activity levels. Discourage short-term 'fad diets' that restrict particular food groups or that recommend skipping meals completely.

### Take waist measurements on a weekly basis – ideally at the same time each week.

Record waist measurements and calculate weekly and cumulative waist loss. Use the chart on page 3 to track progress. You can use the chart for an individual to complete, or it can be used to record a cumulative total for the whole team.



Waist measurement for:					Action needed
	Men	Women	South Asian Men	South Asian Women	
<b>Healthy measurement</b>	Less than 94cm (37 inches)	Less than 80cm (about 31.5 inches)	Less than 90cm (about 25.5 inches)	Less than 80cm (about 31.5 inches)	This is a healthy waist measurement, but if you feel the need to tone up, check that your diet is well-balanced and that you are doing enough physical activity.
<b>At increased risk</b>	Over 94cm (37 inches)	Over 80cm (about 31.5 inches)			Now is the time to try to lose some weight. Increase your level of activity and make some changes in your diet to reduce calorie intake.
<b>At high risk</b>	Over 102cm (40 inches)	Over 88cm (over 34.5 inches)	Over 90cm (over 35.5 inches)	Over 80cm (about 31.5 inches)	You need to take some action now as your weight is increasing your risk of developing illnesses including heart disease, and diabetes. Increase your level of activity and make some changes in your diet to reduce calorie intake.

# Waist-watchers' challenge

MISSION VERY POSSIBLE!

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
(Of the team or person)



	Waist measurement	Weekly change	% Weekly change	Total change to date	% change to date
Week 1					
Week 2			Divide weekly change by Week 1 waist measurement.		Divide total change by Week 1 waist measurement.
Week 3			Divide weekly change by Week 2 waist measurement.		Divide total change by Week 1 waist measurement.
Week 4			Divide weekly change by Week 3 waist measurement.		Divide total change by Week 1 waist measurement.
Week 5			Divide weekly change by Week 4 waist measurement.		Divide total change by Week 1 waist measurement.
Week 6			Divide weekly change by Week 5 waist measurement.		Divide total change by Week 1 waist measurement.

# Waist-watchers' challenge



## Making the challenge more successful

- Promote the health benefits of losing weight to encourage more employees to take part.
- Provide participants with materials to help promote sensible dietary changes and increases in physical activity levels. The British Dietetic Association (BDA) provides a wide range of resources for those wanting to lose weight, see [www.bdaweightwise.com](http://www.bdaweightwise.com)
- Signpost participants to additional resources to help them decide on an eating plan that works for them. The BDA website mentioned above can help with this.
- Get each person to set a realistic weight loss target.
- Encourage participants to keep a food and activity diary so that they can see how they are progressing.
- Publicise success, no matter how small, on a weekly basis.
- Continue to promote the health benefits associated with being a healthy weight.
- For team challenges, give each team a name or theme. For example, run the challenge during a sporting event and allocate team names accordingly.
- Team captains should encourage their team members to eat well and to increase their levels of physical activity.
- Link the challenge to health promotion campaigns in the employee restaurant and highlight waist-wise choices and portion sizes.
- Link the challenge to health promotion campaigns to increase levels of physical activity.
- Talk to local slimming clubs to see if they will run a group in your workplace. Or let employees know where and when local clubs meet.